



## Waunakee Rotary Club

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Gary Acker is just the 13th fire chief in the history of the Waunakee Fire Department, founded in 1895.

Gary spoke at the Feb. 19 Rotary meeting about the current state of the fire department and its future as it looks to add onto the fire station.

Currently the department is comprised of 38 volunteer members, with one spot open that the department is hoping to fill this spring. Gary said five candidates are on the waiting list right now.

The department votes on the addition of any new members, Gary said, with current members selecting future colleagues based on their qualities and motivation to join the department.

The fire department and EMS are separate organizations, despite some perceptions, Gary said, but they are often called upon to come to each other's aid.

In 2008, the department responded to 242 calls, Gary said, which was a handful more than the year before. About half of those calls originated from the village proper, with about 30 percent coming from the town of Westport. The towns of Springfield and Vienna also each had a handful or two of calls, and the fire district responded to 24 calls for mutual aid from other departments.

Most of the calls required an hour or less of the department's time, which Gary attributed to the education programs started in the schools by his predecessors.

Much has changed over Gary's soon-to-be 32 years with the department. The size of the trucks has increased as has the amount of water they carry, he said, and thankfully, the number of home fires is way down from those days.

A number of those changes, along with the growth in the area over the last few decades, has brought the

department to the point where it would like a larger facility. The facility, built in 1964, has 12-foot bays, which are a little tight with the current 11-foot wide trucks.

And with the police department moving out of the building a couple of years ago, space to create an addition was freed up on site, Gary said. He said the department is looking forward to meeting with an architect this summer to put together a good floor plan for future needs.

Even with the need for more space, the department is not thinking about going away from the volunteer model any time in the near future.

"I personally don't see a full-time staff in the near future," Gary said.

The central location of the station, on Second Street, does help to keep the response times low, Gary said. He said there also is a good core of members who work in the village, making it possible to adequately cover any daytime emergencies. But at the same time all members, carry pagers to receive calls from the 911 center and can be ready to respond in the case of a major incident.

The district currently carries a class three fire rating, which is about the best a community of this size can hold, Gary said. And he can't envision the district having to talk about going to a paid staff until it reaches a population of 25,000-30,000.

#### Other news:

•Char and Phil Brereton of the Lodi Rotary Club came to announce the annual Lodi club smelt fry upcoming on March 18 and April 1 from 5-9 p.m. Tickets are \$9.50 in advance and \$10 at the door.

•Rex Endres put out a reminder of the Whitetails Unlimited dinner at 5 p.m. on Feb. 24.

•Super Raffle tickets for the March 4 drawing are still available for purchase.

### OFFICERS

DAN STATZ, PRESIDENT • TOM REIS, PRESIDENT ELECT  
PHIL WILLEMS, CLUB SECRETARY  
BOB PULVERMACHER, RECORDING SECRETARY • AL DASSOW, TREASURER

### DIRECTORS

DAN MUXFELD • BILL ERICKSON

### Calendar of Events:

- Feb. 21, Waunakee Community Foundation Hypnotist Show
- Feb. 24, Whitetails Unlimited
- March 4, Super Raffle
- May 12, Safety Seat Check

•Bill Barlow, Waunakee village administrator, was inducted as a new club member.

•Tickets are also still available for the hypnotist show to raise money for the Waunakee Community Foundation this Saturday in the high school PAC and they can be purchased at the door, too.

•a \$2,500 check was given to the Waunakee Orcas of Wisconsin for their help volunteering with the Rotary in Lights project.

Birthdays: Feb. 26, Sandy Taylor; March 1, Rex Endres and Duwayne Statz.

Anniversaries: None.

Prayers: Feb. 26, Susan Vergeront; March 5, Leonard Allen.

Programs: Feb. 26, Waunakee Police K9 Unit; March 5, Club Assembly.

Greeters: Feb. 26, Brent Ziegler and Mike Ableidinger; March 5, Peggy Acker-Farber and Leonard Allen.

### Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is [www.rotaryclubone.org](http://www.rotaryclubone.org). Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.