

HISTORY OF THE AFTON HOSE COMPANY

The Afton Hose Company will celebrate its 127th year this September. The company was formed on September 17, 1895, adopting the constitution and bylaws of the George Wilbur Hose Co. of Oneonta. The initial group of firemen was made up of 36 charter members with C. E. Coddington the first recorded chief. An improvement of the village water system, after the conflagration of 1884, prompted the formation of the Hose Company. Through the years, the Company has had 29 chiefs with Blane Reiling presently serving in this position.

The Company has had a number of men who have served Afton faithfully for many years, but three men stand out for the longest service. Bruce Keator, who was the 1967 Chenango County Firefighter of the Year and joined the Company in 1903; J. Harry Carr, serving 49 years and Harry Horton, serving for 56 years. In 1953 both Horton and Keator were honored by the Company for their 50th year of service to the Community of Afton.

The first resident fire house was the present-day Town Hall structure, and if you look closely, the “Afton Hose Co.” lettering can still be distinguished on the front of the building. The next firehouse was the Village Hall, which stood at the present site of the Great American food store driveway. In 1954, the Afton Emergency Squad was organized and became part of the Company. In 1958, the Company moved to its present home, a one-story metal and brick structure which housed all of the fire apparatus plus the Emergency Squad ambulance. Since the original construction of this building, two additions have been added. The first was in 1978 and was equipped with a kitchen, storage area, bathrooms and a meeting room for the Company. In 2005, another addition was constructed which provided additional equipment storage, an expanded kitchen and meeting area, and a larger office area. The facility is used for other community functions, organizations and activities.

In 1979 the Fire Department and Emergency Squad were incorporated and were reorganized under a Fire District. This Fire District is governed by 5 elected persons from the Town of Afton, but functions as a separate entity from the Town or the Village of Afton.

Today, the fire department and emergency squad include both men and women. Our “youth” program enables individuals under the age of 18 but at least 16 to gain experience on both the Fire Company and Squad. Several past “youth” members have gone on to become professional fire fighters and para-medics in paid departments. The department has a long and distinguished record of service to the community.



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