

**Past Chiefs
Winona Lake Fire
Department
1914-2014**

Tom Holbrook

Newt Ferris

Chauncey Eddington

Bill Cullison

Don Gatke

Bill Hunter

Link Hay

Bruce Howe 1949-1973

Jim Heaton 1974-1976

Bob Wulliman 1977-1981

Ed Purrington 1982-1985

Dick Haines 1986-1990

Roger Gelbaugh 1991-2001

Kip Shuter 2001

Mike Cox 2001

Roger Gelbaugh 2002-2006

Mitch Titus 2007-Present



**Winona Lake
Fire Department**
1000 Kings Hwy
Winona Lake, IN
(574) 267-4708



**Winona Lake
Fire Department**

***One Hundred
Years of Service***



HISTORY OF THE WINONA LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Town of Winona Lake was incorporated in June, 1913. At that time the town's fire protection was provided by citizens utilizing a single hose cart that contained firefighting hose with a nozzle but no pump. The Town did not have a trained fire department; it relied on the assistance from all of the town's people in case of fire. In April of 1914 several men were burning leaves on the park grounds just to the east of the Winona Hotel (now the Winona Condos). A gust of wind blew the leaves against the base of the hill and carried flames and sparks up the hill to the cottages that lined Chestnut Street. In minutes several cottages east of the Condos were on fire.

The hose cart was brought to the scene from a barn, located at the corner of 10th Street and College Avenue, by Philip Laurien and Victor Hatfield. It was useless against the fast moving fire due to the lack of a pump to boost available water pressure. A special train from the Fort Wayne Fire Department arrived in approximately forty minutes; this stopped the spread of the fire to the west and saved the Winona Hotel. Dynamite was used to blow up a couple of houses in the path of the fire. A total of twenty-three homes and cottages were destroyed.

In 1914 the Winona Lake Fire Department was organized by N. Bruce Howe, Newt Faris, Bill Cullison, Victor Hatfield, Dick Robinson, Phil Laurien; they elected Tom Holbrook as the first Fire Chief. The Town purchased a Howe pumper for \$2,750 and erected a concrete building just south of the Winona Hotel on Park Avenue. Over the years the building was enlarged and continued to be the home of the department until 1985.

Originally the firemen were called to a fire by phone and later a siren at the station. In 1957, with Civil Defense funds, home monitors were purchased for each fireman. Today each fireman has a battery powered radio and the fires are dispatched from the county dispatch center.



Today the fire department is housed in a station built in 1985. The volunteer firemen provided much of the construction manpower and contributed a substantial amount of the financing. There are currently 32 members, all volunteers. The equipment includes two engines, one tanker, one ladder truck and two utility vehicles, one of which is a Gator that is equipped to be used off road and on the many trails in Winona Lake. The department provides other services such as Medical First Responders, Hazmat Operations and Vehicle Extrication. The department belongs to the Kosciusko County fire association in a cooperative agreement to provide, and receive, assistance as needed.

