

A Brief History of Hudson Fire Department

Hudson Fire Department has proudly served the community of Hudson for over 173 years. The Hudson Volunteer Fire Department was first organized by the village in 1849. It was the first volunteer fire company in Summit County. The department consisted of up to 30 volunteers who were paid two dollars each per year.

In 1859 Hudson Village purchased the first horse drawn hand pumper fire engine in all of Summit County. It was in service until 1911. The fire engine was stored in a barn behind the town hall. The first fire station was added to the town hall in 1896, which is currently the home of the Hudson Fire Museum. That original 1859 hand pumper is on display there.

A major fire broke out on Main Street in 1892 and Main Street was lost. The wooden buildings were replaced with brick using fire codes of the day to prevent a future disaster.

Hudson again led the way in firefighting equipment when it purchased the first mechanized fire apparatus in Summit County in 1915. In 1928 the village acquired a Seagrave fire engine. (On display in the Fire Museum) In 1932 the township formed its own fire department and purchased an engine which was housed with the village fire engine in the town hall station. There were two fire chiefs, two fire engines and 30 volunteers serving both departments. In 1934 the two departments merged to form the Hudson Township Fire Department. A township fire levy funded the department until the village and township merged in 1994.

As larger, more modern equipment was purchased, the town hall fire station was outgrown. In 1955 a new fire station was built on the corner of Routes 91 and 303. That station was used until 1979 when our current Safety Center was built on Oviatt Street.

Chief Richard Myers was appointed the first full-time Fire Chief and Fire Inspector of the Hudson Volunteer Fire Department in 1977. Full-time personnel have been slowly added to support the fire department administration and prevention bureau.

Over the years, many communities have been forced to move to full-time fire departments due to the lack of volunteers and the addition of EMS. Hudson is a unique community and has been able to maintain a combination fire department with full-time administration and a large force of paid-on-call, dedicated, highly skilled, well trained personnel. This combination Fire Department continues to offer superior fire protection at a nominal cost to the Community.

A Brief History of Hudson EMS

In 1975, residents of the Village of Hudson and the surrounding Hudson Township felt the need for a local ambulance service. "At the time, a call for medical help would bring a response from private companies in Akron, and for a brief period, from a service from Stow," said Claire Truesdale, who served as Hudson Volunteer Emergency Medical Service Director (now known as Hudson EMS) from 1977 to 1997.

Announcements were placed in local publications calling for drivers and EMTs to join. A training class was held for the new membership, a tradition that continues today in the EMT-B classes offered, as well as CPR classes for healthcare workers and the community at large. A search for an operations base led to a conversation with a Sohio executive who offered a former automotive dealership located near Rt. 91 and Ravenna St. The building, located across the street from the Yours Truly is where PNC Bank sits today.

On April 2, 1977, the service officially began operations with approximately 45 members on the roster. Truesdale was formally appointed director by the Operations Board and 24/7, all volunteer staffing began.

The need for money quickly came to light. Ballots were cast June 1977 in a special election paid for by the Hudson Jaycees for a 0.5 mil levy, which was approved by a large majority.

Today Hudson EMS has evolved from its threadbare origins to an established and fully equipped, professional, municipal service, responding with a combination of fulltime, part-time and volunteer paramedics and volunteer EMT's all certified to the same national and/or state level as all other paramedics and EMT's in Ohio. These dedicated members respond from a central station that is staffed with two ALS squads 24/7.

EMS Service Milestones:

- * 1979: A second ambulance was acquired and served as a backup squad
- * 1981: The present Safety Center was completed and put into service
- * 1989: A third ambulance becomes available, putting the present arrangement of two squads available supplemented by a call for a crew for the third squad as needed
- * 1992: The existing ambulance bays and EMS crew quarters were added to the Safety Center
- * 2003: Fulltime Training Coordinator hired – shared between Fire & EMS
- * 2006: Shift Officers were added to the service's Command/Supervision model
- * 2014: EMS Director position was eliminated and a combined Fire/EMS Chief position created
- * 2016: Transitioned from predominantly volunteer response staff model to a combination part-time paid/volunteer response staff model
- * 2020: Command/Supervision changed to a Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain, Lieutenant model