

A "thank-you" to fire chiefs past and present

In Pittsford, being a volunteer firefighter is a considerable commitment. The term "volunteer" is used to refer to part-time firefighters who have other occupations when not firefighting. Although they "volunteer" to become members, and to respond to the call for help, they are not compensated as employees during the time they are responding to an emergency scene, training drills, fundraising events or performing routine equipment maintenance. On average, PFD's 81 firefighters volunteer almost 12,000 hours each year.

The Pittsford Fire Department is led by a Fire Chief who also works in a volunteer capacity. This is an extremely demanding position that has always been filled by someone who possesses dedication, commitment and unwavering loyalty to the Town of Pittsford. This job frequently takes those who serve in it away from their families on nights, weekends and holidays. Over the years it has been filled by some tremendous Pittsford residents including: Jim Burdett; Mark Cavanaugh; Rob Cline; Pat Dwyer; Bob Farnam; Bob Hanretty; Tom Heagerty; Tim Hyland; Scott Hyland; Jared Lusk; and Barry Sens. These men have served the community well.

For the last two years, Paul Schenkel – the Town of Pittsford's Public Works Commissioner – has served dutifully as Pittsford's Fire Chief. As Public Works Commissioner, Paul oversees the Town's highways, sewers, parks, building maintenance, code enforcement and handles much of the budgetary and planning aspects for projects within Pittsford's borders. In addition to these responsibilities, he took on the position of Fire Chief in 2009 and 2010. I am very proud and grateful for Paul's service in both his official capacities as Public Works Commissioner and as Fire Chief. I would also be remiss if I did not acknowledge the other Town of Pittsford staff who volunteer as firefighters - Kelly Cline, Greg Kayes, Allen Reitz, Jim Murray, Todd Long and Town Board Member Jared Lusk.

At the beginning of January, a new fire chief took over - Steve Laboski. Steve brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position. He is a career firefighter for the City of Rochester. He has worked for the City for 26 years and is currently serving as a Captain. On behalf of Pittsford residents, I thank Steve for his service and wish him the best of luck during his tenure as Chief.

In closing, the Pittsford Fire Department is always looking for a few good men and women. If you are interested in volunteering and joining the ranks of these dedicated individuals, 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.