



SHREVEPORT FIRE

D E P A R T M E N T

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The Shreveport Fire Department has a rich history of service to the citizens of Shreveport. For more than 150 years, Shreveport firefighters have worked tirelessly to provide emergency and non-emergency services to this community while maintaining the high standards of the profession. Each year, this department strives to be more efficient and effective as we meet new challenges. The following is a brief history of how this department has evolved and how we plan to prepare for the future. Click on the links below to read our history.

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Firefighting before 1900

On September 11, 1839, the City of Shreveport passed its first fire regulations pertaining to blacksmiths, bakery shops, maintenance of chimneys, etc.; imposing a \$5.00 fine for fire related offenses.



On July 23, 1849, "Germania", the first volunteer fire company was formed. Also known as Hook and Ladder Company #1. Their equipment consisted of carts drawn by man power. There was a small two-wheel hose cart and a small hand pumper. The hand pumper when used had to be operated by two men.

Additional volunteer fire companies were organized in later years which included: Germania Hook and Ladder Company #2; Pelican Hook and Ladder Company #1 and #2; Caddo Companies #1, 2 and 3; Allendale; Columbia; and numerous salvage companies.

In 1852, a bond initiative was posted on the ballot and approved by the people to buy one horse drawn fire engine and one hook and ladder wagon.

The mule drawn vehicles replaced the hand carts because of the muddy condition of the dirt streets; mules were more serviceable than horses. With the introduction of mules pulling the apparatus, larger size hand-operated pumps were utilized. It took six to eight men to operate the pump when it was needed.



The first water reservoirs used for firefighting were huge 50,000 gallon under-ground cisterns. These cisterns were located at Market and Texas, Texas and McNeil, Fannin and Edwards, and Market and Crockett. There is a chance that some, if not all, of these are still in the same place, but not filled with

water.



On January 22, 1867, the steamboat "Bart Able" arrived with a new steam fire engine for Caddo Company #1. This fire station was located in the southwest corner of Marshall and Travis, but later was moved to the 200 block of Travis.

From Volunteer to Career



The first City Hall was built on the northwest corner of Milam and McNeil at a cost of \$75,000 in 1872. The City Hall was in the front portion on the second floor with a farmers market directly underneath, and Caddo Company #2 occupied the first and second floors at the rear portion of the building. The firefighters had a pole that they could rapidly slide from their bunker room on the second floor to the apparatus bay. It was made of solid mahogany that was kept well polished and shined. The building burned down in 1905.

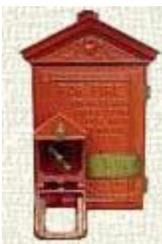
The first water mains and fire plugs were installed in 1887, by Samuel R. Bulloch and Company of New York City.

The fire losses were so heavy in these early years and up into early 1900's that many insurance companies closed their Shreveport offices and moved. The insurance companies that remained put the insurance rates so high that it was practically impossible to have coverage.



On January 1, 1891, under the administration of Mayor Andrew Currie, the city took over the volunteer fire companies; including tow horses and six Missouri mules, and hired six regular fireman and fifteen call men.

Later the streets were paved and the fire department changed from mules to horses because of their speed. They were also easier to train than mules. It generally took about two weeks for a horse to be trained for fire horse duties.



In 1897 the first fire alarm boxes were installed; one each, at three local refineries, and three in the downtown area.

On January 10, 1910, the fire department received its first piece of motorized equipment; an auto-chemical wagon with an engine rating of 55 horsepower and more motorized equipment was gradually bought until all of the horses were retired in 1917.

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Major Fire



On September 4, 1925, one of the worse fires in Shreveport's history occurred when a hot water heater exploded and caught a house on fire. Although Fire Station No. 4 was located across the street from the house, a broken water main prevented the firemen from effectively fighting the blaze. A train with tank cars filled with water was brought to the area, but by the time the train was put together and the tank cars filled with water, it was too late. The fire had quickly spread and between 9:00pm on the 4th and 6:00pm on the 5th, a total of 9 city blocks and 194 homes were lost. Many people were left homeless, but no lives were lost.

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New Era



to all yellow coloring.

Chief Dallas W. Greene was very well liked and respected by the citizens and made major improvements in the Shreveport Fire Department. Under Chief Greene the Department was desegregated and the first minority was hired in 1974; the first Rescue Unit was introduced to the department; the Department apparatus color scheme switched from all red to all white to avoid the possibility of having to go

In 1984, the Department took over the EMS services for the City of Shreveport during a time when many fire departments were shying away from such a task.

In 1993, under Chief Dale Martin a former Chief of the Fire Prevention, the Department brought back red to the fire apparatus and also put Federal Q sirens back on all new pumper and hook and ladder rigs.

In 1994, under Chief Jerl "Bo" Roberts the Shreveport Fire Department was brought up to a Class 1 fire rating by the Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL).





In 1999, Chief Kelvin J. Cochran was appointed as the Department's first African American Fire Chief by Mayor Keith Hightower. Under the Chief Cochran the Department maintained its Class 1 rating. He successfully passed a bond initiative in 2001 to build three fire stations - including a new Dallas W. Greene Central Fire Station and Administrative Offices, and renovate a new Fire Maintenance facility. Firefighter staffing and pay also increased during Chief Cochran's tenure. Cochran is also credited with significantly increasing the department's EMS capabilities by increasing the number of Medic Units (ambulances) from 7 to 10, implementing 5 ALS Engines, and adding an additional Medical Director. Chief Cochran retired from Shreveport in 2007 to become the Fire Chief in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2009, President Barak Obama appointed Chief Cochran as the United States Fire Administrator.



In 2008, Chief Brian A. Crawford was appointed by Mayor Cedric B. Glover as Fire Chief. A 24-year veteran, Crawford had served as the Assistant to the Fire Chief under his predecessor for the six years prior to his appointment. In his young tenure Crawford is credited with placing increased emphasis on the Emergency Operations through opening Station #22 and entering into the department's first Automatic Aid Agreement with Caddo Fire

District 5, both increasing coverage to the southeast of the city; opening the new Fire Maintenance Facility at 7300 Mansfield Road; placing two Semi-Heavy Truck companies in service; and having the department go to a more effective 5.11 tactical work uniform.

In 2009, Crawford along with Bossier City Chief Sammy Halphen led efforts and secured Louisiana's Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) Task Force III team for the Shreveport/Bossier City area. Crawford also stepped-up the department's fire prevention efforts by commissioning a public/private Fire Safety Task Force, implementing the Neighborhood Smoke Detector Installation Program, and passing legislation requiring all apartments to install automatic stove-top fire extinguishing systems.

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