

## **ANNUAL REPORT - 2008**

### **WALLINGFORD FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU**

**The following information was compiled by the staff of the Wallingford Fire Prevention Bureau to present an overview of the responsibilities and accomplishments during calendar year 2008.**

#### **Presented by:**

**\*Fire Marshal Joseph P. Micalizzi Jr.**

**\*Fire Inspector Brian R. Schock**

**\*Fire Inspector John J. Andrews**

**\*Senior Clerk Laura Watson**

**\*Clerical Assistant Joyce Fretts**

**WALLINGFORD FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU**

**MISSION**  
**STATEMENT**

**TO ACTIVELY PURSUE THE HIGHEST**  
**STANDARDS OF LIFE SAFETY**  
**WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**  
**THROUGH EDUCATION, INVESTIGATION,**  
**AND ENFORCEMENT**

## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

In 2008, this office performed *1,412* various types of inspections and activities. With the use of our Firehouse software, we will try to give an overview of these activities.

Although we have tracked *1,412 inspections* through the “Firehouse ©” inspection program, this figure does not reflect all the meetings, preliminary plan reviews, preconstruction conferences, zoning approvals, training activities, walkthroughs, open burning permits, blasting permits, and many more various activities and duties performed by this office that can’t be tracked or recorded in “Firehouse”.

**Personnel:** The Fire Prevention Bureau is fully staffed with 3 state certified members; two Fire Inspectors and one Fire Marshal, 1 full time Senior Clerk, and 1 part time Clerical Assistant. In September of 2008 Fire Inspector Gudelski transferred to the Fire Department, leaving this office 1 Inspector short of authorized manpower. In September Firefighter John Andrews began his certification training as the new Fire Inspector and is currently a Code Inspector and will continue his certification training as a Fire Investigator and is expected to be fully certified by April of 2009.

**Deputy Fire Marshal:** This position has remained vacant since 2002. During fiscal year 2009-2010 I would like to promote one Fire Inspector position to a Deputy Fire Marshal position. The Deputy Fire Marshal position is key in the operation of this office. It will help reestablish a career ladder for promotion and will have duties and responsibilities of a more complex nature and will be able to run the office in my absence. A savings will be realized in as much as the Town will not have to pay acting pay in my absence. Funding will be relatively inexpensive. I estimate that a payroll increase of \$900.00 would be the 2009-2010 cost, provided that the position is deferred until January, 2010. I am presently consulting with the Personnel Director as to the feasibility of promoting to this position without the need of expanding our table of organization, which would be cost prohibitive.

**Vehicles:** This department is in dire need of a vehicle replacement. A 1995 Chevy Lumina is unreliable and cost prohibitive to keep operating. The electrical system on this vehicle continues to keep failing and has stranded the inspector on the road and in the office on more than several occasions. Fiscal year 2008-2009 was targeted for the sixth and final year of our six year vehicle replacement plan, but after budget cutbacks it left us without a replacement vehicle. This office will request a capital expense this fiscal year for replacement of this vehicle.

**Inspections and activities:** The following pages will illustrate the amount of activities performed by this office throughout calendar year 2008.

## **PLAN REVIEW AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

The Plan review process is the foundation for all new construction projects and insures that both new construction and existing building renovations meet all applicable fire and life safety codes. This is also a necessary process in approving fire code violation corrections to insure they meet the code when corrections require alteration or construction to buildings. In the year 2008, the Fire Marshal performed **92 inspections for certificates of occupancy** and **202 plan reviews** for new and existing buildings comprising of thousands of pages of plans examined, site plans, and many meetings and consultations with contractors, developers, architects and engineers.

## **INSPECTION AND ABATEMENT**

In 2008, the Fire Prevention Bureau conducted a **Target Hazard Inspection Program** to help identify the most likely properties that sustain the highest rate of civilian deaths and injuries due to fire. In 2008 this office performed **752 building inspections**. Unfortunately, from time to time it becomes necessary for this office to write **Administrative Search Warrants** and **Arrest Warrants** for owners of properties that are uncooperative or non-compliant. These warrants are required by state statutes and policy guidelines as outlined by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and State Prosecutors Office. This is a very time consuming and demanding process for our staff and resources.

This office continues to do permitting and licensing inspections for various other types of occupancies as required and requested during the target hazard inspection program. This year we performed **235 permit inspections**. Complaints from the public and referrals from other agencies and departments are continuously handled on a daily basis.

## **FIRE INVESTIGATIONS**

The Fire Prevention Bureau conducted **30 fire investigations** during calendar year 2008, **17** of which were accidental, **5** incendiary, and **8** undetermined.

State statutes require that the Fire Marshal or his designee conduct investigations to determine the origin, cause, and circumstances of all fires within his jurisdiction. Although some fires are determined by the Fire Department Officer on scene when the cause is apparent, it becomes necessary to call in state certified investigators when the origin and cause is not easily determined or when the fire appears to be suspicious in nature. All members of the Fire Prevention Bureau are state certified as experts in the field of fire origin and cause determination. We also have the resources and training to coordinate with other investigative agencies such as the Wallingford Police Department, Office of State Fire Marshal Investigations Division, State Canine Accelerant Detection Unit, and Connecticut State Forensic Laboratory.

## **PUBLIC FIRE EDUCATION**

Efforts to educate the public and make the citizens and visitors of Wallingford more aware of the dangers of fire in an effort to reduce injuries and property loss are paramount. This office alone can not provide the manpower and hours needed to educate the public without the cooperation of the Wallingford Fire Department. This office coordinates training and public presentations hand in hand with the Fire Department. Our inspectors provide training materials and audio and visual aids as well as giving ***Fire Prevention presentations*** when our office hours permit. Some of the services this office has provided to the general public in 2008 include:

- ✓ In service training for local health care agencies, municipal departments, civic organizations, and local businesses.
- ✓ Juvenile Firesetter program.
- ✓ Production of public safety announcements on local government television.
- ✓ Safety displays and fire prevention materials at town events.
- ✓ Fire Prevention poster contest for all 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- ✓ “Smoke Detectors Save Lives” banners displayed on firehouses and public buildings.

## **PERMITS**

Permits are issued to various agencies and commercial farms on basis of individual need. ***Open Burning Permits*** for vegetation management are issued to monitor fire safety conditions and air quality compliance. ***Blasting permits*** are issued to certified contractors where applicable for development of construction sites and the installation of utilities. ***Pyrotechnic permits*** are also issued for all special events and fire works displays in the public and private sectors. The Fire Marshal monitors and issues these permits. At times, it is necessary to schedule overtime assignments to monitor compliance with the Connecticut Fire Safety Code as required by state regulations.

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

The enforcement of hazardous materials regulations fall under the auspices of the Fire Prevention Bureau. Inspections and safety meetings are conducted with our local industries to help ensure that adequate levels of safety are met. The Fire Prevention Bureau correlates, verifies, and distributes this information to the Fire Department for the protection of emergency response personnel and the general public. The Fire Prevention Bureau conducted ***101 Hazardous Material*** inspections in 2008.

The Fire Prevention Bureau conducts on site inspections of all ***underground and aboveground flammable and combustible liquid storage tank*** installations, certifications, abandonment and removals. The purpose of the inspections is to help ensure that applicable installation and maintenance standards are met. This office also inspects fuel oil delivery trucks and propane tank trucks as required

### **OUTDOOR AMUSEMENTS AND TENTS**

Inspections of outdoor assembly events including carnivals, outdoor amusements, open air tents and special events such as the Celebrate Wallingford are conducted with the State Fire Marshal and local building officials. The moderate summer season highlights these activities and approximately ***40 tents and events*** were inspected.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

State Certified Fire Marshal Personnel assigned to the Fire Prevention Bureau are required to maintain a high skill proficiency level. Each certified member is required to achieve a state mandated ***90 hours*** of continuing education within a three-year cycle. The required training helps us stay abreast of a dynamic and constantly changing public safety environment. This year, as with years in the past, all members of the Fire Prevention Bureau have met their training obligations in a professional manner and are current on the latest information available. Also, outside training and seminars, as well as professional organizational meetings are an integral part of networking and staying abreast of ongoing changes in codes and legislation.

*The Wallingford Fire Prevention Bureau will continue to monitor and assess the needs of our community to deliver services and public safety to our towns' residents, visitors and business community.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph P. Micalizzi, Jr., Fire Marshal - Wallingford Fire Prevention Bureau  
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**End of report**

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