



THE TORRENT

ISSUE 4

THE FORT WAYNE FIREFIGHTERS MUSEUM

SPRING 2026

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Welcome to our newsletter

Welcome The Torrent. Our goal is to keep you informed about what is happening at our museum, along with a little bit of history. To start, we just recently added a donated 1884 Cowing & Gleason hand pumper to our collection along with a new, bigger Fire Chiefs display. In this addition we have our 1927 Ahrens Fox which next year, 2027, it will be 100 years old. Look for us to feature this truck and get it out to the public more.

Museum Notes

The Fort Wayne Firefighters Museum continues to grow as a vibrant hub of local history, preservation, and community engagement. Recent updates include ongoing restoration work on several historic apparatus pieces, refreshed exhibit signage to improve visitor experience. As we move forward, we remain committed to honoring the legacy of Fort Wayne's firefighters while creating meaningful, hands-on experiences for visitors of all ages. We're looking for passionate members to join us in that mission. We are actively seeking dedicated volunteers to help with events, and preservation projects, as well as new Board Members who can bring fresh ideas, leadership, and energy to our organization. Your time and expertise make a real impact on preserving Fort Wayne's firefighting history and keeping this important piece of our community thriving for future generations. If you're interested in getting involved, we'd love to connect.

**“When fire is cried
and danger is neigh,
'God and the
fireman' is the
people's cry; but
when 'tis out and all
things righted, God is
forgotten and the
firemen slighted.”**
— *Unknown*

Upcoming Events

“Saving Santa”
Sun. December 6, 2026
12:00 – 3:00

1927 Ahrens Fox

The Ahrens-Fox Fire Engine Company was an Ohio-based fire truck manufacturer. The company was founded in 1910 by John P Ahrens and Charles H Fox and built its first motorized fire engine in 1911. By the end of the following year production of horse-drawn fire apparatus ceased completely. Since then, over 1500 pieces of fire apparatus were built until 1977. Ahrens-Fox fire engines were recognizable by the chromed sphere above the pump that held air and smoothed the outgoing pressure fluctuations from the piston pump.

In 1927 a new engine was purchased. This was the 750 g.p.m. Ahrens Fox pumper. This engine was sufficient size to carry plenty of hose and was placed at Engine House No. 1. This engine was still part of the department fleet until around 1980 when it was given to the Firefighters Museum.



Testing new 1927 Ahrens Fox 750 g.p.m. pumper at the Keenan Hotel, corner of West Washington and South Harrison. The Fox pumped water over the top of the hotel and passed the test. Date 1927

History Lessons

Another Big Fire

The Fort Wayne Sentinel on March 24, 1860, carried the story of the destructive fire that destroyed Thiemes Clothing Store, and the Time Printing Office. The building was located at Columbia and Clinton. Thiemes owned one office building, and the other half was occupied by a shoe store. The Time Printing Company on the second floor, was also a complete loss. This building was operated by John W. Dowson.

Taken from the book "Fires That Have Ravaged Fort Wayne"

More Mutual Aid

The formation of a volunteer fire department for Poe and surrounding areas was first proposed in the early 1930's. Although the necessity was recognized by many area citizens, it was of special concern to members of a pinochle club which was formed in 1932. During their weekly games, the subject of fire protection would arise, usually after someone had had a fire. It was finally decided to ask the Township Trustee and the Advisory Board to establish a fire department. This was in 1934 or 1935. Since the recovery from the great depression had not progressed to the point of having taxes increased, a fire department could not be established.

In October 1935, a fire at Shearer's chicken warehouse, located in Poe, burned to the ground. The Fort Wayne and Decatur Fire Depts. Came to the rescue and saved the surrounding buildings and homes. Before the end of 1935, another disastrous fire occurred on the Cartwright farm located Yoder Rd. west of Poe. The house and barn both burned to the ground. The people living there at the time were given temporary shelter in the basement of the Poe schoolhouse.

The two fires were the last straw for the card players and other concerned citizens of the community. Something had to be done to provide local fire protection.

Immediately after the fires, thirteen determined men decide to form a community fire department without using tax moneys.

Taken from the "Poe Fire Dept. Golden Anniversary book"

More information about all of the Allen County departments will be included in future newsletters. We do not have the history of every department and very little on some. If anyone can obtain the history of a specific County Department, we would love to have it here at our museum. Soon all county departments will be gone after they are all combined. These histories should be saved. Get them to us!!

History of Fort Wayne Fire Stations

In these articles we will be looking at all of the Fort Wayne Fire Stations in the paid firefighter era, where they were and how long they operated. Other than station 2, the first stations built for horse drawn equipment were first designed in 1892 by Architect Brentwood Tolan, he passed away in 1892 before and building was started. In 1893 the architectural firm of Wing & Mahurin completed the build. Stations 1, 3,4,5, and 6 were built. Stations 7 & 8 were built in 1898 using the same design. The west side of station 3 was added in 1907 and designed by John M. E. Riedel. We will try and spotlight two stations per issue.

STATION 5



Fire Station 5 built in 1893, closed in 1959
1405 Broadway Ave. Now IAFF Union Hall



Second Station 5, built in 1959, still active
5801 Bluffton Rd.

STATION 6



First Sation 6 built in 1893, closed in 1968
1401 Wells Street. Torn down



Second Station 6 built in 1968, still active
1500 W. Coliseum Blvd.

Planned Giving

A HUGE "Thank You" to all of you who are members or have been members of the museum. Your support means everything to us. Without your help we may never have grown to where we are today. In the past we have had former members of the department remember us in their estate after passing. Elmer "Doc" Gamon was the first. His estate gave us a sizable donation that helped get the museum up and running. Later on, Margaret Johnson, the first chief's secretary, set up an account with the Community Foundation to take care of her in her last few years, with the museum receiving the remainder of her estate upon her passing. The museum couldn't have expanded as quickly as we did, had it not been for their generous donations. We thank them and their families.

HELP NEEDED

The Museum is always looking for help. We have several openings on our Board of Directors. We could also use more part time staff. And as always, volunteers to help out with projects and special events. If you would like to help out, contact our Director at the Museum or any of our Board members



Become a museum member

If you are not a member of the museum and want to be one, there are three simple ways to become one.

Active FWFD Firefighters;

1. Go to the FWFD intranet, forms, Union Forms, UN-04 Museum Deduction form. Fill out and return to payroll. (check your pay stub to see if you are a member)

For Retirees and civilians

2. Pick up a membership envelope at the museum, fill out the info, add your money, send back to the museum.

Or

3. Stop by the main branch of the Fire Police City County FCU and get our membership form, fill it out and give to the Credit Union. (It has banking info on it. Do Not bring to us. Leave at Credit Union)

All forms can be picked up at the Museum.

Contact Us

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