

**CITY OF MILTON
FIRE
DEPARTMENT**



**2009
ANNUAL REPORT**

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In many respects 2009 was an historic year for the City of Milton Fire Department. Within just the first two weeks we were called to respond to three separate major incidents that each made national news. In each case the department proved equal to the task at hand. As the year progressed, emergency activity kept pace with previous years, actually exceeding the prior year by nearly two percent. Throughout the year much of the department's energies were focused on the completion of the new fire station for which construction began the previous year. Dedication of this new facility was held with appropriate honor and ceremony on September 11. Additionally, two of the department's most senior officers retired in 2008, and the extensive process to promote candidates to fill the resulting vacancies was undertaken, ultimately resulting in the selection of one Captain and two Lieutenants. Many outstanding challenges have been addressed, and improvements have been implemented, greatly improving the department's operational capabilities and level of service to the community. Beginning the new year, the City of Milton Fire Department finds itself well positioned to meet the demands of protecting our citizens for many years to come.

EMERGENCY ACTIVITY

2009 began with an ominously bad series of incidents. Early on the morning of January 3, members of the City of Milton Fire Department, along with units from Avalon – Mulat, Bagdad, Skyline, and Pace Fire Departments were dispatched to a reported train derailment from the railroad trestle across Escambia Bay. Extremely dense fog obscured visibility as units assembled and attempted to locate the derailment. After nearly an hour of searching by boat and crews in protective ensemble walking down the tracks, the actual location of the incident was found to be immediately west of Avalon Boulevard, completely obscured by the dense fog. Units relocated to the scene to find six locomotives and thirteen cars scattered around like a child's toys. Although thousands of gallons of mineral oils and bottled wine spilled from damaged cars, no hazardous materials were released to threaten nearby homes. Aggressive efforts by responders prevented the flow of pollutants into adjacent wetlands, and rapid actions by CSX Railroad had the line reopened within 48 hours.

On January 6, 2009, Milton saw one of the largest fires in recent memory – more than likely the largest in nearly a century. Ironically, this fire occurred almost exactly 100 years after the devastating 1909 fire that ultimately prompted the establishment of the City of Milton Fire Department. And this fire started at nearly the same exact spot, and with eerily similar weather conditions, creating a very real potential for a repeat of previous disaster. This fire was first discovered by members of the Santa Rosa Historical Society who observed heavy smoke coming from the adjacent Courthouse Professional Mall.

Dispatched to a “commercial structure fire at Imogene Theatre” at 6:50 pm, the on-duty crew responded, along with Chief Reble and other off-duty personnel, and units from Bagdad, Skyline, and N.A.S. Whiting Field Fire Departments. Engine 23 arrived moments later to find heavy smoke coming from the rear of the building. A strong wind was blowing from the south-southwest, with warnings of strong thunderstorms approaching.

Acting Captain Lee Devine established “Caroline Street Command,” conducted a size-up from three sides (south, west, and north) and observed heavy, wind-driven smoke from the rear of the building but no visible flame. Upon his arrival, Chief Reble was advised of conditions and assumed “Caroline Street Command,” establishing an Incident Command Post at his vehicle, near the corner of Caroline and Willing Streets. Captain Devine was directed to lead an entry team through the main (front) doors in an effort to locate and extinguish the fire. The building owner reported that no one was in the building at the time. As initial attack lines were being deployed, bystanders advised that flames were visible behind (north of) the Imogene Theatre.

After forcing entry through the storefront door, Captain Devine and Firefighter/EMT James Shaw entered and advanced through the central corridor toward the rear of building with the hose line, hand tools, and a thermal imaging camera, encountering relatively light smoke and heat. Bagdad Volunteer Fire Department’s Engine 13 arrived at the front of the building and was assigned as a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT), ready to assist interior crews should they experience difficulty.

Upon reaching the rear of the corridor, the interior crew began to experience substantially increasing heat and observed flames to their rear which were not immediately extinguished with a short hose stream. They began to back out of the building and radioed this information to Command. A partial ceiling collapse occurred both ahead and behind the interior crew, partially blocking their exit from the building. As flames began to roll from the front door in the increasing heavy black smoke, the evacuation signal was sounded, and RIT was activated to assist the interior team in exiting the building. While the interior crew was able to safely exit the building, their hose line had to be abandoned in place and quickly burned through as burning debris fell to the floor and the corridor became an inferno. It was clear that firefighters could not safely operate within this building, meaning that the building of origin could not be saved, and all efforts were thereafter focused on limiting the spread of the fire.

A switch to a defensive strategy was announced, notifying all responders that no one would be permitted to reenter the building of origin, and a second alarm was requested, including additional apparatus from East Milton, Avalon, Pace, Bagdad, and an air truck from Skyline. A collapse zone was established around the building, and Engine 23 was repositioned to the south side of Caroline Street, directly in front of the building of origin. As additional apparatus arrived they were assigned defensive positions in an effort to contain the fire to the building of origin and prevent spread to adjoining buildings. Strong winds fanned the intense flames, driving choking smoke, heat and a constant shower of burning embers toward the north.

The roof of the building of origin quickly began to collapse, resulting in a column of flame that was visible from Interstate 10. As it became obvious that this operation was expanding, the decision was made to close the Blackwater River Bridge and detour all traffic around downtown Milton. The Santa Rosa County Sheriff’s Office and Florida Department of Transportation assisted the Milton Police Department in establishing this nearly 10 mile detour which would remain in place for over 48 hours.

As second alarm apparatus arrived, they were assigned key positions to protect exposures. Wind driven flames rapidly advanced into and throughout the second floor of the building at the corner of Elmira and Caroline Streets. A third alarm was requested, including apparatus from Midway, Munson, Escambia County, and Pensacola Fire Departments.

The fire eventually breached the windows of the Imogene Theatre, and hose lines were advanced into the theater to drive the fire back out. For hours fresh crews were rotated through this position, repeatedly being forced out by wind driven flames and fighting their way back in, until the theater had been saved.

These various operations were quickly exhausting available manpower resources, and a fourth alarm was requested, which brought additional units from Escambia County, Saufley Field, and Allentown Fire Departments. Early in the incident Lifeguard Ambulance established a rehabilitation, or "rehab," area on the courthouse lawn, which they operated throughout the incident to monitor firefighter health and give them a place to cool off and replenish fluids.

After roughly three hours of aggressive firefighting in the face of over 40 knot wind gusts, the spread of the fire was finally stopped and progress was being made toward extinguishing those areas that had been devastated by the fire. Then, shortly after 11:00 pm, a very strong line of thunderstorms arrived, pouring millions of gallons onto the burning rubble, and largely knocking down the main body of fire. The fire was declared "Under Control" at 11:30 pm, although large scale overhaul operations continued for several hours. Shortly after midnight, the long process of demobilizing units was begun. All units, with the exception of Engine 23 were demobilized by 3:00 am on the morning of January 7. Engine 23 remained on scene, watching for hot spots, until incident was terminated at 6:55 pm on January 7, just over 24 hours after the initial call.

In all, over 110 firefighters, from 15 different fire departments in two counties had come together to fight this fire. Fifteen of the City of Milton Fire Department's sixteen personnel responded to this fire. Final damage estimates ranged from \$2 million to \$4 million, including a total loss of the Courthouse Professional Mall. The Imogene Theatre, though suffering fire, smoke and water damage, had sustained no structural damage, and should soon be restored to her original glory.

The operation to fight this fire brought dozens of agencies from several different disciplines together to operate under common direction to accomplish an almost unimaginable goal of stopping what seemed to be an unstoppable fire and preventing the destruction of much of downtown Milton. The conditions faced by these responders could hardly have been worse, but they came together, laying aside all other obstacles, to accomplish the mission laid before them. No lives were lost, and, with two very minor exceptions, no injuries were sustained. This incident proved to be the culmination of many years of training and preparation on the part of the City of Milton Fire Department and the many surrounding agencies that have worked together through the years to raise the level of fire protection to the highest level possible. Despite the tragic losses of this fire, the community was comforted by the realization that the people charged with protecting their lives and property had performed admirably, and had demonstrated that they were, in fact, up to the task.

Five days later, on the evening of January 11, members of the City of Milton Fire Department, along with units from East Milton, Bagdad, Skyline, and Whiting Field Fire Departments, were dispatched to a reported plane crash near the north end of Peter Prince Airfield. The wreckage of a small private aircraft was ultimately located in a cypress swamp near the end of Lakeside Court, on the north side of Wright Basin in East Milton. Available information was sparse and contradictory, but responders used boats to gain access to the wreckage, only to find the cockpit empty, the door open, and the seatbelts unfastened. A subsequent search of the area on land, water, and air by fire departments, law enforcement, and Coast Guard resources proved fruitless. Eventually the truth of the situation became evident, the occupant had bailed out of the aircraft long before it crashed. The scene was turned over to the FAA for investigation, and the pilot was eventually located and arrested near Chattahoochee. It was later determined that he had attempted to fake his death, bailing out near Birmingham and expecting the plane to crash into the Gulf of Mexico. The plane had missed hitting several homes by less than 100 yards.

Subsequent to these three major incidents, the remainder of the year was relatively calm. Although emergency activity actually increased slightly from the prior year, no other working structure fires occurred, no major storms impacted the region, and aside from a “white powder scare” at Santa Rosa Medical Center, no other major emergencies occurred. Despite this relative calm, the total number of emergency calls increased by over 1.5% to 1,572 calls, up from 1,548 the previous year. This increase reflects a slowing in the past few years of the overall 4.3% average annual activity increase over the last 10 years.

In keeping with the long standing trend, Rescue calls this year made up the vast majority of our emergency calls, totaling 1,212 calls, or 77% of our annual emergency activity. Rescue calls include: medical emergencies such as strokes, heart attacks, falls, etc.; all vehicle accidents including those that involve entrapment requiring forcible extrication with specialized hydraulic tools such as the “Jaws of Life”; and rescue calls like a child locked in a vehicle, elderly who have fallen and need help back into bed, and even the occasional animal rescue. In 2009 the department responded to 1,044 medical rescues, 155 vehicle accidents, and 13 other rescue calls.

Fire responses, while a relatively small portion of our total emergency activity, are our primary responsibility, and actually are the segment of our responsibility that requires the greatest resources, in terms of equipment, training and personnel. Although the vast majority of fire related incidents are quickly handled by the on-duty crew, as this year proved, we must always respond with the capacity to bring the full capabilities of the department to bear rapidly to effect rescue, protect exposures, and quickly bring a well-developed working structure fire under control. As we can never know when the next “big one” will occur, we must constantly maintain the readiness necessary to manage that incident. This includes continuous training of personnel and maintenance of vehicles and equipment to ensure that all is ready at a moment’s notice.

This year we responded to 304 fire related calls, including the Caroline Street fire, amounting to 19% of our total responses. These included 16 structure fires, 9 vehicle fires, 4 brush or wildland fires, 209 false alarms or good intent calls, and 66 other fire related calls, such as illegal burning.

Our smallest category of emergency response, hazardous condition calls, make up only 4% of our emergency activity, but represents potentially the most dangerous aspect of our operations to both our members and the public. These include: natural gas incidents; electrical problems such as downed power lines, arcing lines, and transformer fires; fuel leaks and spills, and all other hazardous conditions such as chemical releases, train derailments, building collapse, and terrorist acts. These incidents potentially involve very dangerous agents, present almost endless complexity, and often require responders to begin operations with very little information in a very dynamic environment.

In 2009 the department responded to 56 hazardous condition calls, including 26 natural gas incidents, 12 electrical incidents, 9 fuel leaks or spills, and 9 other hazardous condition calls, including the train derailment in January, and a “white powder scare” at Santa Rosa Medical Center on September 8. This latter incident involved an individual who presented himself at the Emergency Room (ER) complaining of exposure to a “white powder” from a package he had received in the mail. As is so often the case with this type of incident, accurate information was inadvertently “enhanced” as it passed through the chain of involved parties, and our department was dispatched to a hazardous material release involving an individual “covered with white powder” and arrived to find the Emergency Department locked down and the hospital’s decontamination facilities being set up. Initial operations were set up to manage the exposure and to provide care for those exposed, as well as others who might arrive with unrelated emergencies, unaware that the ER was closed. It was soon determined, however, that the individual was not actually contaminated and operations were quickly returned to normal. While this incident was essentially a non-event, it did provide an excellent opportunity for joint training and review of the respective policies of all agencies involved.

MUTUAL AID

Maintenance of an effective mutual aid agreement is a crucial element in our overall ability to meet the needs of our citizens. While we are able to manage the vast majority of emergency calls with on-duty personnel, supplemented when needed by the recall of off-duty personnel, incidents arise wherein the resources of the City of Milton Fire Department alone are not sufficient to manage the situation. Whether due to the number of concurrent calls, or the scale of the incident, in these situations we must call on the support of surrounding fire departments to develop a coordinated response structure. This was the case in each of the three major incidents in January, although two of the three were not within the city limits, our department provided mutual aid to the respective departments. In the case of the Caroline Street fire, in addition to our full staff, our department received assistance from roughly 90 firefighters from 14 separate fire departments in two counties. Without the support of these agencies the damage from this fire would have been far worse, on a scale with the 1909 fire. The City of Milton Fire Department is very pleased with the operation of the current mutual aid policy.

During calendar year 2009 the department provided mutual aid to other departments on 39 occasions, and received mutual aid on 21 occasions, amounting to 2.5% and 1.3% of total calls, respectively. Both decreased from the 2008 totals of 47 given and 22 received.

NEW FIRE STATION

After years of planning and preparation, the City of Milton Fire Department this year made the single greatest improvement to department operations in many years with the completion of the new headquarters fire station. Dedication was held on Friday, September 11, 2009 and all department operations relocated to the new building the following Monday. This new 16,295 square foot facility features five bunk rooms, with an ultimate capacity to house 27 officers and firefighters, four large drive-thru bays, administrative offices, classroom, and ample storage space, to serve as the department's headquarters for many years into the future. This new station will be able to accommodate anticipated staffing increases and house new, larger apparatus, to include an aerial (ladder truck). The facility also provides a safe base of operations during hurricanes, eliminating the need to disperse resources throughout the city as in past storms.

The construction was managed by city staff, allowing for the greatest possible economy while still producing a very sound, attractive facility. Whenever possible, city employees performed the work, including installation of utilities, site grading, landscaping, etc. Trees and shrubs were donated and installed by Green Up Santa Rosa. The flagpole and flag were donated by Woodman of the World. A memorial statue and bench were donated by Affordable Art with support from West Florida Trophies. Through effective management of each step of the process, the city was able to complete this project for a total cost of \$ 1,800,00.00, or roughly \$110.00 per square foot. This is almost unprecedented for commercial construction today. Despite the frugal approach, the building stands as one of the city's most attractive and functional facilities.

This building was designed entirely by the members of the City of Milton Fire Department, and reflects many the best practices in fire station design and construction, including many very unique training features. Over the past several years, members of the department have toured other fire stations throughout the region, asking what features were least liked or most appreciated. Whenever possible, the best features have been incorporated into this facility, along with several innovations thought up by members of the department. These include: a specially constructed gear room with climate control and motion sensor lighting to extend the life of personal protective equipment; additional space between apparatus bays to allow for equipment storage and access to apparatus; an integrated Decon room to provide an OSHA compliant area for decontamination of personnel and gear; separate installation of breathing air compressor in an exterior equipment room to reduce heat and noise at the fill station in the gear room; floor level lighting in corridors to provide safe travel to apparatus bays at night; automatic lighting in bunkrooms tied to an alert system; an automatic gas shutoff to stove and grill tied to alert system; first and second story window openings for ladder, rescue and forcible entry training; and, a manhole opening cast into mezzanine floor allowing the use of the equipment room for confined space entry/rescue training.

NEW EQUIPMENT

The department was thrilled in December of 2008 to receive the donation of 17-foot Boston Whaler Guardian center-console rescue boat, with a 90 horsepower Johnson outboard motor, trailer, and all equipment. With minimal expenditure, this vessel was refurbished, outfitted, and placed in service as Marine 23 in March of 2009, giving the department excellent water rescue capability on the Blackwater River. This donation was quite advantageous, as the department's former rescue boat had succumb to age and the elements, and had been removed from service the previous year. This new boat can be deployed and operational on the water within ten minutes of an emergency call. Already this past year the department has performed two separate rescues with this vessel.

Concurrent with the construction of the new fire department, the department purchased a new Bauer 6,000 psi breathing air compressor with a two-bottle fill station. This system replaces the 30-40 year old Eagle 2,216 psi system at the old fire station. The new system incorporates all of the currently required safety features, such as Carbon Monoxide sensors and air purification systems, and has ample capacity to fill all of the department's breathing apparatus. Prior to the installation of this system, we were unable to fill our own air cylinders to capacity from our own cascade, and were required to get air from other fire departments in order to fill our cylinders. This was a very cumbersome process and greatly delayed our ability to restore apparatus to service following an emergency call. With the new system we can maintain our equipment immediately upon return from a call.

Recognizing the department's need for a more practical fire simulator for use with fire extinguisher training, the members of B-shift gathered materials, including an old beer keg, to assemble a device they call the "Keg-o-rator." The top of the keg was removed, and a burner assembly was constructed and installed at the bottom of the keg. This burner is connected through a flexible hose with a control valve to a LP gas cylinder. The keg is filled with water, the cylinder turned on, and gas ignited as it bubbles to the surface of the water. This creates a very effective fire within the top of the keg that mimics a fire in a flammable liquid. The fire remains safely contained within the keg and the intensity of the flame can be easily controlled and quickly shutoff by a firefighter operating the control valve. This device provides a very safe, effective, and environmentally friendly way to provide effective fire extinguisher training.

OTHER ADVANCEMENTS

With the retirement of Lieutenant Gary Williams and Captain Alan Lowery in 2008, the department entered 2009 with three officers serving in an interim or acting capacity, pending the completion of the lengthy promotional processes for each position. Given that the outcome of the Captain's Examination process would determine the number of Lieutenant's openings, the Captain's Examination process was initiated first. This process includes a written examination, a practical assessment, and assigns points for seniority and education. In order to be eligible to test, a candidate must have been a member of the department for not less than six years, be a Certified EMT, and maintain satisfactory ratings on their regular performance evaluations. The entire process is established and described in detail in Article 35 of the Contract Agreement between the City of Milton and the Milton Professional Firefighters, Local 2944 I.A.F.F.

Seven candidates were eligible and competed for the single vacant position. After the required 60-day posting of reference materials, the written examination was administered on May 28. The practical assessment was conducted the following day and was administered by Fire Chief Reble, Station Chief Frank Jones from the Fire Department aboard NAS Whiting Field, and Fire Chief Brian Coley of the Defuniak Springs Fire Department. Three candidates achieved a passing score through the process, and obtained ranking on the resulting promotional roster. Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Lee Devine, having attained the highest score, was promoted and sworn in before the City Council on Tuesday, June 9, 2009.

A similar process was then begun to fill the resulting two vacant Lieutenant positions. While the process is very similar to the Captain's Examination, the Lieutenants Examination places a greater emphasis on driving and operating fire apparatus, and includes a driving and pump operations element on the practical assessment. The written exam was administered on November 5 and the practical exam the following day, by Chief Reble and Captains Vinson, Hutchinson, and Devine. Five members were eligible and competed for the two vacant positions. Two candidates, Firefighter/EMT Jim Custred and Firefighter/EMT (Acting Lieutenant) Randy Hendrix achieved a passing score and were promoted and sworn in before the City Council on Tuesday, November 10, 2009. The department entered into a new year with all positions filled and with well qualified officers at each level.

Concurrent with the move to the new fire station, the department was privileged to be able to staff a Receptionist position to answer phones, greet guest from the new fire department lobby, and handle routine filing and clerical functions. Through the NCBA Senior Employment Program, a federally funded program that provides workforce reentry training for seniors, we have been able to place two individuals in a 20-hour per week, part time position that allows us provide full time coverage for the front desk at no cost to the city. NCBA staff has been pleased to have the opportunity to place clients with us, and we receive the services of two very capable and enthusiastic individuals who have become an important part of our department.

TRAINING

As always, training remains a vital part of the fire department's normal activity. With the wide array of situations to which the department is called to respond, it is imperative that all members of the department remain current and proficient in all areas of firefighting, basic life support, technical rescue, hazardous materials, etc. In accordance with the department's annual training calendar, each member undergoes a minimum of 20 hours of in-service training each month. In addition to this company training, many members have participated in additional specialized training. All members of the department received recertification in CPR and First Responder or EMT as applicable.

Chief Reble, who serves as the City's Director of Emergency Preparedness and serves on two Regional Type III Incident Management Teams (IMT), attended a series of Position Specific IMT Courses conducted by the Florida Department of Emergency Management in conjunction with the Florida Division of Forestry. First among these was Incident Commander held May 18-22 at the Florida Center for Wildland Fire and Resource Management Training in Brooksville, Florida. The next class was Operations Section Chief, held June 15-18 in Brooksville, followed by Liaison Officer held August 20-21, also in Brooksville. Chief Reble is now certified in each position held, and has gained valuable knowledge through each of these classes.

Chief Reble also attended a *Rail Car Incident Response* course held March 13 at the Santa Rosa County Emergency Operations Center, *S-215 Fire Operations in the Urban Interface*, held April 7 – 9 at Blackwater Forestry Center, *NWCG S-130 / S-190 Train-the-Trainer*, held at Bear Lake Recreation Area, and *NFPA 1851 Advanced Cleaning and Advanced Inspection of Protective Ensembles for Fire Fighting* presented by Globe Manufacturing Company, held September 21 at Pace Fire Department. Captain Keith Vinson, the department's Uniform Officer, also attended this last course. Captain Vinson, who also serves as the City's primary Liaison to the Santa Rosa County Emergency Operations Center during emergencies, attended EOC training there in June.

Through a cooperative relationship with the United State Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 01-08 in Milton, in which Chief Reble serves as Public Affairs Officer, the Flotilla offered *About Boating Safely*, their nationally recognized boater safety course, to all members of the fire department. The availability of this course greatly improves the overall safety and competency of the department in waterborne operations.

On February 21 and 22 the Santa Rosa County Firefighters Association, in conjunction with the Florida Division of Forestry, held the 2009 Blackwater Wildland Fire Conference at Pensacola Junior College Milton Campus. Many different classes were offered during the course of this weekend even, including I-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents. Captain Lee Devine, Lieutenant Jim Custred, Firefighter Stephen Steele, and Firefighter Peyton Blacklege attended this 16-hour course. During this conference, Chief Reble attended *Wildland Medical Emergencies*, *Introduction to Fire Weather*, *Structure Protection in the Wildland Urban Interface*, *Wildland Engine Operations*, *L-180 Human Factors on the Fireline*, *RT-130 Annual Fireline Refresher Training*.

During the year, several members obtained College Degrees or advanced certifications. Lieutenant Jim Custred attended a *Fire Service Course Delivery* class and obtained his Fire Service Instructor and Fire Officer 1 Certification and an AAS Degree in Fire Science. Firefighter/EMT Geoffrey Freeman attended *Fire Chemistry, Fire Cause and Origin, Fire Service Company Officer, Private Fire Protection Systems, Ethical & Legal Issues for the Fire Service, Building Construction for the Fire Service, Fire Service Course Delivery, and Fire Service Pump Operator* classes, and obtained his Fire Service Instructor and Fire Officer 1 Certification and an AAS Degree in Fire Science. Firefighters Ben Stockdale and Steve Maddox both obtained certification as Emergency Medical Technicians.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

While internal training is a crucial element of department operations, external public education remains a very important element of the department's overall fire prevention program. The department operates with a stated goal to, "Put ourselves out of business through fire prevention and public education." While a lofty goal indeed, the department does consistently see a positive impact from their efforts toward educating the public. The department attempts to offer a diversified public education program in an effort to reach all age groups throughout the community. Fire Prevention is taught through school programs, station tours, fire drills, fire extinguisher demonstrations, fire prevention classes, informational displays, and our Fire Safety Puppet Show. During 2009 the fire department conducted 8 school classes, reaching 248 students, 8 fire extinguisher classes, reaching 230 persons, 6 fire drills, reaching 1,230 students, and 8 other programs, reaching 485 people, for a total of 30 programs reaching 2,193 people.

Among these programs were: *Fire Extinguisher Selection and Use* classes held for Santa Rosa Health and Rehab, Covenant Hospice, and Santa Rosa County School System Food Service Employees; *Marine Fire Safety* conducted for USCG Auxiliary Flotilla 1-8, USCG Auxiliary Division 1, and the United States Navy Sea Cadet program; our *Fire Safety Puppet Show* at the annual Public Safety Night aboard Navy Housing Whiting Pines and at the Christmas with a Firefighter at the new fire station; regular fire drills at T.R. Jackson Pre-K; and Career Day at W.H. Rhodes Elementary School. Station Tours, which were once a major portion of our public education program, had been almost entirely curtailed due to the condition of the old fire station. With the occupancy of the new facility, with full handicap accessibility, we hope to resume a regular program of station tours and again make this a vital part of our program.

The department also provides Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Classes to target groups and the public. Through the departments Training Center, headed by Lieutenant Randy Hendrix, 120 individuals were taught CPR and/or First Aid. With the new classroom facility in the new fire station, we hope to increase this program to offer a regular schedule of public classes, and again offer the program to all city employees.

FIRE PREVENTION AND LIFE SAFETY

The City of Milton Fire Department is also responsible for enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code and Life Safety Code. Chief Reble serves as Life Safety Officer and Fire Official for the City of Milton. With the slow economy, development, and the resulting demand for inspections of new construction and new business has dropped off considerably. In 2009 Chief Reble conducted 48 Life Safety Inspections, 23 follow-up Inspections, 38 construction related inspections, 6 pre-plan inspections, and 32 plan reviews, totaling 147 inspections and reviews.

INTO THE FUTURE

Despite having been put to the test in one of the toughest ways imaginable, the City of Milton Fire Department has come through 2009 in a strong position, confident of their ability to meet the demands of serving the residents of Milton. The three major incidents at the beginning of the year have proven our ability to handle “the big one.” The new fire station facility provides the resources that the department will need to sustain their high level of service for many years to come. While the department must look to replace Engine 23, our 12 year old first-due pumper, with a combination ladder/pumper unit (Quint), and Rescue 23, our 9 year old first-due rescue vehicle, we find ourselves generally well equipped to meet the continued demands of protecting the lives and property of our citizens well into the future.