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HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE HEARING

Topic: Volunteer Firefighters & EMS
Hatfield Township Building – Hatfield, PA
March 10, 2020

AGENDA

- 2:00 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks
- 2:10 p.m. Debbie Wellington
Treasurer, North Penn Good Will Services
- 2:20 p.m. *Questions & Answers*
- 2:40 p.m. Panel of Local Fire Companies:
- Jim Gallagher
President, Perseverance Volunteer Fire Company
Treasurer, Souderton Fireman's Relief Association
 - Jerry Guretse
President, Telford Volunteer Fire Company
 - Marv McKown
President, Tylersport Volunteer Fire Company
- 3:10 p.m. *Questions & Answers*
- 3:30 p.m. Closing Remarks

North Penn Goodwill Service, Inc.

"Serving those who serve others since 1949."



The North Penn Goodwill Service was formed by a group of Souderton firemen in 1949 after fighting a house fire in Franconia, near Harleysville, on a cold March night. After discussing the need for a local canteen, they acquired a used mid-1930's school bus from Hagey's Transportation Service. Some used equipment was secured through donations, and other items were purchased as funds became available.

For several years, the Goodwill Service was operated by members of the Souderton Fire Co. Currently the active membership includes several Telford Fire Co. members, and a number of Souderton Fire Co. members help out when additional manpower is needed. We also share garage space on Fire Co. property across from our station at 120 E. Church Street in Souderton. A charter as a non profit corporation was secured in 1952.

In the early years several used transit buses were outfitted as canteens, before the switch to step vans, which have grown in size to the ones we currently operate. Current equipment includes two fully equipped canteens; a 1998 and a 2011 Freightliners. This canteen contains two refrigerators and two freezers, plus enhanced cooking facilities. We also have two somewhat smaller Shelter units, complete with bathroom facilities. Equipment also includes a van for shuttling crews and supplies. We now have one canteen and one shelter equipped with "insta-chains" for heavy snow conditions. We are in the process of evaluating our need for a third canteen unit.



Over the years, some of the larger calls have included extended service during flooding along the Delaware in 1955 and along the Schuylkill in 1972. A fire at a K-Mart warehouse in lower Bucks in 1982 required 24-hour service for 8 days. The large fire in Perkasio in 1988 required 3½ days. Other large calls were for a tornado in Lyons, Berks Co.; the Bridgeport Industrial Park fire, and the Millennium Apartments fire in Conshohocken. While the largest number of calls are in Montgomery and Bucks Counties, other calls are to, Lehigh, Northampton, Chester, Delaware, and Berks counties; and occasionally farther, and across the Delaware to New Jersey.

In 2017 we put in over 1800 man hours, serving over 6,500 sandwiches, over 300 gallons of coffee, while traveling 2377 miles. Over the past 9 years, the average number of calls annually has been 58 per year.

NPGS operates on a totally volunteer basis, providing food, drink, and shelter to firefighters, EMS, police, and other emergency workers, and victims 24/7. Operations are funded through donations, contributions, and our Fire Company (June) and Community (December) Fund Drives. Another major fund raiser is our annual Christmas Tree Sale.

Our roster includes sixteen Life members. We can always use additional men and women who are available to volunteer their time. Length of calls can range from several hours to eight hours or more. One of your rewards will be the often heard statement, "Thanks for coming out." Meeting night is on the last Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Feel free to visit on one of our work nights (the first and third Mondays) starting at 7:00 p.m. or call us and leave a message at 215-723-9579. We are located behind the Souderton (Perseverance) Fire Company on North Second Street.

You can also find us on Facebook: NPGS41 or Twitter at NPGS41 Souderton
E-mail: recruitment@npgs41.com