

History of Horry County Fire Rescue

Over the last 30 years, Horry County Fire Rescue has gone from being established as a fire district, to being responsible for 1134 square miles and responding to more than 42,500 calls annually.

During the elections in 1979, a referendum was put on the ballot in hopes to create a fire protection district to protect the unincorporated areas of Horry County. This vote would not only determine if the district would be established but also which voting districts would have fire stations in their jurisdictions. Though the referendum was voted down in the elections, there was enough support on the east side of the county that Horry County council established Ordinance 11-79 and created the *Horry County Fire Protection District*. Bob Maxwell was named the first Fire Coordinator and served from 1979-1985.



The first stations in the county were: Socastee, Lake Arrowhead, Wampee, Bucksport, Forestbrook, Little River and Mount Olive, which was the only station located on the west side of the county. Each of these stations were equipped with one engine and manned by volunteers.

Under the command of Fire Chief Hampton Shuping (1985-1999,) the Horry County Fire Protection District had a substantial growth spurt and was renamed Horry County Fire Department. Chief Shuping's goal was to ensure that 90% of all homes in Horry County would be within five miles of a fire station. With that goal in mind, 1985 saw the addition of Juniper Bay, Longs, Ketchuptown, Nixonville, Bayboro and Shell, with Aynor Rural coming into the county system. Between 1989-1990, 22 more apparatus were brought in and stations were built in Goretown, Cherryhill, Joyner, Allens, Cates Bay, Maple, Brooksville, Mount Vernon, University, with Wampee and Socastee being rebuilt. The additional fire stations would not only protect thousands of residents, but also prove to be instrumental in some of the biggest fires Horry County would have yet to see.



With the continued growth of the county, the increased number of fire stations and limited number of volunteers, 1993 saw the first career fire stations at University and Lake Arrowhead. These stations were manned with an officer and firefighter per shift. In 1997, firefighters were required to have their EMT.

In 1999, Hampton Shuping resigned and EMS Director, Randal Webster, stepped in and served as interim fire chief, later becoming the Fire Chief. During this time, Horry County had already begun preparing for the merger of the Horry County Fire Department and Horry County EMS that would in 2001 become Horry County Fire Rescue. The benefits of this merger would be seen throughout the county, as there would be an increase in manpower, resources and response times.

2003 brought changes to the leadership of Horry County Fire Rescue. When Fire Chief



Randy Webster accepted a new position as the Director of Emergency Management, Horry County brought in Garry Alderman to serve as interim fire chief. Alderman's previous role with the county included HazMat Coordinator for the Emergency Management Division where he then moved to the Fire Rescue Department and became Deputy Chief of Special Operations. In February 2004, Horry County Fire Rescue named Garry Alderman, Fire Chief, where he still serves today.

Under Alderman's direction, the department has continued its momentum grown at an enormous rate. In 2005 Horry County Fire Rescue increased its convoy by adding an additional 34 pieces of fire apparatus. It has also added five new stations, rebuilt two and renovated eight to accommodate the more than 300 career members and 200 volunteers. Currently, it has 38 stations in total and has responded to such incidents as the Engine 40 Crash and Highway 31 Wildfires.