

**HELENA
FIRE DEPARTMENT
1980 ANNUAL REPORT**

AS SUBMITTED TO THE HONORABLE MAYOR
AND THE CITY COMMISSION

NORM GRAY, FIRE CHIEF

JOHN C. TODD, ASS'T CHIEF

ROBERT A. ERICKSON, CITY MANAGER

FIRE PREVENTION IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

Commissioners
Rich D. Brown, Mayor
Michael J. DeSilva
Dale L. Johnson
James H. Nybo
Russell J. Ritter

Robert A. Erickson
City Manager



Fire Department
Mailing Address:
City-County Admin. Bldg.
316 North Park
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Phone 406/442-9920
Office Location:
Civic Center Building

Fire Chief
Norm Gray

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January 14, 1981

Mr. Bob Erickson
City Manager
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Erickson:

I am submitting herein the 1980 Annual Report of the Helena Fire Department. This report contains statistical data and information for the year 1980.

This year has been a devastating year as far as fire loss and life loss. We've had several large fires which contributed to the large fire loss this year and two (2) lives lost in two (2) separate residential fires. We also had two (2) fire-fighters who were forced to take their pensions due to injuries suffered while fighting fires. The Helena Fire Department responded to a record 588 alarms during 1980. We are hoping that 1981 will be a better year for all concerned.

1981 should prove to be a very interesting year. This past year, we seemed to be in constant turmoil, due to the change in the administration of the Fire Department, the change of the City administration and other factors beyond our control. I feel that as Chief of the Helena Fire Department, I am getting my feet on the ground and with the co-operation that you and the City Commission have given me, we will be able to progress even further to make the Helena Fire Department even better.

This year we will be expanding our inspection program due to the re-organization of the department. We will have two (2) full time people in the Fire Prevention Bureau and one (1) part-time person to accomplish the task of building inspections and code enforcement. We are now working directly with the City Building Department to accomplish code enforcement in the more difficult areas of the City.

With the creation of the position of Fire Training Officer, we will be able to bring our training program up to a higher level.

I would like to thank the men of the Helena Fire Department for their dedication and hard work this past year which made my job extremely easier. I am very proud of these men and the citizens of Helena should be proud of them also.

I would also like to thank you and the members of the City Commission for your co-operation and support this past year.

Respectfully submitted,

Norm Gray
Norm Gray, Fire Chief
Helena Fire Department

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MAYOR

RICH BROWN

COMMISSION

MIKE DESILVA
DALE JOHNSON
JIM NYBO
RUSS RITTER

CITY MANAGER

ROBERT ERICKSON

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HELENA FIRE DEPARTMENT

CHIEF
NORM GRAY

ASST. CHIEF
JOHN TODD

FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER
ROBERT KNUDSON

COMBAT

SHIFT #1

Capt. Lee Crawford
Lt. Rich Coe
FF 1/C Ted Simpson
FF Jim Skinner
Mech. Ron Morris
FF Doug Duncan
FF Don Gage
FF Warren Ziegler

SHIFT #2

Capt. Don Holshue
Lt. Ron Jacobsen
FF 1/C Dennis Sorrels
FF Don Hurni
FF Dale Klugman
FF Jay Moore
FF Mike Spotorno
FF Ed Flies

SHIFT #3

Capt. Bob Pare
Lt. Joe Cross
FF 1/C Art Krieger
FF Mike Foster
FF Bob Olson
FF Harry Crawford
FF Norb Roth
FF Jim Feucht

Separated from service - Capt. Ed Wordal
FF Butch Warfield

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FIRE APPARATUS

1980

| <u>APPARATUS #</u> | <u>STATION</u> | <u>TYPE APPARATUS</u> | <u>DISCRIPTION</u> | <u>YEAR</u> |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Engine 31 | Main | Mini Pumper | Chevrolet | 1979 |
| Engine 32 | Main | 1250 Pumper | Seagraves | 1975 |
| Engine 33 | Main | 1000 Pumper | Superior | 1979 |
| A.T. 34 | Main | 85' Tower | Sutphen | 1976 |
| Engine 36 | E.S. | Mini Pumper | Dodge | 1976 |
| Engine 37 | E.S. | 1250 Pumper | Superior | 1980 |
| Ladder 38 | E.S. | 75' Ladder | Pirsch | 1946 |
| #27 | Main | Chief's car | Ford | 1980 |
| #28 | Main | Asst. Chief's car | Buick | 1969 |
| #29 | Main | F.P. car | Plymouth | 1973 |
| --- | E.S. | Utility | Chev. Pickup | 1968 |

Our new 1250 G.P.M. Pumper was delivered December 24, 1980.

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BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Fire Department Personnel take pride in keeping their buildings and premises clean and orderly. These facilities are the firefighters home away from home. Many man hours are spent each year performing these duties.

Building maintenance costs, utility costs and janitorial costs are up substantially from last year.

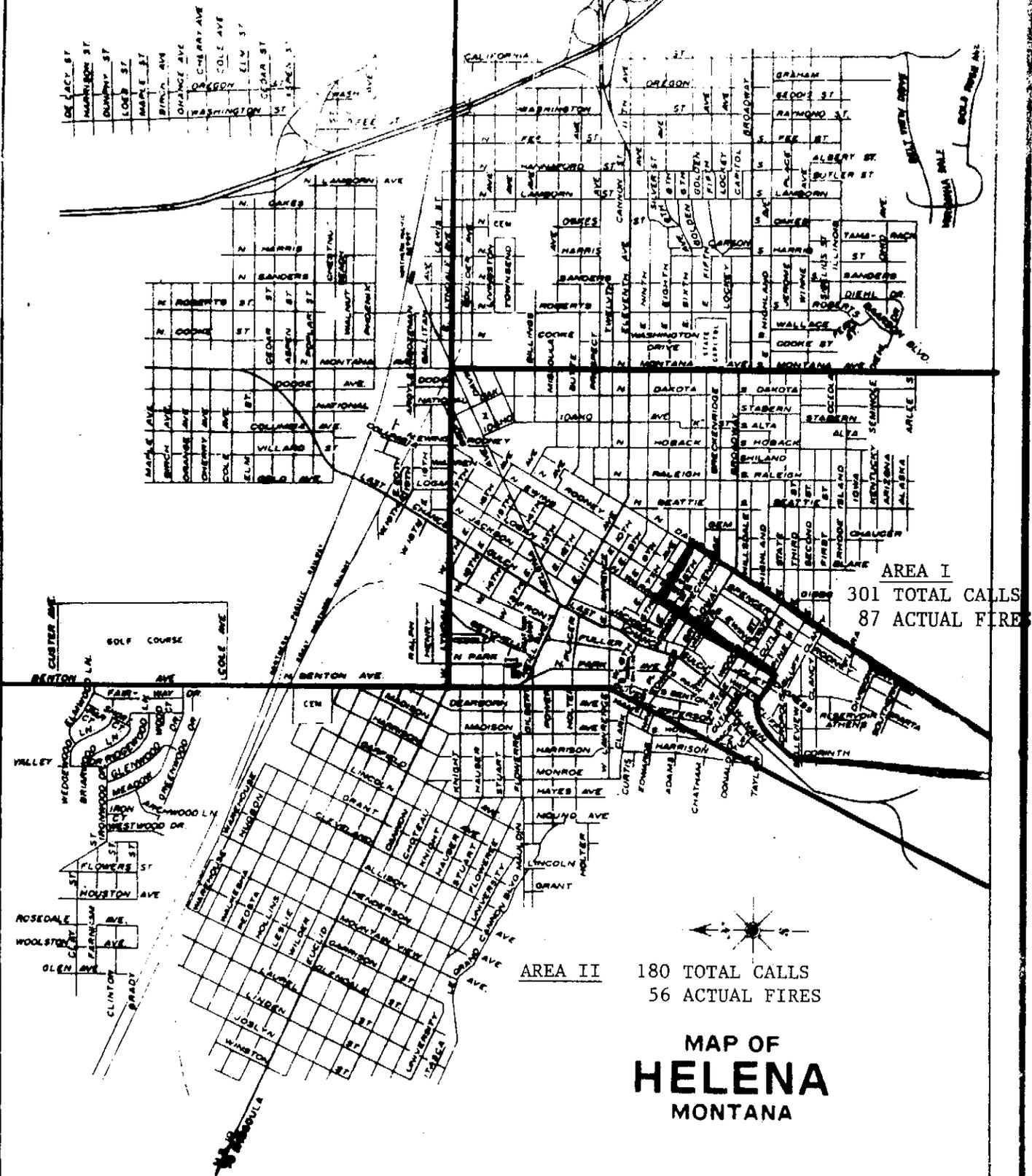
| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| BUILDING MAINTENANCE COSTS: | July to December | \$ 230.24 |
| UTILITY COSTS: | July to December | \$1,942.48 Estimated |
| JANITORIAL COSTS: | July to December | \$ 195.69 |

Utility costs do not reflect any money for utilities for the Main Fire Station.

There were 1,540 man hours spent in Building Maintenance in 1980.

AREA III 164 TOTAL CALLS
55 ACTUAL FIRES

AREA IV 183 TOTAL CALLS
42 ACTUAL FIRES

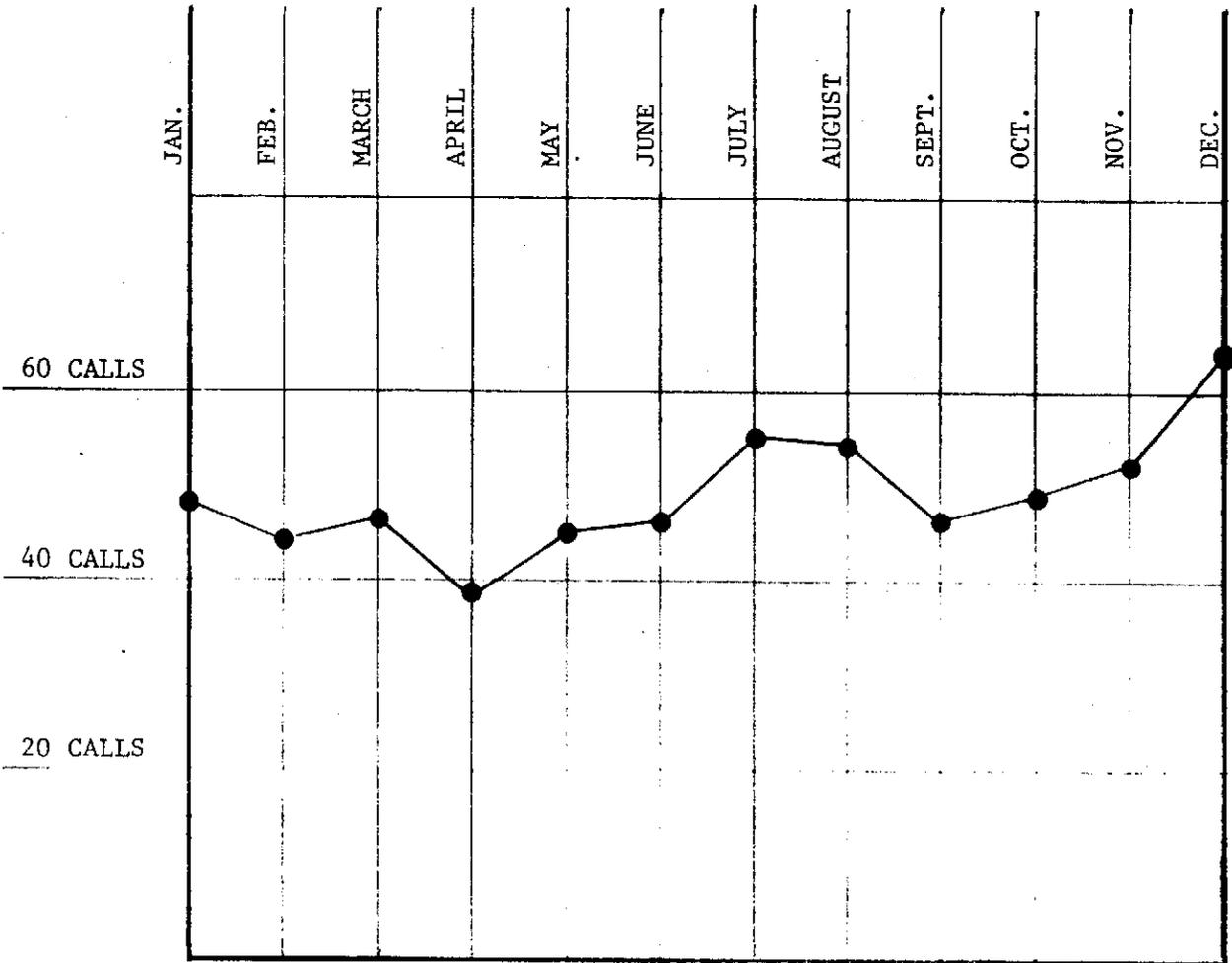


AREA I
301 TOTAL CALLS
87 ACTUAL FIRES

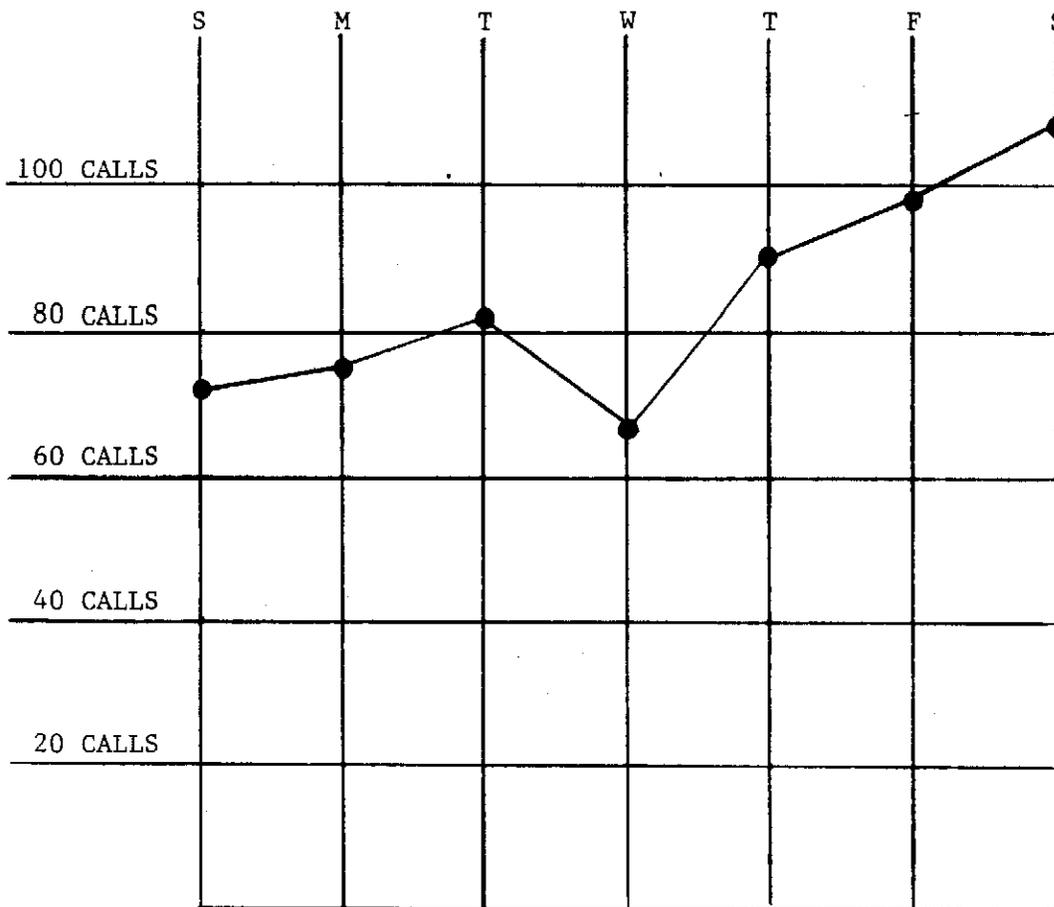
AREA II 180 TOTAL CALLS
56 ACTUAL FIRES

MAP OF HELENA MONTANA

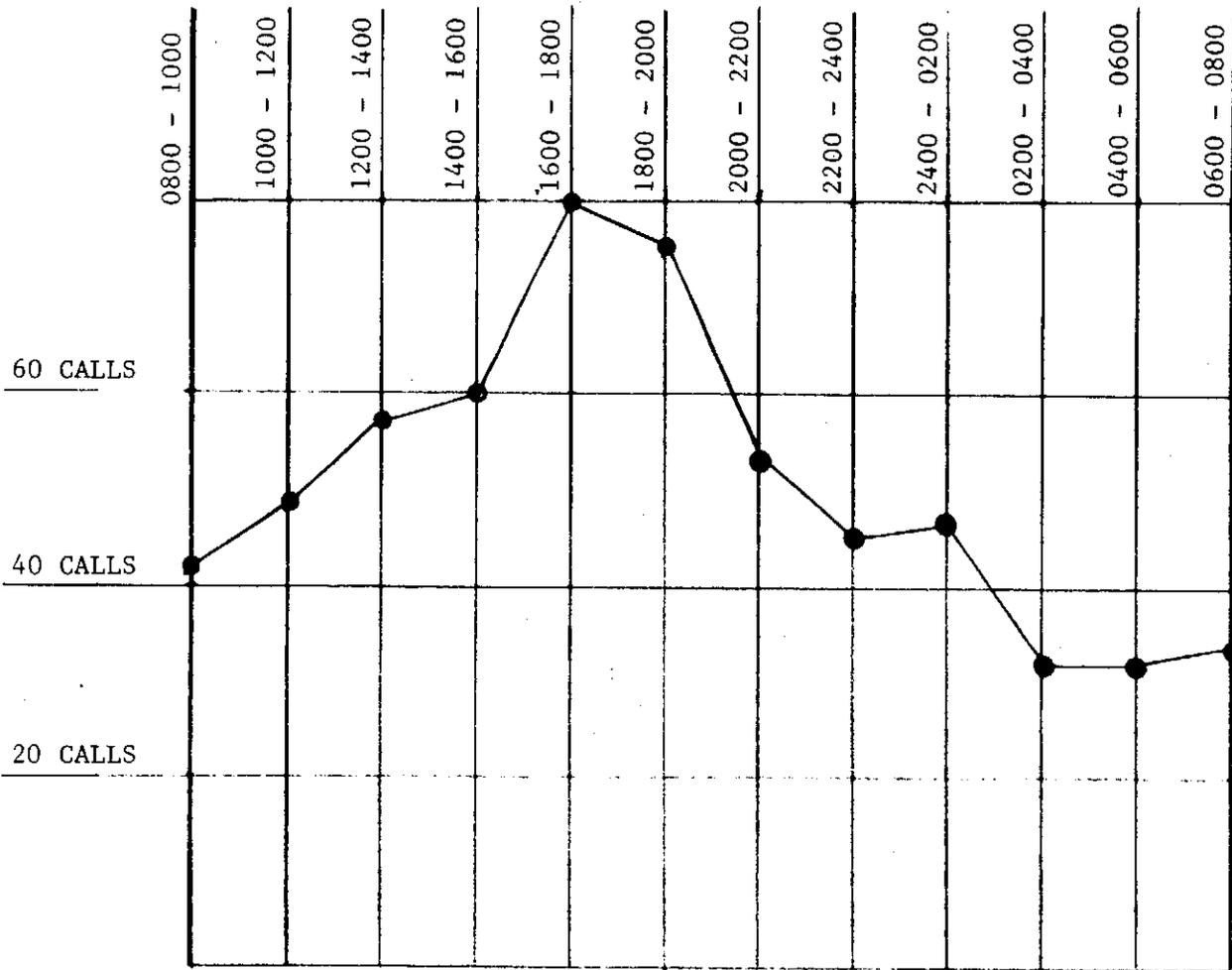
TOTAL CALLS FOR ALL AREAS - 588
TOTAL FIRES FOR ALL AREAS - 240



CALLS PER MONTH OF YEAR - 1980



CALLS PER DAY OF WEEK - 1980



CALLS PER HOUR OF DAY - 1980

(228 calls, residential - 167, commercial - 193, misc.)

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FIRE HYDRANT PROGRAM

The purpose of the fire hydrant program is to flush the hydrants and take pressure readings at each hydrant. When the hydrants are flushed we find out if there is anything wrong. If there is a problem with the hydrant, a repair order is made out and turned over to the Water Department. This system not only makes the Fire Department aware of problem hydrants but also makes the Water Department aware of the bad hydrants so they can be repaired. When repairs are made the Water Department contacts us and we will know that in case of a fire we will be able to use that particular hydrant.

The purpose of taking pressure readings at each hydrant is, it helps us determine which hydrants would serve us best in each area. It has proven very valuable to us in pre-planning target hazards. Another way we use the pressure readings is to help us determine water requirements in new building construction.

A total of 755 fire hydrants were flowed by shift members this year. 46 repair orders were written and turned over to the Water Department. Of the 46 repair orders, 17 were considered out of service, 4 were in need of major repairs, and 25 were in need of minor repairs. This program has proven very successful and we will continue this in the future.

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FIRE INCIDENT STATISTICAL REPORT

SOURCE OF ALARM

| | <u>This year</u> | <u>Last year</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Telephone-Fire Department..... | 401 | 347 |
| Telephone-Police Department..... | 116 | 115 |
| Alarm Board..... | 53 | 48 |
| Radio..... | 9 | 6 |
| Direct Report..... | 7 | 4 |
| Other..... | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 588 | 523 |

TYPE OF SITUATION FOUND

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Fire, explosion, etc..... | 236 | 201 |
| Smoke scare..... | 80 | 82 |
| Rescue, crash, emergency..... | 60 | 38 |
| Hazardous condition..... | 63 | 82 |
| Public Service..... | 21 | 14 |
| Alarm-no fire (accidental)..... | 81 | 71 |
| False alarm (malicious)..... | 20 | 20 |
| Electrical failure..... | 21 | 6 |
| Miscellaneous..... | 6 | 9 |
| Total | 588 | 523 |

TOTAL ALARMS IN AREA

| | | |
|--------------------|-----|-----|
| In City..... | 563 | 502 |
| Fire District..... | 24 | 19 |
| Mutual Aid..... | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 588 | 523 |

FIRE LOCATION

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|
| In buildings..... | 107 | 78 |
| Brush or grass..... | 28 | 36 |
| Rubbish near building..... | 16 | 1 |
| Rubbish in vacant lots..... | 10 | 5 |
| Vehicles..... | 43 | 51 |
| Miscellaneous..... | 28 | 30 |
| Total | 232 | 201 |

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FIRE CONTROL METHODS

| | <u>This Year</u> | <u>Last Year</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| By fire department..... | 169 | 171 |
| By occupants..... | 11 | 8 |
| Automatic sprinkler..... | 1 | 1 |
| Out on arrival..... | 33 | 15 |
| Other..... | <u>18</u> | <u>6</u> |
| Total | 232 | 201 |

FIRE CAUSES

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Chimney..... | 42 | 13 |
| Sparks on roof..... | 0 | 2 |
| Defective heaters..... | 8 | 2 |
| Rubbish near heaters..... | 5 | 6 |
| Open lights, flames..... | 2 | 1 |
| Careless smoking..... | 7 | 8 |
| Children with matches..... | 3 | 8 |
| Careless use of matches..... | 1 | 1 |
| Defective wiring..... | 6 | 10 |
| Defective appliances..... | 2 | 3 |
| Flammable liquids..... | 1 | 2 |
| Grease on stoves..... | 4 | 2 |
| Fireworks..... | 0 | 0 |
| Spontaneous ignition..... | 0 | 1 |
| Lightning..... | 0 | 1 |
| Sparks from machinery..... | 2 | 0 |
| Incendiary..... | 13 | 12 |
| Suspicious..... | 5 | 2 |
| Unknown..... | 1 | 0 |
| Miscellaneous..... | <u>5</u> | <u>4</u> |
| Total | 107 | 78 |

FIRE LOSS ANALYSIS

| | <u>Fires</u> | <u>This Year</u> | <u>Fires</u> | <u>Last Year</u> |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Public building..... | 8 | \$ 66,490.00 | 9 | \$ 15,150.00 |
| Dwellings..... | 58 | \$ 113,117.00 | 48 | \$190,975.00 |
| Mercantiles..... | 12 | \$1,309,700.00 | 5 | \$ 11,400.00 |
| Manufacturing..... | 0 | \$.00 | 0 | \$.00 |
| Miscellaneous..... | 3 | \$ 4,900.00 | 5 | \$ 20,300.00 |
| Vehicles..... | 70 | \$ 27,210.00 | 44 | \$ 18,420.00 |

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FIRE LOSS ANALYSIS (Cont.)

| | <u>This Year</u> | <u>Last Year</u> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Outdoor fire (vehicles, etc.)..... | \$ 27,210.00 | \$ 18,420.00 |
| Building fires..... | \$1,494,167.00 | \$237,825.00 |
| Total estimated fire loss for 1979 - | \$ 256,245.00 | |
| Total estimated fire loss for 1980 - | \$1,521,377.00 | |

This fire loss is estimated at the time of fire by the officer in charge. The insurance company then pays off to insured. This then becomes the actual fire loss.

The actual fire loss for 1980 is: \$ 3,310,282.80

PEOPLE INJURED IN FIRES

| | <u>This Year</u> | <u>Last Year</u> |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Civilians..... | 3 | 6 |
| Firefighters..... | <u>7</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Total | 10 | 6 |

PEOPLE KILLED IN FIRES

| | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Civilians..... | 2 | 0 |
| Firefighters..... | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Total | 2 | 0 |

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TRAINING

One of the major training problems our department faces is the lack of actual fireground operations. There is just so much that can be done in a classroom. The past year provided an opportunity for our firefighters to gain experience on the fireground, while combating the over 200 fires in 1980, just about all phases of firefighting operations were practiced in actual fire conditions by all members.

However, one area of great concern is fire prevention. The firefighters are very weak in this area of fire protection. The goal of the department is to have all firefighters trained in every aspect of fire protection and to maintain an ongoing training program to maintain a high level of firefighter proficiency to assure that our taxpayers are getting the most fire protection for their bucks.

The following is a summary of the training activities for 1980:

22 members completed National Firefighter Professional Certification program, Firefighter I.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Basic Arson..... | 1 member |
| Arson Field Training..... | 1 member |
| Fire Science Courses..... | 5 members |
| Handling L.P. Gas..... | 13 members |
| Hazardous materials..... | 8 members |
| Ladder Practices..... | 1 member |
| Rescue Practices..... | 1 member |
| Hose Practices..... | 1 member |
| Emergency Medical Technicians..... | 4 members |
| Fireground command..... | 1 member |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Classroom Training (manhours)..... | 2960.5 hours |
| Field Training (manhours)..... | 2936 hours |

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TRUCK AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Fire apparatus and equipment are the tools of a firefighter's profession. In order to perform our duties well, we have to have apparatus and equipment in top shape at all times. Many hours each year are required to keep this equipment clean and ready. The Helena Fire Department is very fortunate to have the modern up-to-date apparatus and equipment which we now have. A good maintenance program keeps the equipment in good shape and ready to use in an emergency situation.

The Helena Fire Department has it's own mechanic who works on shift as a firefighter. All mechanical work is done by the mechanic while he is on shift unless we have an emergency repair which requires that he be called in.

Most of the preventive maintenance is done by shift members. Following is a breakdown of man hours spent on truck and equipment maintenance by shift members.

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Equipment maintenance | 694 hours |
| Truck maintenance | 872 hours |
| | Total 1,586 |

New Fire Equipment purchased in 1980:

- 1-Booster nozzle
- 1-1½" nozzle
- 5 lengths of 3" hose
- 5 lengths of 2½" hose
- 5 lengths of 1½" hose
- Photographic equipment
- spare opticom unit
- New car with radio

The new 1250 G.P.M. Pumper was delivered to us December 24, 1980

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OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

The Helena Fire Department has a total uniformed strength of 27 members. The Fire Chief, Asst. Fire Chief and the Fire Prevention Officer are all day shift men and the other 24 men are shift personnel or combat firefighters. We work with a minimum of six (6) men on duty at all times. The six (6) men are split between the Main Fire Station and the East Side Fire Station. There are three (3) men at each station at all times. Montana Avenue is the dividing line between the two stations. One (1) truck alarms such as car fires, grass or brush fires, garbage cans, etc. are handled with one (1) truck and two (2) men for that respective side of town. If there is an alarm to a structure, the fire trucks from both stations respond with all firefighters. If we receive a call from one of our outside protection districts a pumper and three (3) men will respond from the Main Fire Station and three (3) off duty firefighters will be called in to standby at the Main Fire Station. If we receive a call for Mutual Aid, two (2) men and a pumper will respond from the East Side Fire Station and two (2) off duty firefighters will be called in to standby at the East Side Station. This procedure is our basic system and can be changed by the Officer in charge if he deems it necessary.

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TO: Norm Gray, Fire Chief
FROM: John C. Todd, Assistant Chief
DATE: January 14, 1981
SUBJECT: Annual Report from the Fire Prevention Bureau - 1980

Commentary:

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRE PREVENTION

As you are well aware, the Fire Service has four objectives which are focused on one main point - Prevention. Our "prevention" to say the least, is somewhat behind and I think that our City's fire loss in the past year is proof of this. Furthermore, it is a fact that cities that do not have an ongoing "prevention" program, suffer larger fire losses than those cities who do. Again, the past will stand as evidence.

For our department, 1980 was a very bad year. Death, injury, destruction, and arson is up 100 percent over 1979.

Now for the question, just exactly how important is fire prevention?

As I, and other fire protection specialists see it, fire prevention is the most important non-firefighting function of an organized fire department.

I am not saying this just because "prevention" is my charge. Before I became involved in this aspect of fire protection, I was a combat firefighter; at one point in my career, a lieutenant, in fact, and at times with a rather large number of subordinates. At this point in my career, "prevention was the farthest thing from my mind. However, as I came up the ladder of success within the Fire Service, I now look back and see the exact importance of "prevention" and how it could have, and still can improve combat firefighting.

In the fire service today, and Helena is no exception, less than 10 percent of the total budget and manpower are utilized for fire prevention programs. The bulk of the money is spent on firefighting manpower and apparatus in efforts to control fire after it has started.

This strategy is based on early alarm, the ability of construction materials to hold the fire in check for a given amount of time, time for our firefighting force to arrive on the fire scene and begin fireground operations.

In 3 minutes, under average fire conditions, the area involved reaches the point of flashover, the whole area bursts into flames all at once. Flashover occurs at about 800° F. and temperatures often reach more than 2000° F. The temperature of an average residential fire will exceed 1000° F. Within a short time after ignition, the fire can be well beyond the control of our firefighting force. If there is any delay in alarm after ignition has occurred - then we end up saving a cellar. At about 200° F. or in 2 minutes or less, the chance of human survival is slim and none; doors, windows and other structural components begin to fail. After 500° F, (dependent upon rating) the building itself becomes victim to the fire.

Let us be realistic about fire. Unless we act to prevent fire, we are forced into the position of trying to save whatever is left in a fire's wake. Our city has the potential of having fires we cannot control, let alone put out! But then we don't need to worry about putting them out - eventually, they will go out by themselves, or it will burn down to our size.

Fire prevention is not only important, it is necessary. It is required by state statute. It is our duty to our taxpayers. Furthermore, it is our first line of defence.

By utilizing fire prevention, we can take positive steps toward reducing our loss rather than merely reacting to fire and at the very least, buy time that can mean the difference between a minor loss and a major tragedy.

To prevent fire loss in our City is going to require an all out organized effort and, two people cannot get the job done. If our "prevention" program isn't "beefed" up, we are going to have more years like 1980.

Our prevention program is over 2 years behind and as you know, there are apartment houses in our City that have never been inspected, we don't even know how many there are! The inspection of apartments, hotels, and motels would keep one Fire Prevention Officer busy, all year. This brings me to the goals of the Bureau for the up-coming year of 1981.

GOALS FOR 1981

1. Inspect all apartments, hotel, and motel occupancies.
2. Not to get more than 3 years behind, well, maybe 4.
3. To prevent the 200 fires we are going to have in 1981.
4. To fully investigate all fires as required.
5. To reach more of our taxpayers by utilizing the media more.

Of course, the above goals are dependent upon additional manpower in the Bureau.

Recommendations:

1. The addition of at least two, full time Fire Prevention Officers, or one full time Fire Prevention Officer and implimentation of on duty firefighters for Code enforcement.
2. The appointment of a full time secretary.
3. Divert all monies received for parking and citations that the Bureau issues into the Bureau budget.
4. Impliment a charge for all reports, pictures, and the like that the Bureau provides to insurance companies and other such parties, to be put into the Bureau's budget.
5. A minimum charge for all plan reviews conducted by the Bureau for fire protection equipment, to be put into the Bureau's budget.

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1980 CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

INSPECTIONS:

| <u>Occupancy Type:</u> | <u>No. Inspections</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Assembly..... | 102 |
| Educational..... | 34 |
| Residential..... | 105 |
| Mercantile..... | 143 |
| Business..... | 31 |
| Industrial..... | <u>81</u> |
| Sub Total: | 618 |
| Re-inspections conducted..... | <u>131</u> |
| Total: | 749 |

FOUR YEAR COMPARISON

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total Inspections</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1980..... | 749 |
| 1979..... | 1486 |
| 1978..... | 1741 |
| 1977..... | 1689 |

ORDERS, NOTICES, CITATIONS:

Notices are issued for the correction of routine violations, orders are issued for the correction of the more hazardous violations, and to gain compliance and, as a last resort, citations are issued.

During 1980 there were 123 notices, 71 orders, and 10 citations issued.

PLAN REVIEW

The Bureau reviews all plans for new construction and remodeling of commercial structures also for all fire protection systems installed within the City.

Total plan review hours for 1980, 62.

FIRE INVESTIGATION

As per State Code, all fires within the jurisdiction of the department must be investigated. The Bureau investigates all fires where there is injury or death, suspicious circumstances, or where the dollar loss is estimated to be \$1,000.00 or more.

In 1980, the Bureau investigated 59 fires, 32 were of incendiary origin, 21 accidental, 2 suspicious and 4 undetermined origin.

FOUR YEAR COMPARISON

| <u>Year</u> | <u>No. Investigated</u> | <u>Incendiary</u> | <u>Arrests</u> | <u>Convictions</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1980..... | 59 | 32 | 5 | 0 |
| 1979..... | 47 | 16 | 5 | 2 |
| 1978..... | 34 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| 1977..... | 49 | 5 | 1 | 1 |

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Part of the Bureau's public education program is informing the public via the news media. During 1980 the Bureau conducted 16 radio and T.V. Programs, 36 lectures and demonstrations and conducted 14 fire drills.

Commissioners
Rich D. Brown, Mayor
Michael J. DaSilva
Dale L. Johnson
James H. Nybo
Russell J. Ritter

Robert A. Erickson
City Manager



Fire Department
Mailing Address:
City-County Admin. Bldg.
316 North Park
Helena, MT 59623
Phone 406/442-9920
Office Location:
Civic Center Building

Fire Chief
Norm Gray

FIRE PROTECTION CONTRACTS

At the present time the City of Helena has several Fire Protection Contracts with areas outside the City Limits. These include the Veteran's Administration Hospital, the County Fairgrounds, the State Highway Shops, the IOOF Home, and the area west of the city which is Fire District #3. We cover these areas with one (1) pumper and three (3) men. The cost of the fire protection for these areas is computed by taking the valuation based on fire insurance and multiplying that figure by mill levy necessary for operating the Helena Fire Department. The cost for taxpayers in the Fire District is computed on the same basis as the people who live in the City Limits. The private protection contracts are re-negotiated each year after it is determined what the operational budget for the Helena Fire Department is. In 1980, all contracts were re-written and start on October 1 of each year and end September 30 of each year.

Following is a breakdown of the money received by the City of Helena from these contracts.

| | | |
|--|-------------|----------|
| VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL..... | \$14,533.10 | per year |
| COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS..... | \$ 3,429.86 | per year |
| ODD FELLOWS HOME (IOOF)..... | \$ 524.40 | per year |
| HIGHWAY SHOPS..... | \$ 1,046.83 | per year |
| FIRE DISTRICT #3..... | \$20,049.01 | per year |
| Total | \$39,583.20 | per year |

The Helena Fire Department also has two (2) Mutual Aid Contracts. These contracts are with the West Helena Valley Volunteer Fire Department and the East Helena Volunteer Fire Department. These contracts state that in the event of a large fire the Helena Fire Department would receive one (1) pumper and ten (10) men from each Fire Department for a total of two (2) pumpers and twenty (20) men. If either of the volunteer Fire Departments should need our help, we are obligated to send one (1) pumper and two (2) men.