

BENDERSVILLE COMMUNITY FIRE COMPANY

The early written history of the Bendersville Community Fire Company dates back to July 8, 1914. "The undersigned members of the above named company (Union Fire Company) hereby declare that said company is formed for the purpose of public service as an Engine, Hose, and Hook and Ladder Company within the Borough of Bendersville, PA." The elected positions consisted of: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chief and two Assistant Chiefs. Appointed officers were: four Nozzlemen, four Pipemen, two Axemen, two Assistant Axemen, two Linemen, four Laddermen, Fire Marshall and Assistant Fire Marshall.

In the first 95 years, there have been numerous changes with regard to personnel and equipment. The Company has been very fortunate to have many members and non-members who have dedicated countless hours and years towards the goal of providing for and improving fire safety.

The Union Fire Company was a function of the Bendersville Borough until January 28, 1919 when the citizens of the Borough of Bendersville held a meeting at the I.O.O.F. (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) Hall for the purpose of organizing a fire company and thus the present day fire company foundation was laid. W. C. Yeatts was elected first president, with E. W. Sowers treasurer, and W. B. Delap secretary. Dues were set at 50 cents and the name "Union Fire Company" was kept. On February 12, 1919 a formal constitution and by-laws were adopted. The first apparatus was hand-drawn hose cart owned by the borough. On April 2, 1919 \$300.00, was donated by Mrs. E. W. Sowers, to procure a fire bell to be used to ring the alarms.

On January 17, 1921 the Union Fire Company purchased a 45 gallon chemical wagon from the Buffalo Chemical Co. for \$480.00. They also built a new hose cart at a cost of \$48.00, purchased three rubber coats and hats, a 1 ½" nozzle and a 1 5/8" nozzle for a cost of \$36.00.

In the year 1922, the first known fire officers were recorded:

- Fire chief - W. L. Baumgardner
- Assistant Chief - H. W. Knouse
- Assistant Chief - H. W. Hoffman
- Fire Police - Chas Lerew
- Nozzlemen - H. G. Orner, A. B. Reed, J. E. Routsong, R. Rice
- Reelmen - Chas Stover, D. C. Taylor, LC. Bucher
- Breakers - A. E. Sheely, H. F. Quigle, John Black
- Couipers - M. J. Heller, F. M. Beamer, Lloyd Orner
- Plugmen - E. W. Sowers, R. D. Peters

After looking at Camp Hill's and Carlisle's Ford Pumpers, the members decided to look at new apparatus and narrowed it down between a 1931 500 GPM Seagrave for \$5,500.00 or a 350 GPM American Lasserjet for \$3,500.00. On November 17, 1931, a special meeting was held with 20 members present and the investigation committee reported on the several machines they saw and recommended the 500 GPM centrifugal Seagrave as the best pumper for the Company's needs. By a unanimous vote, the committee was given authority to meet with the Seagrave Company to make up the contract. Also 800 feet of 2 ½" hose at \$.90 a foot and 500 feet of 1 ½" hose at \$.45 a foot was also purchased. On November 24, Mr. Kohr from Seagrave explained the difference of a rotary pump to a centrifugal pump and R.D.Peters made the motion to put a \$100.00 down payment upon 10 days after delivery with the balance to be paid over the next 5 years with a 2 year extension if needed at 6% on any unpaid balance. The motion was approved and passed. The final specifications were worked out and contracts were signed by the president, secretary and trustees. The first call for the 1931 Seagrave was a chimney fire at the home of John Black.

Notes from the January 7, 1932 meeting included: insurance was issued to cover members while going to and from a fire, drills or accidents at a cost of \$75.00 for a \$10,000.00 policy. Also noted was that fire drills were to be held at 1:00 P.M. on the last Saturday of every month. It was also moved and seconded that the fire whistle would be blown one long blast for a town fire, six short blasts for out of town fires and one blast at 6:30 P.M. on every regular meeting night.

During the year 1932, the Union Fire Company changed its name to the Bendersville Community Fire Company and the Ladies Auxiliary was officially organized on March 2 of that same year. They

also answered some big fire alarms helping Biglerville on March 29 at the E. L. Lawver planning mill at an estimated loss of \$6325.00, G. C. Myers P.O. and warehouse on May 11 and various barn fires to name a few.

On March 11, 1936, the fire company held a special meeting at the I.O.O.F. Hall, it was called to order by President C. D. Bream at 8:00 P.M. with 21 members present. The purpose of the meeting was to decide what action, if any, the fire company should take in regard to buying the Fruit Growers Hall which would be sold at a public sale on March 14, 1936. After thorough discussion, a motion was made and seconded that the fire company should purchase the hall provided the price would be reasonable. The following were appointed by the president as the purchasing committee; R. D. Peters, W. D. Taylor, Henry Taylor, H. W. Knouse. It was agreed that the deed to the hall should be made in favor of the Bendersville Borough but that an agreement should be made between both parties defining the rights of each contracting parties. On April 2, 1936, they purchased the hall for \$400.00 and also purchased the furniture and fixtures for \$55.00. On April 23, 1936 a 1/4 acre lot was obtained from Sue Snyder for \$65.00, on February 4, 1942 another lot was obtained from Preston Peters, 1 1/2 acres of land was purchased from Charles Asper for \$500.00 on October 3, 1945, a strip of woods known as the firemen's woods was purchased from Harry Snyder for \$100.00, and the last piece of land was purchased from Dyson Kennedy for \$600.00 to provide an area for construction of a ball diamond. Over the years the hall was used for various events to include: community plays, basketball games and school classes which were held there until such time the school was finished being built. The hall was heated by coal and the receipts of the plays paid for the expenses. June 3, 1937, the first electric refrigeration unit and other electrical appliances were put on display at the annual fair. Also noted was that Radio entertainment and Square dances were to be held twice a month starting on December 7, 1938. Also in July the president J. B. Aumen and Geo. McMellan spoke briefly and introduced Motor Patrolmen Schuler who spoke to the members about safety on the highways and while at a fire. He mentioned that "a motor driven fire truck need not stay under the speed limits while going to a fire, but must be under control at all times and should be driven safely to the fire". The meeting was then interrupted by a fire alarm and was adjourned abruptly. The county commissioners asked permission for use of the hall to register voters in 1943. The annual fair was postponed until such time that the pleasure driving ban was lifted during the war so that the people would be allowed to attend.

In September of 1945 a windshield and a red light were installed on the 1931 Seagrave for use at night when going to fires. It was also during this time that the 15 year old tires had to wait a little bit longer to be replaced because the availability of tires during the war weren't plentiful. During this same time frame, a swimming pool was suggested to be built for use as a fire reservoir to be kept full at all times. This was to be separate from the town's water reservoir, but it would have necessitated laying additional 6" water mains from the existing reservoir and the borough was not prepared to meet such expenses at that time. After more discussion it was the opinion of the members present that they should build a ball diamond, (named the Apple Bowl in 1946) tennis courts, horseshoe courts, swings, slides etc. and that this should precede the swimming pool.

The first fog nozzles were purchased in November of 1945 at a cost of \$33.00 for a 1 1/2" and \$30.00 for a 1" nozzle. The plans and sketches for the grandstand and ball diamond were approved and the construction was completed. In 1946, it was dedicated as a memorial for all of the veterans who had fought and served in World War II. The company also held a non-profit dance to recognize the veterans returning from the war.

On May 25th of 1947, the building housing the vinegar tanks owned by the National Fruit Product Company Inc. Northern Division, Peach Glen, Pennsylvania (Knouse Foods) was struck by lightning on a Sunday evening which caused considerable damage.

The fire company purchased land for \$600.00 on November 7, 1951 on which the first engine house was built and completed in late 1952. An addition was added on in June of 1970. Prior to that time, the fire company rented space at the I.O.O.F. hall to house apparatus. In late 1953, the old Bandstand was torn down and a new wooden structure was constructed in its place. The Company also moved the siren back to the roof of the Bendersville garage with an outside control box in case it malfunctioned so that they could turn it off manually.

The fire company voted to purchase a 1954 Seagrave which was known as Engine 7-2. It had a 12 cylinder dual ignition motor, a five speed manual transmission, a Seagrave 750 GPM pump with built in foam tanks, a 400 gal booster tank along with wooden ladders, and completely equipped at an

estimated cost of \$18,000.00. In its later years it became a water supply engine with its dual three inch lines of 3,000 feet. It rarely saw fire and due to newer apparatus and advancements in the fire service plus requirements for additional manpower, it was retired in 1988.

In 1960, the Fire Company purchased a 1956 Ford fuel oil truck and refurbished into a tanker truck which was used to belly feed the engines until water relays were established. It was known as Tanker 7 and was retired after Engine 7-1 was placed in service.

In 1960, the Mountain Orchard COOP and Cold Storage which housed spray material was one of three major fires attended. The Knouse Food Plant burnt in 1961 from the present day cafeteria area to the Peach Glen Idaville road and required 32 fire companies including ladder trucks from Hanover and Gettysburg. Most of the companies called were relief crews with the exception of Bendersville's 31 Seagrave which pumped at the Knouse hydrant from 4:00 PM Saturday until the following Monday as well as their 1954 Seagrave with Mount Holly Springs 1953 Seagrave in relay from the pond. In September the Zeiglers Feed Mill burnt with the 1931 Seagrave and Asper's Reo supplying the initial relay with Mt. Holly Springs 1953 Seagrave in relay with Arendtsville's International and Gettysburg's 1951 Mack.

1970 ushered in a busy year for the fire company as we hosted the Adams County Volunteer Firemen's Association Convention and also purchased a 1971 Chevrolet 3/4 ton 4 wheel drive brush truck with a reading body. This unit was equipped with a 350 GPM pto midship pump, a front suction, two 1 1/2" pre-connection lines, 750' of 3" supply hose and carried 300 gallons of water. Equipment included all basic wildfire tools, chainsaws, leaf blowers, weedwacker, a 4500 watt portable generator and 2 MSA 4500psi SCBA. Mini Pumper 7 was rehabbed in 1994 and is still in service today. It was also the first unit for our Quick Response medical assist team which was formed in 1971. A few EMTs coupled with many members who were already trained in CPR and Advanced First Aid started handling QRS responses with favorable review from the community. In order to better handle the needs of QRS services, members upgraded their training to EMT's, took advanced BLS courses and participated with Biglerville to learn defibrillation and pacing. The snowmobile rescue sled was also purchased with a sizable donation made by the Bear Mountain Snowmobile Club. It was capable of carrying one prone patient compartmentalized from the elements and is still in service today.

During 1977, we again hosted the Adams County Volunteer Firemen's Association Convention. That same year, the company also purchased a 1977 Chevrolet-Hamerly built pumper-tanker with a 427 gas motor and a five speed transmission with a 2 speed rear axle. It had a waterous 750 GPM two stage pump and carried 1250 gallons of water with a 4 1/2" jet assisted dump valve capable of dumping in 80 seconds and two 3" quarter turn quickfill lines which were added in 1986 allowing it to be filled in under a minute. The Hamerly was equipped with the following: two pre-mounted 1 1/2" pre-connects with Akron Automatic nozzles, a 3" pre-connected attack line, 800' of 3" supply line, a 4500 watt generator with pre-wired lights and receptacles, a 2100 gallon portable pond, forest fighting equipment, and carried 3 Survivair SCBA's and 6 spare cylinders as well as two portable pumps. This unit was placed in service for about \$55,000.00 and was used as an engine until 1983 when it was recognized as Tanker 7. Also a 1963 Chevrolet panel truck was donated by H. C. Guldens Manufacturing. It was refurbished to be used as a service truck but was later sold as its usefulness was no longer needed.

On September 3, 1980 the Junior Fire Company was formed. The first elected officers were:

President - Dave Taylor
Treasurer - Leon Stoner
Secretary - Mike Shreve
Captain - Michael Bretzman

May 10, 1983 at a cost of \$35,000.00, Engine 7-1, a 1969 Seagrave was purchased from Fire Equipment and Supply from Landover MD. Better known as the "WAR WAGON", its name was given from the number of major fires it attacked after being placed into service as compared to years past. Coming from Prince-Georges County it had an 8V-71 Detroit Diesel with a 5 speed manual transmission equipped with a Jacobs engine brake that was installed in 1988 for safety reasons. Engine 7-1 featured a Seagrave 1000 GPM pump, carried 500 gallons of water, front suction, four 1 1/2" preconnects with Selectamatic automatic nozzles, preconnected foam line, 3" preconnected attack line, premounted deck gun, and portable 500 GPM Master Stream device, 1,250' of Angus supply hose preconnected to a hydrant appliance with a 5" gated valve with four 2 1/2" gated valves,

and assorted adapters. It carried 5 Survivair SCBAs with 6 spare cylinders, a 2500 watt generator, various cord reels and adapters, 500 watt quartz lights, a 24' ladder, a 12' roof ladder, a 12' attic ladder, a variety of hand tools and light boxes, AFFF and protein foam, Hy-Dry, 24" smoke ejector fan, 3 pressurized water extinguishers (one being foam), 20 lb. dry chem, 10 lb. CO2 extinguisher, a 20 lb. Halon extinguisher, salvage covers, chimney packs and cleaning equipment as well as an EMS kit and Oxygen.

In 1985, many changes were made to include the following: the bandstand was removed and a new one was constructed with a roof and a concrete floor, lights were installed on the carnival grounds and part of the ball diamond for better lighting and a barbecue pit was also built.

Numerous changes were made in 1988 to include: installation of a 20' door in the engine house, removed the siren from the garage and placed it at the firehouse and installation of floor grates in the engine house. In 1989 we moved the restrooms at the community hall to the upstairs with an addition costing approximately \$33,000.00 and repainted the interior.

The Company purchased a 1989 Chevrolet Suburban 4-wheel drive vehicle with the help of various neighboring businesses. Squad 7, as it was known, carried personnel as well as medical supplies, a front mounted winch with an "A" frame, lighting, high pressure air bags, air packs and other rescue equipment. It also had a cellular Phone, 36 channel low band radio for fire ground operations, a 30 channel high band radio for med channels and was able to handle command post operations. This vehicle is still in service today and is currently designated as Special Unit 7. It is currently used as a multipurpose vehicle to carry personnel and equipment.

In 1992, the Company purchased a new Seagrave Engine Tanker designated as Engine 7-2. It was placed into service on March 22, 1992 and replaced the 1977 Hamerly Tanker, which was sold to the New Glasboro Fire Dept. in Prince Edward Island in Canada. Engine 7-2 was built by FWD Seagrave in Clintonville, WS. It featured a ten man, four door, enclosed cab; a 450 HP Detroit Diesel with an HT740 transmission. It also had a 1750 waterous pump, a 1250 gallon poly tank, a 10" Newton dump with jet assist. It had rescue body compartments, front and rear intakes, a 5" hi volume discharge, 1250' of 5" angus hose, four 1 3/4" crosslays, a 2" crosslay, two 3" quick fills, and a premounted foam line. It was equipped with 8 MSA 4500 psi SCBAs, a RIT pack, an MSA 5000 Thermal Imaging Camera as well as an MSA Solaris 4-gas monitor. Engine 7-2 is still in service today.

Starting in September of 1997, a Building committee was formed for the purpose of planning for a new modernized fire station. At that time, the Company operated from two aging facilities that were located on separate parcels of land. Over the few years, members spent hundreds of hours diligently planning, securing financial support as well as acquiring adjoining parcels of land for the eventual ground breaking.

In 1998 the company bought a 1982 Hahn engine to meet the requirements of NFPA 1500, which called for elimination of tail-step riding among other safety factors. This unit was placed into service as Engine 7-1 in 1999 after the retirement of the 1969 Seagrave. Engine 7-1 was refurbished to include a 7 - man enclosed cab. It carried 7 MSA 4500psi SCBA and a RIT pack, had a 1500 gpm pump, 1000 gallon tank, and a 4500 watt generator. It also carried 1100 feet of 5" hose, three 1 3/4" mattaydales and one 3" preconnect. It was also equipped with an Amkus rescue system, Vettor air bags, and an MSA Solaris 4-gas monitor. Engine 7-1 was QRS certified and also carried an AED.

We started housing and manning an Ambulance from Biglerville in 1999 for emergency medical calls. This piece of apparatus is currently known as Ambulance 7A.

The Bureau of Forestry provided the Company with a 1968 5 ton Army 6X6 truck in 1999 for use as a mountain fire fighting vehicle. This vehicle remained in service until 2005 when it was returned back to the Bureau of Forestry. The biggest mountain fire on record consumed approximately 700-800 acres in May of 1963. Known as the Big Flat mountain fire, it started at Birch Run Road and burned up over the mountain crossing the Shippensburg Road and was not contained until it was stopped at Dead Woman's Hollow.

The Company officially broke ground in August of 2002 for construction of a modernized facility. Thousands of yards of dirt were hauled away during the excavation before the actual construction began. In November of 2003, the Company moved into the new facility from which all operations and activities are currently conducted.

During 2004, we again hosted the Adams County Volunteer Firemen's Association Convention at our new station.

In late 2007, the Company formed an Apparatus committee to explore options for replacing the outdated Engine/Rescue. After months of careful research and planning, the Company was awarded a 265K federal grant which allowed us to move the project forward and solicit bids from various manufacturers. In early 2008, the Company voted to purchase a 2008 E-One Typhoon Engine Rescue with a 1750 gpm pump 1000 gallon water tank, 30 gallon foam tank, 3 crosslays and front bumper line with foam as needed, seating for 8 with 7 air-pack seats, a David Clark head set system and a light tower mounted on the cab. We then developed and executed a very successful fund drive effort which superior contributions from local businesses and residents. The unit was delivered to the Company in January of 2009 at which time we spent countless hours training and preparing the unit for duty. On March 1 2009, it was placed into service and designated as Engine 7-1 replacing the 1982 Hahn.

At present, all equipment has 36 channel Uniden radios with PL run books for all Company 7 boxes broken down into names, addresses, and maps, MSDS books, Hazardous materials books as well as neighboring companies run books.

The Bendersville Community Fire Co. Inc. has upgraded its training to the highest level possible. Not only by purchasing equipment needed, but by learning to use it to its maximum use. Many of the past line officers have taken all 3 structural firefighting courses given at the PA State Fire Academy as well as other members. Believing in interior attack we aggressively train on air packs, LDH, water relays, tanker shuttles, hazardous materials, truck company operations, venting and have controlled live burns when possible. We train extensively on vehicle extrication, CPR, first aid and attend county as well as out of county training.

Over the past five years, the Bendersville Fire Company has responded to an ever increasing number of calls averaging just over 160 per year. The Company has six pieces of equipment currently in operating service.

- Engine 7-1 2008 E-One Engine/Rescue
- Engine 7-2 1992 Seagrave Engine/Tanker
- Mini Pumper 7 1971 Chevrolet 4-wheel drive Pumper/Brush
- Special Unit 7 1989 Chevrolet 4-wheel drive Squad
- Car 7 1995 Chevrolet Impala Squad
- Ambulance 7A 1998 Ford Econoline Basic Life Support Unit (Biglerville)

Today, the Bendersville Community Fire Company continues to serve the Upper Adams community with a roster of 50 Active members as well more than 180 Social members.

2010 FIRE COMPANY OFFICERS			
President	Matt Shank	Chief	Gary Bretzman
Vice-President	David Taylor	Deputy Chief	Shawn Melhorn
Secretary	Kathleen Englebert	Assistant Chief	Dustin Cramer
Treasurer	Vern Cook	Captain	Jason Cook
Relief Treasurer	Shawn Mosholder	Lieutenant	Jeff Bretzman
Membership	Tara Taylor	Fire Police Captain	Larry Heller
Trustees	Harry Melhorn, Kevin Shealer, Shawn Mosholder	EMS Captain	Michelle Bretzman