

## HISTORY OF THE SUMMERFIELD FIRE DISTRICT

The Summerfield Fire District was formed after many discussions around the community starting about 1950 by a group of men that felt the community needed fire protection. Most of these discussions happened in the community stores like Gordon's Hardware and as the group and interest grew, the meetings began to be held in a meeting hall over Baynes Grocery which is now the Summerfield Town Hall. The group applied to the North Carolina Secretary of State to grant them a charter to operate a non-profit fire department, it was granted effective May 31, 1951. When the charter was applied for, a fire engine was on order from Barton American in Charlotte, NC. The exact date it was received and put into operation is not known but the firemen had already begun to prepare for its arrival. George Price was selected as the first Fire Chief, a position that he held for the next 36 years. Marion Ayers was selected as the first Board of Directors President. When the engine was first received there was not a station for it so Gordon Proctor housed it in his Texaco service station/ Western Auto building where Rose's Day Care is currently located. Later George Price kept it for a short while in Simpson's Garage (location of the new office building being built on Summerfield Rd) where he was employed until the station was completed. Harold Decker and volunteer helpers built a two bay station to house the engine and later a tanker that was built from a donated delivery truck that the box body was removed and replaced with a 1500 gallon tank.

In 1954 after a hard fight the community agreed to be taxed to support the fire department. In 1956 an addition was added to the two bays that provided space for a kitchen, a training room, bathroom and a radio room with 2 bunks for firemen staying overnight. The addition also included an upstairs 2 bedroom apartment for a fireman and his family to stay and man the phone at night. This was crucial because the district received their own emergency calls and alerted firemen by a phone relay and sounding the station siren. In the mid 1960's the Board of Directors and firemen began to work towards getting the department rated by the NC Department of Insurance so residents would be eligible for discounts on their fire insurance. It was determined that the district was too large to protect from 1 station so in order to continue to offer protection to everyone it had been serving it was determined that a second station was needed. Land was acquired at the intersection of Scalesville and Lake Brandt Roads. The station was completed and occupied in 1968 with the original engine being located there after being replaced by a new engine at the original station. Another addition of 2 more bays was added to the original station and additional equipment was acquired. The department's first brush truck was a military surplus M37 jeep truck with a metal septic tank mounted

in the bed and had a small gasoline pump to fight the fires. The septic tank came from Sears (and who said that Sears didn't have everything, they did at least in those days) and was lined with an asphalt type lining that gave us a hard time but it served a purpose for a long time. It was replaced with a home built squad truck. The squad truck was designed by Chief George Price and Asst. Chief Dewey Trogdon. The chassis, a service body and pump was ordered and assembled by George, Dewey, Robert Southard and Jack Winfree with some professional help by Ford Body Company in Greensboro. It was one of the first trucks of its type in Guilford County.

In 1980, Guilford County expanded its emergency medical services to include paramedic units around the county. Summerfield was proud to house the first of these units, Medic 1. Now several of these units are located around the county, staffed by Guilford County Emergency Medical Services personnel.

The 1980's were a time of growth for the fire district. Small portions of Rockingham County were added, allowing for the establishment of a mutual aid agreement between the two counties, which still exists today. The first rookie school for the district was also conducted during these years, adding several firefighters, including the first female firefighter for the district. In 1987, after 36 years of service, Chief George Price announced his retirement. His son, Kenneth Price, served as interim Chief until Chief Frederick "Rick" Hall was hired in August 1987. He was the first paid Chief of Summerfield Fire District. Under Chief Hall, the department saw continued growth. May 6, 1990 Summerfield opened a new Station across the street from the original one on Summerfield Road.

September 2000, Summerfield Fire District hired its 3rd Chief. Chief Ricky Boykin joined the district and the community after serving at Wake forest Fire Department. On July 1, 2002 Battleground Fire Department chose to merge with Summerfield after their district had been reduced to such a small area by annexations by Greensboro that could not stay in operation. This merger was rather unique in that as far as anyone knows it was the first merger between two non-municipal fire districts in Guilford County. They provided 2 engine/tankers, 1 squad truck, 1 rescue truck, 1 pickup and other valuable equipment. They also had some accumulated funds that were used as seed money to build a new station at 6214 Lake Brandt Rd. They did not own the station they were housed in plus it was in the city limits so it was necessary to relocate the station. That station was officially opened on May 16, 2004.

In 1992 the district received its first ISO rating of Class 7. The rating reflects the readiness of the department to serve the community and results in reductions in fire insurance for the property in the district. The rating number is like a golf score from 9 down to 1, thus the lower the number the better the rating. Since then work has been on going to improve this rating and we successfully lowered it to a Class 6 in 2002. Water availability or the lack of it weighs heavily on the score and since receiving our Class 6 rating a new 3500 gallon tanker truck has been purchased to improve our on scene water capacity and should help us score additional points on the next inspection, also the new station on Lake Brandt Rd will help.

Each Monday night the volunteers gather for training exercises and classes. In addition to this scheduled training, firefighters frequently attend outside training schools and conferences. Volunteers are required to complete at least 80 hours of training a year, but most exceed this minimum. Each year those firefighters that exceed expectations are recognized with awards at the Annual Business Meeting. Today the department employs a full time Chief, staff aid, 15 full time fire fighters, 21 full time after January, 10 part-time firefighters and 40 volunteers. The fleet now consists of 3 engines, 4 tankers, 1 brush truck, 1 rescue pumper, 1 squad/brush truck, 1 boat, 1 utility pickup and 1 command vehicle.

We pride ourselves as being a forward thinking and innovative fire department that is constantly looking for better ways to serve our community. Besides our strong in house training program we participate in various outside training with our neighboring districts and the City of Greensboro. We strongly support outside training by sending our recruits to GTCC for the Fire Academy and more other firefighters to schools on the local, state and national level. Another valuable asset for us has been the availability of abandoned structures to use to better train our firefighters to fight the real fires and reduce the damage that occurs when fire strikes.

We always welcome those that would like to come and be a part of YOUR fire department as a volunteer.