



Dear Resident,

Have you ever asked yourself why the City of Chicago Heights sends you a letter like this one, without an envelope?
Why?

Because the City of Chicago Heights can provide the same valuable, dependable information at less cost to the taxpayers without the envelope. That's the answer. Same service, less cost.

Providing the same valuable, dependable public services at less cost to taxpayers throughout every City department has been the goal of my administration.

The Chicago Heights Fire Department (CHFD) is no different.

This administration is committed to providing the same valuable, dependable fire protection and ambulance services to protect the property and lives of Chicago Heights residents, preserving services without increasing costs to the taxpayers. Access to quality health care for all residents and our ability to provide ambulance and emergency services has been and continues to be my priority.

In fact, the goal is to modernize the CHFD to better protect residents.

How?

The City has a five point modernization plan:

- First, the City will maintain our current force of **57 full-time firefighters** to respond to fire calls and ambulance emergencies. The City wants to keep our force of **57**.
- Second, the City worked in partnership with Franciscan St. James Health for the construction of an expanded Urgent Care center in Chicago Heights. The Urgent Care site will have an advanced life support (ALS) ambulance on-site 24 hours a day and will be completed by 2018.
- Third, the City wants to schedule each CHFD shift at 15 firefighters per shift rather than 17 per shift. The City wants to have the ability to supplement with qualified and certified part-time firefighters when necessary - in addition to, not in place of - our **57 full-time men and women**.
- Fourth, the ability to supplement **57 full-timers** with part-time firefighters will reduce overtime and pension costs; those savings will be used to invest in the purchase of new ambulances and state-of-the-art fire suppression equipment.
- Fifth, by scheduling 15 firefighters per shift, the City will be able to save money to maintain the current force of **57 full-time firefighters**. Maintaining the full-time force will continue the same level of paramedic services (85% of the call volume) and operate all of the City's ambulances.

The City's fleet of ambulances is aging. Moreover, the City is faced with the closure in 2018 of the emergency room and hospital in Chicago Heights and the additional wear and tear of ambulance transport to the Olympia Fields campus. With 15 firefighters per shift, maintaining **57 full-timers**, the City can respond safely to emergency calls and save taxpayer money. With these savings, we can purchase new, modern ambulances.

The City of Chicago Heights currently has **57 full-time firefighters** that respond to ambulance emergencies and fire calls. Scheduling 15 full-time firefighters per shift and having the ability to supplement with a part-time firefighter reduces pension and benefit costs. We can maintain our services with 15 firefighters per shift, and we avoid the unnecessary burden to you - the taxpayers - of skyrocketing increases to the City's tax levy to fund state-mandated fire pensions.

Can we safely schedule 15 firefighters per shift? Of course we can.

We can meet the commitment and will continue to protect the property and lives of Chicago Heights residents.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I am committed to providing you with the same valuable, dependable information you've come to expect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'David A. Gonzalez'.

David A. Gonzalez
Mayor