

## ***Firefighters deserve a pat on the back***

One unique quality about the Town of Pittsford is the overwhelming amount of residents who volunteer, especially for the Pittsford Fire Department.

Many towns are not able to maintain a fully volunteer fire department and often need to have a combination of paid and volunteer firefighters. The Town of Pittsford is lucky to have 80 volunteer firefighters who respond to approximately 900 calls annually.

While many calls are simply good intent calls such as an activated smoke alarm due to burnt food or excessive steam from a shower, others are more serious such as structure fires, down power lines, motor vehicle accidents or medical emergencies.

Being a volunteer firefighter is a considerable commitment. In addition to answering an average of 18 percent of calls per year, volunteers are also expected to give additional time for training, drills and monthly meetings. On average, PFD firefighters volunteer almost 12,000 hours each year.

Our fire department is financially supported through taxes paid to the Pittsford Fire District. The Pittsford Fire District, made up of 7 volunteer Fire Commissioners, uses these funds to acquire and operate firefighting apparatus, equip and train firefighters, maintain the firehouses, and also cover insurance, worker's compensation, and post-injury assistance when necessary.

There is also a Volunteer Fire Association which organizes volunteers, purchases some equipment, and helps maintain operations at each of Pittsford's two firehouses. The Volunteer Fire Association is a non-profit and is fully funded through donations.

Pittsford's VFA conducts two mail campaigns a year to raise money. The next campaign will be held in the Fall and, if possible, I encourage residents to participate.

To ensure there is always enough manpower to handle emergencies, the Pittsford Fire Department has an agreement with other nearby departments to provide additional equipment and firefighters, when necessary. More specifically, the PFD is part of what is known as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion is comprised of Brighton, Penfield, Pittsford, East Rochester, Egypt, Mendon, Fishers, Bushnell's Basin and Fairport.

In serious calls, neighboring fire departments will automatically respond. However, each fire department can call on one another at any time.

The Pittsford Fire Department is always looking for a few good men and women. If you are interested in volunteering, I encourage you to stop by Pittsford Fire Department Station #1 at 8 Monroe Avenue in the Village of Pittsford. At the fire station, you can receive an application and learn more about becoming a volunteer firefighter.

The men and women who volunteer at the PFD deserve a great deal of appreciation from the Town of Pittsford and all its residents - they work hard to keep us safe.