

# **BLUE ROCK REGIONAL FIRE DISTRICT**

**26 East Charlotte St.  
Millersville, Pa 17551**

## **2013 Year End Report**



**Duane E. Hagelgans  
Fire Commissioner**

**Ann Harach  
Administrator**

# **BLUE ROCK REGIONAL FIRE DISTRICT**

**26 East Charlotte St.  
Millersville, Pa 17551  
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania  
(717) 872-9345 extension 0**

## **Blue Rock Regional Fire District Executive Summary 2013**

This executive summary has been prepared to provide an overview of the activities for Blue Rock Regional Fire District for 2013. An overview of the services, training preparation and community involvement will be provided along with a financial synopsis. This overview is intended to provide an understanding of the organizational achievements for 2013 and the future direction.

Blue Rock Regional Fire District is an all-volunteer organization, currently staffed by approximately 130 members, which serves a 55 square mile area that encompasses Manor Township and Millersville Borough with a population of approximately 28,500 residents, plus approximately 8000 staff, faculty and students at Millersville University. The volunteers are supported by two part-time paid staff, a fire commissioner and administrator.

Blue Rock Fire Rescue continually strives to maintain positive relationships with the community, elected officials and outside agencies. Mutual aid is provided to all neighboring districts and we participate in the Lancaster County Rescue Task Force. Additionally, The Blue Rock Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is dedicated to enhancing public safety by improving the community's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all emergencies, disasters, and threats.

Our motto: *One team, One mission, Moving forward.*

### **Fire and Rescue Operations**

With the creation of the Blue Rock Regional Fire District in 2011, and the subsequent consolidation of the four former volunteer fire companies into the new Blue Rock Fire Rescue in 2012, there were several key factors. First, the volunteers will no longer do fundraising, which lessens the time burden on the volunteers. Second, by consolidating, the incident response volume is shared by the four stations and fewer vehicles due to this new collaborative effort which ultimately results in a direct cost savings.

In 2013, Blue Rock Fire Rescue handled a record number of calls with its all-volunteer membership. In addition, Blue Rock Fire Rescue and its diverse community and special operations capabilities offer both challenges and opportunities for the membership, while using this wide array of specialties to attract new membership.

The following bullet points give an overview of some of the activities of Blue Rock Fire Rescue:

*Call volume:*

- Total calls for the 2013 year – 1,239
- Dwelling fires - 7
- Millersville University - 229
- Quick Response Service calls - 1208
- Water Rescue calls – 23
- Lancaster County Rescue Task Force calls – 8

*Training:*

- Total company wide training hours - 4,212 hours
- Members participated in 3,097 hours of outside training in areas such as NIMS, water rescue, truck company operations and instructor courses.
- A total of 77 people attended outside training for an average of 40.22 hours per person.
- 67 members participated in 1,115 hours of in-house company training.
- Individuals with the most training hours: Nick Oakes – 251 hours, Troy Bolin - 232 hours and Dan Bezek – 228 hours.
- Increase in the number of individuals that participated in training in 2013 vs. 2012.

*Membership:*

- Current membership totals 132 members participating at four different locations within the district.
- Continue to be coordinating agency for the Lancaster County Rescue Task Force.
- Continue to be a cooperating agency with Keystone Wildfire Crew
- Participating agency with South Central Task Force for multi-county operations

*Recruiting and Retention:*

- Recruited 12 new members during the 2013 year
- Increase recruiting of junior members
- National Night Out
- Smoke detector magnets
- Flyers and other promotional information
- Created a fun committee to bring unity and camaraderie to the group
- Attended public events to recruit new members
- Active recruiting at Millersville University

*Public Education and Community Service:*

- Attended community events such as the Millersville Business Expo
- Attended events at Millersville University (Wellness and housing fair)
- Fire extinguisher training
- Pre-school presentations
- Elementary presentations
- Annual Penn Manor Cat in the Hat Read-A-Thon
- Smoke detector checks and installations
- High-visibility address signs installed at residences
- Annual Millersville Parade
- Deliver Santa and Mrs. Claus to tree lighting
- Assist with Greiner Park summer camp programs

## **Blue Rock Emergency Management Agency**

Blue Rock EMA is a multi-jurisdictional emergency management agency comprised of personnel from Blue Rock Fire Rescue (BRFR), Manor Township, Millersville Borough, Manor Township Police, Millersville Borough Police, Millersville University, Millersville University Police, Penn Manor School District, and community members.

In 2013 Blue Rock EMA began a complete overhaul of the previous Emergency Operations Plans for the district. This project was supported by a grant from Millersville University. Blue Rock EMA continues to work on updates to technology and training for its membership and mission.

- New website creation <http://brema.weebly.com/>
- Combined and updated Emergency Operations Plan is nearing completion.
- Several activations of the Emergency Operations Center for weather related events.
- Currently seeking participation from community members and Millersville University students with Community Emergency Response Team, CERT, training.

## **Budget Overview**

The Blue Rock Regional Fire District is the umbrella for Blue Rock Fire Rescue, Blue Rock Relief Association, Blue Rock Support Group and Blue Rock Emergency Management Agency. Budget funding comes from municipal funding, state foreign fire tax monies, grants, donations, rental of a cell tower space and limited fundraising by the Blue Rock Support Group.

The Blue Rock Support Group is comprised of members who have as their sole mission the raising of funds to support the membership of Blue Rock Fire Rescue. Support Group funds are

not used for the operating budget of the District, but as a means to supply items for the membership that the District budget cannot fund. The support group operates the annual Tomato Festival and Bingo. The support group is the sole source of funding for the annual Blue Rock membership banquet, and additionally has made some purchases for the membership such as apparel and radio holders.

Manor Township and Millersville borough fund the District's operating and capital budget on a percentage basis that is determined by assessed property value. In addition, the District received fifty-eight thousand dollars in donations from various non-profits and individual donors, fifty-three thousand dollars in grants and one hundred and ninety-two thousand dollars in foreign fire tax monies from the state.

In 2013, the amount was reduced to nine hundred and sixty-seven thousand, seven hundred and five dollars, which is thirty thousand dollars less than the 2012 budget. When the District was first created, an operating agreement with the Blue Rock Fire Rescue was initiated. As part of this agreement, the District was given ownership of all property, equipment and assets and agreed to one hundred percent fund the Fire Rescue. Along with the assets, the District took over nearly one million dollars in debt services. In the initial District budget, it was determined that in addition to funding an operating budget, that the District would also fund a capital budget for future replacement cost for vehicles, and large building projects and repairs. During fiscal year 2012 and 2013, the capital budget money was to be used to fund radios under the new county radio system. The District board decided that in 2014, capital budget money would start to accumulate for other major purchases. This decision was made as a determination that it would be better to save and pay for major purchases in the future master plan with money from a capital budget then to take out large loans when purchases are required.

In 2013, due to upgrades needed for the new county radio system, the District negotiated a new tower contract with Lancaster County. This new contract will pay the District additional rent money over the next twenty-nine years and also will supply the District with the radios that would have been purchased in 2013 with capital money. This contract has allowed the capital money to stay in the account and begin to increase for future purchases.

In 2012, the first District budget year, the year ended with a surplus. Some of this surplus was put into the capital budget account, and some was used to pay down a high interest loan that the District acquired as part of the Fire Rescue debt services. In 2013, the District again came in under budget by one hundred and eighty-thousand dollars. Much of this savings was due to conservative financial practices, and extremely good winter weather which minimized the cost of utilities. The District did however see several line items go over budget, insurance, vehicle maintenance and station maintenance. Insurance continues to escalate due to changes in the state workers' compensation law, a change that has seen insurance cost more than triple in less than a year. In addition to the savings in the operating budget, due to the new county contract, the

District did not need to expend any capital budget money on radios, a savings of nearly one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The District received a fifty-three thousand dollar state grant for the purchase of new technology, computers and modems for fourteen front line vehicles to assist with fire operations. There were no other major purchases in 2013.

The District board has taken an aggressive approach to debt services. The District initially acquired eight loans for various vehicles and buildings. All but one of these loans are low interest state loans. One loan was a high interest loan of over five hundred thousand dollars for a vehicle purchased prior to the consolidation. This loan was a ten year loan, with annual payments accounting for fifty percent of the annual debt services. The District board has taken money saved in other operating areas and applied this to this high interest loan. If through good fiscal practices and potentially reducing cost to both building and vehicle maintenance in 2014, the goal is to have this ten year loan paid off in 2014, after only three years.

The District had an initial five year plan to create a working budget. The consolidation of bills and expenses added to the rising costs of insurance and maintenance costs has made the budgetary process a challenge. However, with two years of data, and some shifting of line items from budget item to budget item, the District is hoping to have solid information by the end of the 2014 budget year that will shape all future budgets and more accurately reflect the actual costs of service.

## 2014

Our 2014 year has begun with the company membership creating goals for the year that include:

- Increasing membership in all areas by thirty members (Juniors, community members, support)
- Persisting with maintaining a high level of training both in-house and inter-agency
- Delivering dependable response to the community and mutual aid partners

We seek to enhance our relationships with other outside agencies by attending training with neighboring companies and continued work with the South Central Task Force and as the leadership of the Lancaster County Rescue Task Force,. The Blue Rock Regional Fire District has made a commitment to boost community involvement in the Manor Township and Millersville areas by heightening awareness with the Blue Rock Emergency Management Agency and Blue Rock Fire Rescue.

**None of this would be possible without the dedication of the one hundred plus members of Blue Rock Fire Rescue and Blue Rock Support Group. The citizens of Manor Township and Millersville Borough can be thankful for the countless hours and dedication of all of their volunteers!**