

REPORT OF THE FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT



2008 has been a year of transition for the Fremont Fire Rescue Department. After 32 years of serving the Department and Town as Fire Chief, Richard (Hez) Heselton retired. He remains a member of the Department assisting us with his wealth of knowledge. The Fire Department and Town of Fremont benefited from his many years of dedicated service.

The dedicated and well trained members of the Fire Rescue Department have had a busy year responding to 244 calls for services along with countless hours of training. Mother Nature again is reminding us that she is not a force to reckon with. We sent crews to Deerfield to assist in search and rescue after a devastating tornado touched down on July 24th. Members also manned the Safety Complex with other volunteers, after it was opened as a shelter during the recent December Ice Storm, helping local residents with their needs while still having to tend to their own families left at home in the dark and cold.

As the Town continues to grow and the need for services grows with it, I am proud to have this team with me providing these services to the residents and visitors of Fremont. I would like to take this time to thank the Town Office staff and the other Departments for all their help and support through the year, making this transition go smoothly.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard D Butler
Fire Chief

INCIDENTS REPORTED FOR THE YEAR 2008

Structure Fire	8	Carbon Monoxide	6
Weather Related Incident	3	Vehicle Fires	1
Alarm Activation	21	Public Assist	2
Woods/Brush Fire	2	Motor Vehicle Crash	13
Chimney Fires	2	Medical Emergency	165
Mutual Aid Provided	19	Illegal Burn	2

Tribute to Retired Fire Chief Dick Heselton

Excerpts from the 1976 Annual Report of the Fremont Fire Department:

"It is with a very heavy heart, that I submit to you my first Annual Report. As you well know, Chief Clarence (Phib) Philbrick passed away while fighting a fire at the Spaulding & Frost Company on August 17, 1976. His passing was a great loss to the Fire Department, and the town in general, but an even greater loss to me, as a good friend and trusted employee, for over forty years. It is pretty difficult to lose someone like that, he is greatly missed."



These are the first official written words to the Fremont Community of Richard Heselton as he took over the position of Fire Chief. Hez had been the Deputy for several years prior, but assuming the role of Fire Chief is an immense community responsibility.

In the 32 years that followed, Dick has seen immense changes in the make-up of the Fremont Community, his Department, and the complex nature that is emergency services. This small writing is intended to serve as a tribute to Dick and the many accomplishments of the Fremont Fire Department during these years.

Early records estimate that Dick joined the Fremont Fire Department in 1956 after serving his Country in the US Air Force. Through these years he responded often from his local business (Fremont Motor Sales) in the Town's time of need. He answered calls at the garage and at home, and until only very recently, still had the "red phone" in his home!

The Department has purchased several new pieces of apparatus, from the first piece he recommended, to be in service by 1981, to the 1988 Tanker; a new Engine 1 in 2001; and the utility truck in 2005. Dick did most of the maintenance on apparatus himself at the garage, and in later years, did some of it in the new fire station. He prided himself on equipment being in top-notch condition and always clean as a whistle.

Dick was always frugal, looking for the economical way to fix things that were broken. The technology has changed, but Dick still has an old-fashioned remedy to many a project in need of fixing. His Yankee ingenuity has solved many problems.

In 1976 he reported that the Department responded to 47 calls, which was an increase of 5 from the prior year; and in 2007, the first full year of a combined department, they responded to 318. This now includes all of the Town's medical aid calls as well as fires.



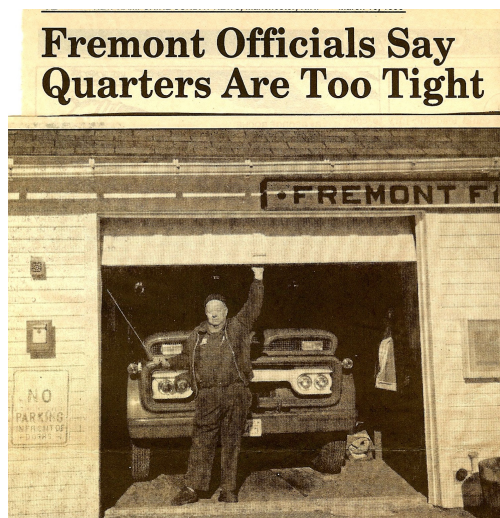


He saw the advance of equipment to include the Department's Jaws of Life, Thermal Image Camera, and CO Meter. His early days of firefighting were without today's SCBA air packs and gear consisted of hip boots and an overcoat, when budgeted funds allowed. We have surely come a long way!

The combination of the Fremont Fire Department and the Fremont Rescue Squad (formerly the FAST Squad) was a tremendous effort on the part of the Department members. Chief Heselton recognized that it was time for this change to occur. The transition speaks highly of the Department, its members, and all of the Officers in leadership positions.

In 1997 Dick was part of the project resulting in construction of the Fremont Safety Complex. He can be seen here in a photograph of that era, highlighting the need for additional space. The old fire station was located on the site of Spaulding & Frost Cooperage, which also saw significant activity during Dick's tenure.

Over the years, Dick has seen a wide variety of tragedy; and been a part of many important and wonderful things in the Fremont Community. He is to be commended for his dedication and service to the Department and to the Town of Fremont.



You will still hear him say he is "old and foolish" when you ask how he is, trademark words that we have all heard many times! It is the end of an era to have Dick retire, but he should look back at a notable career in the fire service with pride and an extreme sense of accomplishment. We have all learned from him, in a variety of ways, and owe a great debt of gratitude for his taking on the challenging task of being Fremont's Fire Chief for 32 years.

And, to close, as Dick began, "...a good friend and trusted employee for more than 50 years..." We miss your day to day interaction with the Town but wish you every hearty congratulations for a job well done! Best wishes for a healthy and enjoyable retirement!



Annual Fire Rescue Department Dinner
December 2008
with a plaque to commemorate Chief Heselton's
years of service to the Fremont Fire Department
and the Town of Fremont.

Photos courtesy of Brett Hunter, Joel and Jode Lennon; and Richard Butler from the Department Scrap Book. Thank you to Meredith Bolduc for her assistance in photo layout!
Information compiled by Heidi Carlson.



"There is no friend like an old friend."

~ Author and Physician Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Yes'm, old friends is always best, 'less you catch a new one that's fit to make an old one out of."

~ Maine novelist Sarah Orne Jewett