

Hot Calls

Volume 7, Issue 3

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May/June 2020



Status of the EM Office

By: Bill Kennedy, Coordinator

Since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic the office has been busy addressing the items related to the Pandemic and has stayed fully operational. Conference calls, Webex meetings and Zoom meetings have been the rule of the day. In the beginning we averaged 25 calls per week, covering days, nights and weekends. Calls are easing but still doing 15 or so a week, Monday thru Friday.

I want to thank Brian Gardner for his service as Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator. Brian served in the position for 12 years. In February Brian left his part-time position to pursue an opportunity with the hospital doing Emergency Preparedness and Security. Brian will be staying on with us as a volunteer Deputy Fire Coordinator. Brian brought a great deal of experience and knowledge to the position.

Calendar:

Burdett Dinner Dance Rescheduled to Oct 3

Tickets Available now! \$100 donation for two prime rib meals and entry into many cash and prize drawings!

Watkins Glen Sportsman Raffle and Casino Night May 2 Postponed, TBD

Tickets available now!

Trivia Question

What was the name of the lady who manned the Sugar Hill Fire Tower from the late 50's until it was no longer used?

Our last Trivia Question went unanswered.

Question: "What were the radio frequencies used when radios were put on Schuyler county Fire apparatus. How many were there?"

Answer: 46.10, which was shared with several other counties and 46.22 which was a statewide, common frequency to all counties. Initially, only one radio per department was issued.

Firefighter Profile: Andrew Yessman

Most kids dream of being either a firefighter or police officer. Andrew got to be both. He is currently 2nd Assistant Chief in Montour Falls Fire Department. In his real job, he is a Deputy with Schuyler County Sheriff. He was recently recognized for a rescue he made in Watkins Glen. His training as a firefighter kicked in even though he was on police duty at the time. The following article describes the incident. I was not able to do the normal in-person interview, but Andrew is married with one son.



Yessman, cont...

Deputy of the Year Award: Deputy Sheriff Andrew Yessman, Schuyler County

The Deputy of the Year Award is given to a Deputy who during the year 2019, performed an act of exceptional valor heroism, above and beyond the normal call of duty. This award was first presented in 1977 and this year recognizes Schuyler County Deputy Sheriff Andrew Yessman.

Last September, Deputy Sheriff Andrew Yessman was dispatched to assist the Watkins Glen Police and Fire Departments for a structure fire. Schuyler County 911 System operators communicated there was a possibility of a person trapped on the burning building's second floor and it was believed that they had special needs.

Upon Deputy Yessman's arrival, Watkins Glen Police Officer Ethan Mosher (who had also just arrived), confirmed that an individual was trapped on the second floor. Heavy smoke poured out of the building and flames could be seen in the front windows of the multi-family building.

Deputy Yessman and Officer Mosher were quickly joined by New York State Trooper Joseph Crane. They worked together to locate the rear entrance at the ground level and forced the door open. Deputy Yessman then entered the residence crawling under the thick gray and black smoke that filled the house.



Schuyler County's Andrew Yessman receives the Deputy of the Year Award for an unprecedented second time. Shown here with his wife Breana.

Three feet inside the door, Deputy Yessman located a bed, but after blindly sweeping, he knew it was empty. Nearby, Deputy Yessman could hear a man yelling for help, so he continued the blind search on his hands and knees through the home towards the voice.

Deputy Yessman was able to locate an interior door. When he opened it, it too was full of smoke. Through the darkness he saw a foot. He made contact with the foot's owner and grabbed

his left hand. Deputy Yessman then proceeded to drag the man across the floor towards the exit. Once back near the door, Officer Mosher and Trooper Crane were able to assist Deputy Yessman in fully removing the man from the residence.

Watkins Glen firefighters escorted the victim to safety in the street. Due to shock and fear, the victim struck one of the firefighters in the face. Deputy Yessman sat down with the victim and provided first aid to the lacerations the debris had caused as they exited the building. He then walked the victim to meet the ambulance. The victim once again lashed out and struck Deputy Yessman in the nose, causing it to bleed. Deputy Yessman then returned to the scene to further assist with the fire investigation.

The Schuyler County Sheriff's Office thanks Deputy Yessman for his heroism and bravery in the line of duty. Deputy Sheriff Yessman also won the 2012 Deputy of the Year Award for his involvement in an incident where shots were fired.

Deputy Yessman becomes the first two-time winner in the award's 43-year history.

Montour Falls: Banquet

Montour responded to 372 alarms and logged 1753 man-hours in training



Steve Lawton received awards for 40 years of service plus top responder



Annual Hard Charger Award to Brooke Burns. She sold lemonade and tea so the Department could purchase oxygen masks for pets.



Line officers sworn in by Bill Kennedy Chief Jake Burns, 1st. Asst Chief Brian Swartwood, 2nd Asst. Chief Andrew Yessman, Captain Joel Husted, 1st Lt. John Horyczun, 2nd Lt. Michael Hines, Deputy Chief Bill Thomas, Deputy Chief Jeff Confer

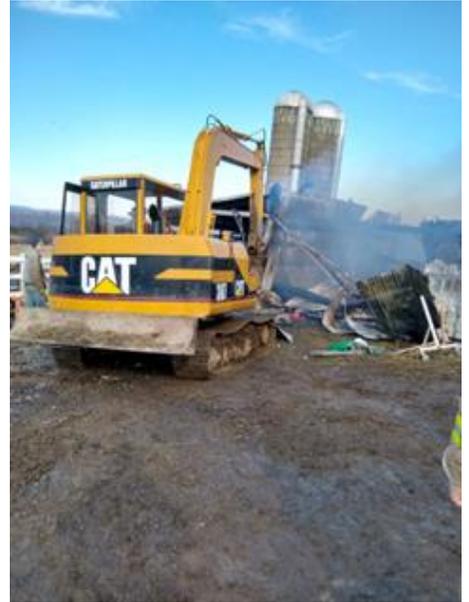
Tyrone: Mutual Aid to Barn Fire

On 3/9/20, there was a barn fire on Kelly Hill Road, in the Bradford Fire District. Tyrone, under mutual aid, arrived first. The house, and the barns to the left side of the picture, were saved due to aggressive attack with large streams. A new barn was in place in one week!



A large tanker shuttle was called immediately and two porta-ponds were set up on the initial set up

Barn Fire cont...



Aggressive attack with a blitz line knocked down a volume of fire and 1 ¼ lines to the house and other barns. It was a good stop! Track hoe was on site to help with overhaul. Notice damage to house.

The importance of having a tanker task force could be used. Mutual aid came from three counties. Water fill site was at Tyrone station.



This BLEVE occurred just after the arrival of firefighters. Look to the right of center and see to firefighters in the picture

Odessa: Fire Truck Accident

Odessa fire truck crashes; sole occupant OK

ODESSA, March 25, 2020 -- An Odessa Fire Department pumper was involved in a motor vehicle accident on Middle Road in the Town of Veteran in Chemung County shortly after noon on Wednesday.

Story by
Odessa File

The fire department reported that the truck was being operated by a 23-year veteran firefighter when a portion of the roadway collapsed, causing the truck to go off the roadway. The driver, who was the sole occupant of the vehicle, was not injured. The pumper sustained substantial damage in the accident but was driven from the scene to a repair shop.

The Millport Fire Department, Erway Ambulance, Chemung County Emergency Management, Chemung County Highway Department and the New York State Police responded to the accident.

"We are thankful," the Odessa department said in a press release, "that the safety features built into this truck helped prevent our firefighter from being injured during this incident.

"The pumper truck will be out of service for repairs for an unknown amount of time. During this time fire protection in the Odessa fire district will not be affected as the Odessa Fire Department will be utilizing a pumper loaned to us by a neighboring fire department."

Monterey: Camper Fire

On April 21 Monterey had a camper fire. The back of the motorhome was right up to the house. The owner was up and heard a noise which was the generator in the motor home. They had the camper plugged into the house with a small electric heater in it to keep it from freezing.

The camper was totally consumed but the origin was where he said the heater was. We believe that the heater malfunctioned and started the fire, it tripped the breaker in the house which caused the generator in the camper to start and that is what they heard.

Monterey had 7 or 8 people with one line off and the fire mostly out when I got there.

Watkins Glen: Fatal Structure Fire

House fire on Church Road in Reading Center Under Investigation

Sunday, April 5th 2020, 11:07 AM EDT by Vanessa Rizzitano



READING, N.Y. (WENY) - A structure fire in Schuyler County is under investigation. The fire broke out this morning at a home on Church Road in Reading Center, just north of Watkins Glen.

According to WENY's reporter on scene, the fire broke out around 7AM Sunday. Fire officials say one person was airlifted from the scene, but the extent of their injuries is unknown. There's no word at this time how many people may have been in the home at the time of the fire.

As of 10AM, multiple fire crews from Schuyler County remain on scene. We're told there is extensive damage to the home. Church Road remains block off and fire crews are expected to be on the scene for some time, and an investigation into the cause is underway. Second alarm brought Dundee, Tyrone, Burdett, Montour Falls, Beaver Dams. Water supply was established at a dry hydrant on Spencer Rd and County Rt. 29. Two people were injured and one life flighted to Upstate Med. And the other to Schuyler hospital. One person died in the fire. This is the second fatal fire in the town of Reading in a months time.

Story and
Picture by
WENY

COVID-19 Virus

As I put this newsletter together, we all (State of New York) are under a quarantine. The virus has effected the whole state and how we do business. The rules of engagement we must follow are the opposite from what we are accustomed to. By the time this issue is out it will either be much worse or under control. Reading the Firehouse website daily, you'll find across the country all or most all are dealing with the same issue. We (Odessa) have changed not only our response but also our approach with the type of PPE we use including the use of SCBA and on scene decon operations. It might seem like overkill but how can we send in EMS to an unknown situation without providing the best possible protection. I am sure as this month goes on I will continue to add to this article.

Day 3, Tuesday, of a total shutdown for all residents. Watkins Glen was without hardly any traffic. EMS calls are down and we went to Wal-Mart this morning and there was actually food and milk, but no toilet paper! Everyone was pretty cautious.

Day 6: The news of the first confirmed case of the virus hit Schuyler County. This was to be expected.

I feel sorry for the ambulance crews and the hospitals that are forced to deal with patients and also the patients who have no where else to turn to. 911 dispatchers now have an added responsibility to screen calls so we know what we are getting into.

Sunday night we had our first EMS call since this all started. It would be close to our house. I held the truck at the station and responded. I have to admit this is the first time I felt very uneasy about investigating a call. I put on a mask, gloves and stayed on the front porch where I could see the patient. This is not the way I have ever done business, but under the circumstances necessary. Thankfully, the ambulance came in quick order and moved the patient to the rig. At this time we (Odessa) are drastically thinking of changing our responses after 42 years of providing EMS. This really stinks.

It is now the end of the first week in April and we are still getting new updates on how we should respond and try to do separation recommended by the CDC. The recent working fire in Watkins showed how difficult it is to do the job and maintain the 6' distance required.

First responders are dying from this and one sick person can put the whole department out of service. You only have to read Firehouse to see how it is effecting us all.

We (Odessa) were toned out for a structure fire. The different thing about this is we were warned of two occupants that were PUI, or persons under investigation, for the

Virus cont...

coronavirus. This made the call more dangerous than just a fire. The occupants were not very cooperative, to make matters worse. The fire turned out to be minor and all second alarm was returned. Just another thing we have to worry about.

The shutdown continues, we lost one of our active firefighters and no services can be held because of the shutdown. Very hard on all of us.

A new order of protocol for CPR/Full arrest. NO BVM's, no forced ventilation of any kind by BLS EMT's. Chest compression only and only minimum persons to work on patient with full PPE. Crazy!!!

In 2003 I retired and became Deputy Director of EMO. At that time one of the duties I had was to work with Department of Health. Then deputy Director Marcia Kasprzyk wanted to work with us to develop a Pandemic Virus Plan for the county. It involved planning for large scale inoculation of the whole county, plus the planning for closing schools and having people who were suspected of having the virus quarantined to prevent the spread. The Police, as well as the ambulance, hospital, and fire, were all in the planning stage to include NYS Fire and Health. We all (except for Marcia) felt this was a lot of planning for nothing. Well guess what?! She absolutely knew what she was talking about. Annual flu shots were given away free at the Watkins High School gym to establish a site to simulate the need and problems faced when doing mass inoculations. The whole county, about 18,000 people, were to be given their annual flu shots. We instituted the ICS and had three days set aside to accomplish the task. Not all 18,000 took advantage of it but it was good training. The Department never took ICS before and we gave classes for them and they did very well. Who would have thought. So all we are going through was really planned out long before. Now instead of getting shots we may well have to test the whole county for the virus. April 26,2020.

As I get ready to turn this over to Jen. The county is currently conducting testing at the hospital for the virus. Things are cautiously opening up for operations but nowhere near normal. Odessa, Monterey, and Watkins either postponed or canceled their annual banquets. Fund raisers are either canceled or modified. Mecklenburg and Burdett have gone to drive through breakfast and BBQ's with great success. So in some cases it has worked out better. I know of local firefighters who have been exposed to the virus and had to quarantine, and be tested. It is still out there and as we go forward it will never be the same any more.

- Car 3

**SCHUYLER COUNTY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

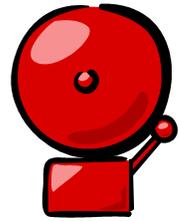
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Last Alarms



Robert “Bob” Bump
Burdett FD

Bernie MacDougal
Odessa FD

Edward Vaughn, Sr.
Odessa FD

Upcoming Classes

We will be offering the following classes:

Tentative:

- *EMR (CFR) - TBD*
- *SCBA/Interior TBD*

Want to be notified of our upcoming courses? Join our mailing list! Send requests to jgeck@co.schuyler.ny.us

For more information, visit:

www.schuylercounty.us
www.dhses.ny.gov/ofpc
www.emstar.org

**Send Us Your
Photos, News,
and
Suggestions!**

To send information, or if you want us to visit your station, contact the Emergency Management Office at 607-535-8200 or Rick and Shirley Churches at 607-594-2189 or rickshirlc27@gmail.com