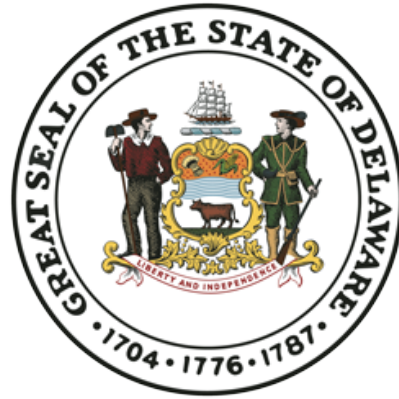


# State of Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts



---

## Delaware Volunteer Fire Service 2013 Annual Report

---

Released in conjunction with the Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's Association Annual Conference  
September 2013

R. Thomas Wagner, Jr., CFE, CGFM, CICA  
Auditor of Accounts





STATE OF DELAWARE  
**OFFICE OF AUDITOR OF ACCOUNTS**

**R. THOMAS WAGNER, JR., CFE, CGFM, CICA**  
**AUDITOR OF ACCOUNTS**

**PHONE: 302-739-4241**  
**FAX: 302-739-4217**

September 10, 2013

Mr. Charles Boyer  
President  
Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's Association  
122A South Bradford Street  
P.O. Box 1849  
Dover, DE 19903

Ms. Penny Rodimak  
President  
Ladies Auxiliary Association  
Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's Association  
122A South Bradford Street  
P.O. Box 1849  
Dover, DE 19903

Dear Mr. Boyer and Ms. Rodimak:

Once again I am very pleased to present the Delaware Volunteer Fire Service Annual Report. Delaware's volunteer fire service program is, and always has been, a tremendous asset to Delawareans. The program demonstrates the pride and support of the many volunteers, both the firefighters and the ladies auxiliary members.

A volunteer's time includes fire responses, training, public education efforts, vehicle maintenance, station upkeep, and many other contributions. As the following report details, these volunteers not only sacrifice their time and energy, but they also save the State taxpayers a significant amount of money. My Office estimates a savings of more than \$182,000,000 for the State's fiscal year ending June 30, 2013.

These individuals voluntarily put their lives on the line to provide the citizens of Delaware with a safer and more secure community.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for the men and women providing these services to their respective communities. I also extend my deepest sympathies for those lives lost in the line of duty.

Sincerely,

R. Thomas Wagner, Jr., CFE, CGFM, CICA  
Auditor of Accounts

## ***Background***

The State of Delaware has 79 volunteer fire companies comprising approximately of 3,000 volunteer firefighters, 1,400 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), and 2,000 additional members (e.g. life, auxiliary, juniors, cadets, and social).<sup>1</sup>

The State of Delaware offers a variety of benefits to recognize volunteer firefighters, ladies auxiliary members, and EMTs for the sacrifices they make through their volunteer services. The benefits include:

- a \$400 tax credit on personal income taxes each year;
- membership in the Delaware Blood Bank;
- participation in a pension plan<sup>2</sup>;
- worker's compensation for disabilities received in the line of duty;
- a special "Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's License Plate" for personal vehicles; and
- membership in the Delaware Federal Credit Union.

In the unfortunate event that a service member suffers a death in the line of duty, further benefits include:

- reimbursement for funeral expenses, up to \$7,000;
- life insurance payments of \$150,000 for deaths in the line of duty; and
- reimbursement for college tuition expenses for dependent children.



Photo Courtesy of Rehoboth Beach Volunteer Fire Company

---

<sup>1</sup> Obtained from Delaware Volunteer Firefighter Association, Executive Manager

<sup>2</sup> After firefighters have served a minimum of ten years, they are eligible to receive a pension at the age of 60

## It would cost \$182,765,333 to replace Delaware's Volunteer Fire Service with an Employed Statewide Fire Service:



Photo Courtesy of Dover Fire Department

### *Projected Costs of Employed Statewide Fire Service:*

Salary and Fringe Benefits <sup>3</sup>	\$	173,645,160
Equipment Purchases and Maintenance <sup>3</sup>		19,191,841
Building Purchases and Maintenance <sup>4</sup>		15,121,344
Fuel and Utilities <sup>4</sup>		5,514,735
Insurance Premiums <sup>4</sup>		3,526,833
Employee Apparatus <sup>4</sup>		1,843,860
		<hr/>
Total Projected Cost		218,843,773
		<hr/>
Less Current Revenue Sources:		
Grant-in-Aid <sup>5</sup>	\$	(5,869,381)
Insurance Tax <sup>6</sup>		(22,758,752)
County Subsidies <sup>7</sup>		(7,450,307)
Subtotal		<hr/>
		(36,078,440)
		<hr/>
Total Cost Avoidance	\$	182,765,333
		<hr/>

<sup>3</sup> See page 5 for details

<sup>4</sup> See page 6 for details

<sup>5</sup> Obtained from the Fiscal Year 2013 Grant-in-Aid Bill

<sup>6</sup> Obtained from the Office of the State Treasurer

<sup>7</sup> Obtained from the Fiscal Year 2013 Budgets for each County



## Property Tax would increase by \$8.51 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for each household for an Employed Statewide Fire Service:



Photo Courtesy of Bethany Beach Fire Company

### *Projected Costs of Employed Statewide Fire Service per \$1,000 of assessed property value:*

Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$	8.09
Equipment Purchases and Maintenance		0.89
Buildings Purchases and Maintenance		0.70
Fuel and Utilities		0.26
Insurance Premiums		0.16
Employee Apparatus		0.09
		<hr/>
Total Projected Cost		10.19
		<hr/>
Less Current Revenue Sources:		
Grant-in-Aid	\$	(0.27)
Insurance Tax		(1.06)
County Subsidies		(0.35)
Subtotal		<hr/>
		(1.68)
		<hr/>
Net Increase in Property Tax	\$	8.51
		<hr/> <hr/>

## Detailed Cost Savings Calculations

### Cost for a Non-Volunteer Fire Department

The basis for this analysis is the paid City of Wilmington Fire Department (WFD). The following statistics were used in the analysis:

Population of the City of Wilmington <sup>8</sup>	70,851
Current number of Wilmington Fire Stations <sup>9</sup>	7
Population served per Station (Wilmington Population/Fire Stations)	10,122
Current number of paid firefighters <sup>10</sup>	177
Estimated employees per Station (8 employees per shift * 3 shifts per day)	24
Average salary and fringe benefits for current WFD employees <sup>11</sup>	\$ 91,585

### State Demographics

State population <sup>12</sup> (excluding Wilmington)	827,083
Assessed property value <sup>13</sup> (excluding Wilmington)	\$ 21,468,575,221
Number of volunteer stations	79
Total employees needed (24 per station)	1,896

### Salary and Fringe Benefits

Salary and fringe benefits were calculated by multiplying the average salary and fringe benefits for current WFD employees, \$91,585, by the total employees needed, 1,896. The total estimate is \$173,645,160.

### Equipment

Equipment purchases were calculated using the following:

Equipment Type	Estimated Cost	Est. Life (Years)	Replacement Per Year*	Annual Replacement Cost
Fire Engine	512,500	15	5	2,562,500
Ambulance	237,500	6	13	3,087,500
Brush Truck	142,500	10	7	997,500
Rescue Truck	662,500	15	5	3,312,500
Aerial Truck	762,500	18	4	1,525,000 **
Tanker	550,000	15	5	1,375,000 **
Utility Vehicle	37,500	8	9	337,500
<b>Equipment Total</b>				13,197,500
<b>Plus Maintenance</b>				5,994,341
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>\$ 19,191,841</b>

\*Averages were truncated to whole numbers.

\*\*Aerial trucks and tankers are required by approximately half of the companies for specialized needs

<sup>8</sup> Obtained from the Delaware Economic Development Office

<sup>9</sup> Obtained from the Fiscal Year 2013 Grant-in-Aid Bill

<sup>10</sup> Per the Senior Analyst/Systems Manager at the City of Wilmington, this figure includes five civilian positions

<sup>11</sup> Total Salary and Fringe Benefit information provided by the Senior Analyst/Systems Manager at the City of Wilmington

<sup>12</sup> Obtained from DEDO

<sup>13</sup> Obtained from the State Department of Education



Photo Courtesy of Aetna Hose Hook & Ladder Company

### ***Buildings and Maintenance***

Building purchases and annual maintenance were estimated at \$15,121,344 per year. Buildings were estimated to have a life expectancy of 20 years.

### ***Fuel and Utilities***

Fuel and Utilities were estimated at \$5,514,735 per year. The fuel and utilities were estimated based on annual reports submitted by the fire companies.

### ***Insurance Premiums***

Insurance Premiums were estimated at \$3,526,833, based on annual reports submitted by the fire companies.

### ***Employee Apparatus***

Employee apparatus was estimated to be \$9,725 per firefighter, with an estimated life expectancy of 10 years. The statewide equivalent for 1,896 firefighters is \$1,843,860 annually.

## **Volunteer Fire Service and Ambulance Training**

The Delaware State Fire School, under the guidance of the State Fire Prevention Commission, provides fire, rescue, emergency medical training, and public fire safety education to the fire and rescue service, as well as to industry and citizens of our State.<sup>14</sup> Fire company training programs are conducted at one of three Delaware State Fire Training Centers. Classes are generally offered on weekends to accommodate the schedules of volunteer firefighters and ambulance attendants.

During 2013, the Delaware State Fire School trained 11,217 students in Fire and Rescue and 10,316 in Emergency Medical Services.<sup>15</sup>



Photo Courtesy of Clayton Fire Company

Sadly, one firefighter was lost in the line of duty en route to a scene in the last year.

---

**Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse  
in Delaware State Government  
1-800-55-FRAUD**

---

---

<sup>14</sup> Obtained from <http://statefireschool.delaware.gov/fromdirector.shtml>, Letter from the Director, Robert Newman

<sup>15</sup> Obtained From the Delaware State Fire School Annual Report