TOWN OF SIGNAL MOUNTAIN
TENNESSEE
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INVITES CANDIDATES TO
APPLY FOR THE
FIRE CHIEF
POSITION

2023
Community Profile

TOWN HISTORY

The History of Signal Mountain

Located on Walden’s Ridge, at the southern end of the Cumberland Plateau, the Town of Signal Mountain takes its name from a promontory of land called Signal Point. Overlooking the Tennessee River Valley and the City of Chattanooga, Signal Point was used by Native Americans, including Creeks and Cherokee, to signal important messages and by Union troops during the War Between the States as a relay station and to observe traffic on the Tennessee River.

Seasonal visitors had always been drawn to the mountain in the summer to enjoy its cool summer breezes. But in the late 19th century with the advent of cholera and yellow fever epidemics, affluent families in the valley fled to the mountains surrounding Chattanooga to escape. One seasonal visitor, C. E. James, saw an opportunity. He bought the land near and around Signal Point and began selling parcels for the building of summer homes. By 1913, Mr. James had built the Signal Mountain Inn—a grand hotel—and a trolley for transportation between the valley and the top of the mountain. In 1918, Mr. James completed his resort community with a golf course.

For generations pioneer settlers in the valley had brought their livestock to graze unfettered on Walden’s Ridge each summer. Farm animals had already found neighborhood lawns to their liking, but the grounds of the new golf course were irresistible. Soon cows and pigs were nibbling in fairways and lazing on soft golf greens. Residents found the animals both difficult to manage and reluctant to relocate.

As a result, the community requested a charter from the state legislature. On April 4, 1919, the charter was granted, and the first order of business for the newly elected government was to outlaw animals in the Town and hire a man with a horse to corral the animals and enforce the law.

By 1925, two hundred homes had been built and the year-round Town of Signal Mountain flourished. The location of Mr. James’ development is now known as the Old Town District. The Inn was purchased by the Alexian Brothers in 1936 and has become the Alexian Village, a nationally recognized retirement community. The promontory, which gave the Town its name, is now Signal Point National Park and is enjoyed for its panoramic view and recognized as the smallest park in the National Park System.

The town of Signal Mountain is known for its beautiful scenery, dazzling views, waterfalls and 18 miles of hiking trails. It has been named one of the “best places to live in Tennessee,” as well as one of the 10 safest cities in Tennessee. The mountaintop community is also a great place to visit, providing bluegrass music at the Mountain Opry and various arts and music events at the Mountain Arts Community Center.
**Form of Government**

The Town of Signal Mountain operates under a Council/Town Manager form of government. The Council has certain responsibilities including approval of the annual budgets, tax rates, ordinances, resolutions, staffing levels, contracts, personnel policy, purchasing policy, and other policies.

A five-member Council is elected by Town voters with three of the five members running every two years on even numbered years, matching the national elections. Of the three top vote getters, two receive four-year terms and one (the third-place finisher) receives a two-year term. This ensures that three members of the Council will be up for election every two years and two will remain seated to provide a level of continuity for the next Council.

The Council elects the mayor and the vice mayor from among its membership. The mayor presides at Council meetings and is the titular head of the Town. The vice mayor acts as mayor in the mayor’s absence.

The town manager is appointed by and serves at the will of the Council as the Town’s chief administrative officer. The Town Manager’s responsibilities include supervising Town employees, enforcing all policies and ordinances enacted by the Council, providing a budget for the Council’s review, and controlling operations and expenditures to maintain a balanced budget.
**About the Signal Mountain Fire Department**

The Signal Mountain Fire Department provides a broad range of emergency and non-emergency services and programs to educate and protect the lives and property of our community and visitors.

The Signal Mountain Fire Department offers a career fire department that operates out of 2 stations. 3 administrative personnel and 24 suppression personnel staff 2 stations. Station #1 staffs 1 engine and 1 ladder, Station #2 staffs 1 engine. These stations provide around the clock emergency services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The Signal Mountain Fire Department maintains an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 2.

The Department offers a full range of Fire, Emergency Medical, Vehicle Rescue and Rope/Technical Rescue services to the area. The department also provides Public Education and Prevention activities to the community as well as a commercial building fire inspection program.

The Signal Mountain Fire Department is an active member of the Tri-State Mutual Aid Association and responds to all types of mutual aid incidents to assist other agencies.

**History of the Signal Mountain Fire Department**

From 1919 to 1970 the Signal Mountain Fire and Police existed as a combined department and operated where the current CVS is located. Employees worked a 48-hour shift alternating 12 hours in the Police Department and 12 hours in the Fire Department. The combined Department consisted of five men, one of which was an officer. At that time, the Fire and Police Department became a central hub for all types of calls and requests for information. Located to the right of the building was a gas pump that was used by the departments, as well as the citizens.

In 1978, the Fire and Police Department moved to its current location at 1111 Ridgeway Avenue. At that time, Fire Department members worked 48-hour shifts, with 12 of those hours in the Dispatch Office, dispatching for both Fire and Police. In 2005, dispatch was centralized to the Hamilton County 9-1-1 Center located on Amnicola Highway in Chattanooga.
Community Risk Reduction Initiatives

As the result of the SMFD community risk assessment the Town and the Fire Department now has a better picture of the risks faced by their citizens; this, along with the goals of the SMFD mission statement create a mandate for the Department to develop and implement a plan for community risk reduction (CRR). Reducing fire and emergency risk in the Town cannot be accomplished with a “one size fits all” attitude; nor should it be assumed that the Department automatically needs more emergency response resources in order to solve identified problems.

CRR Initiatives Include:

- Commercial Fire Inspections
- Fire Prevention Ordinances
- Residential Fire and Life Safety Program
- Fire Prevention and Fire and Life Safety Education

One of the many preparedness functions the SMFD conducts is a fire hydrant inspection program. Over 280 fire hydrants within the Town of Signal Mountain are inspected and flowed annually. Hydrants are flow tested for volume and firefighting flow capacity every 5 years on a rotating basis. This program is also used as a training and pre-fire planning tool to assist the firefighters in learning the location and documenting the location of every fire hydrant.

SMFD Firefighters perform another key service to the community by conducting building walkthroughs and pre-incident planning of 156 commercial buildings within the Town of Signal Mountain. These walkthroughs involve evaluating the protection systems, building construction, contents and operating procedures that can impact emergency operations and documenting this information. A pre-planning document exists for each commercial building and contains details about a building that will allow first responders to respond more quickly and effectively to a situation at that location.

Another component of our Community Risk Reduction Program is commercial fire inspections. The Signal Mountain Fire Department conducts commercial fire inspections as a proactive means of ensuring safe commercial buildings for the community. These inspections are scheduled on an annual basis and are done for a multitude of reasons. The primary reasons are to help protect those who work and do business in the Town, to protect the business owner’s investment in his or her property and to reduce the risks to fire personnel who may have to respond in an emergency to a commercial building. During 2022 a total of 72 inspections were completed.
Fire Prevention - Life Safety Home Survey

Fire prevention activities include the Home Life Safety Visit Program. This program is offered to the community and is dedicated to reducing fire hazards and enhancing safety in the home. The survey is designed to assist the home owner in identifying and reducing any risk that may be found in the home. In 2022, we completed surveys for 56 homeowners.

Smoke Detector Installations

Another fire prevention program is "Get Alarmed, TN!" which is a grant-funded fire safety education and smoke alarm installation program administered by the State Fire Marshall's Office (SFMO). Launched in November 2012, the program distributes fire safety education and 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms to participating fire departments. Signal Mountain Fire Department then delivers the educational information and installs smoke alarms in at-risk homes across the Town of Signal Mountain.

During 2022, SMFD installed a total of 381 smoke alarms throughout the community and was recognized by the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance Division of Fire Prevention and Fire Marshal as a top 10% department for smoke detector installations as part of the “Get Alarmed, TN!” program. Those 381 smoke alarm installs included a total of 169 that were installed as part of a Tennessee State Fire Marshal Alarm install contest during the month of April. SMFD came in 2nd place as part of the State Fire Marshal’s install contest.

Signal Mountain was also one of 53 locations in Tennessee that was identified as having a fire that the residents were alerted to by a detector that was installed as part of the Get Alarmed, TN!” program.
Fire and Life Safety Education

Signal Mountain Fire personnel had a busy and productive year in providing a variety of Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Programs to our citizens.

The department is constantly looking for ways to improve the safety of our citizens of Signal Mountain and SMFD continues to use our Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction and Implementation Plan as a guide in reducing the risk and improving the quality of life to our citizens. The assessment looks at the present risk in the community, and how that risk is expected to change as the Town continues to grow. We accomplish this in offering various CRR programs to the community.

Programs Include:
- Child Car Seat Safety and Installation Program
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training
- Open House and Station Tours
- Fire Safety programs for businesses

Car Seat Safety and Installation

The SMFD personnel provide child safety seat inspections and installations. These are conducted by certified child passenger safety seat technicians who will inspect or install car seats and instruct families how to properly secure them in their vehicles. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety administration, car seats when used correctly can reduce the risk of death by as much 71%.

Fire Extinguisher Training

Fire Extinguisher Training is another community education offering. The public is educated on the safe use of a fire extinguisher using a digital fire simulator.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training

In 2022 we offered our first class to the public, which was a success. SMFD currently has 2 certified instructors and are planning to offer more CPR classes to the public in the upcoming year.
Fire Department Budget: The total budget for the fiscal year 2022/2023 was $2,779,491, which is 30% of the Town of Signal Mountain’s Total Budget

Personnel Cost: 80%  
Ops/Maint: 13%  
Vehicle Replacement: 6%  
Capital Outlay: 1%

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Revenue Sources for Town of Signal Mountain Budget 22-23
82% Local (includes Property) Taxes  
15% State of TN tax  
3% Other Sources

FIRE OPERATIONS

A breakdown of the previous year’s call volume and incident types are in the 2022 Year End charts. Rescue and EMS calls are the primary incident type that SMFD respond to, with over 60% of those calls being Medical.

Based on our location and terrain, rope rescue calls are often a more frequent occurrence. Today all personnel are trained and highly capable of using rope rescue techniques to address difficult and often dangerous rescue and recovery calls. Signal Mountain responded to 1121 calls in 2022, with at least 58% of these calls for Rescue and EMS related incidents.

Signal Mountain Fire Department is one of 64 Fire and Rescue agencies that partner together to support the Tri-State Mutual Aid Association (TSMAA). These agencies from Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee work together to provide superior services to serve and protect the thirteen-county metro area around Chattanooga, TN/North GA. Under mutual aid agreements, SMFD responds outside Town limits to aid departments locally, regionally and state wide at emergency incidents and that aid is reciprocated should Signal Mountain need assistance.
TRAINING and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through technical training the department ensures personnel are competent and safe in the performance of their duties. Professional development encourages professional growth and leadership of department members.

Signal Mountain Fire personnel are required by national standards, state law or governmental mandate to complete over 300 training hours in several subject areas. In 2022, personnel completed a total of over 10,000 hours of training in all of these various disciplines.

- Structural Firefighting
- Wildland Firefighting
- Emergency Medical Response
- Hazardous Materials Emergencies
- Fire Officer Training
- Emergency Management
- Emergency Driver Operations
- Incident Command
- Technical Rescue
- Vehicle Extrication Techniques

SMFD hosted a Rope Operations class that included eight of our staff as well as three personnel from other fire departments. Given our mountainous terrain and abundance of outdoor recreation, this skill is one that is a necessity in order to best serve our citizens and visitors.

We also hosted three classes from the Tennessee Fire and Codes Enforcement Academy (TFACA). The classes focused on urban search and rescue (USAR), sprinkler and standpipe operations, and emergency egress and firefighter bailouts from multi-story facilities.
Daily training is conducted by the Shift Commanders and the various subject matter experts that we have on each of our shifts. Our members train anywhere from two to eight hours on any given day to ensure operational readiness.

SMFD personnel hold many certifications. The current list of certifications is below with the number of personnel that have obtained it following in parenthesis

- Firefighter II (27)
- Firefighter I (2)
- Certified Fire Apparatus Operators (16)
- Fire Officer I (2)
- Fire officer II (8)
- Fire Officer III (1)
- Instructor I (16)
- Instructor II (2)
- Paramedic (1)
- Emergency Medical Technician- Advanced (17)
- Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (4)
- Emergency Medical Responders (2)
- Certified in Rope Rescue Operations (16)
- Certified Fire Inspector (3)
- Certified Rope Rescue-Technicians (6)
- Certified Safety Seat Technicians (5)
- Certified Hazardous Materials Operations Level (29)
- Hazardous Materials Technicians Level (4)
Signal Mountain Fire Department Mission, Strategic Vision & Achievements

**Mission**

Our mission is to protect all life and property through the delivery of quality, professional emergency services, fire prevention, and public education.

**Vision**

We will serve the mountain community by guiding our department into the future and becoming leaders in our profession. We are driven to provide a productive and efficient organization while honoring our values, achieving our goals and accomplishing our mission.

**Strategic Initiatives and Achievements**

1. Provide exceptional delivery of core services and programs to our customers, and ensure the long-term sustainment of all service delivery
   a. Personnel obtained CPR instructor certification and began public CPR courses
   b. Adopted the 2018 International Fire Code
   c. Implemented the Assistant Deputy Fire Marshal Program
   d. Improve the fire extinguisher training program by adding a training simulator
2. Maintain a high-quality resource management
   a. Installed carbon monoxide exposure protection at Station 1
   b. Purchased ATV and trailer for use on trail and rope rescue calls
3. Maintain a highly skilled workforce
4. Enhance technology use in the department
   a. Upgraded reporting management system
   b. Implemented I am Responding a mobile alarm notification system for all firefighters
   c. Implemented tablets and CAD within all apparatus
**About the Fire Chief Position**

The Fire Chief is the Chief Executive Officer of the Fire Department, appointed by and responsible to the Town Manager. The fire chief is responsible for the effective, efficient and legal conduct of the fire department and its employees. The Fire Chief performs a variety of technical, administrative, and supervisory work in planning, organizing, directing, and implementing all aspects of the fire department. Such work includes, but is not limited to, creating, and maintaining department policies and budgets, ensuring required records are submitted complete and accurate, and ensuring all department services are continually monitored to prevent the loss of life and property by fire and/or emergency medical conditions.

**Characteristics of the Ideal Candidate:**

Signal Mountain seeks a highly qualified and successful Fire Chief, who possesses a range of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for effective leadership and management of a fire department. The Fire Chief is expected to be a leader, collaborator, visionary and strategic thinker. The Chief should be an excellent communicator with a commitment to customer service. Additionally, the Chief should have a working knowledge and abilities in all aspects of tactical fire ground operations, rescue techniques, Haz-Mat operations, vehicle operations and other general knowledge needed to function in the role of a Firefighter or an Incident Commander.

Signal Mountain seeks a team builder with a positive attitude who inspires and guides those around him/her and is comfortable with delegating to staff and holding them accountable for results. He/She is able to build consensus with various stakeholders internal and external to the Town. The Chief is expected to be a strong communicator, collaborator, and non-partisan leader who values diversity, inclusion, and equity. A successful Fire Chief should be able to bring together different agencies, departments, stakeholders, and members of the community to work towards a common goal and vision.

The Chief should have a financial background including short and long-term budgeting and capital planning skills. He/She should communicate effectively with the Council, staff and public with a customer focus. Signal Mountain is looking for a Fire Chief who has the ability to analyze emergency situations quickly; apply the most effective course of action with due regard for safety of Department personnel; manage a large organization with a variety of functions; and keep detailed records and reports.
**Qualifications:**

**Required:**
- Bachelor’s degree gained through four-year college/university academic program or any equivalent combination of training, education, and experience.
- At least 15+ years in the fire service with three of those years in a supervisory/management position of shift supervisor, administration, or higher rank which provides a demonstrated ability to perform the duties of the position.
- Must hold the following minimum certifications: State of Tennessee or equivalent (Pro Board or IFSAC) certifications as a Firefighter II, Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer III, Emergency Medical License-(advanced preferred), (Fire Officer IV within 2 years) State of Tennessee Class D endorsement F driver’s license or higher certification. ICS 100, 200, 300, 400, 700, 800
Compensation and Application Process

The Town of Signal Mountain offers a competitive salary dependent upon qualifications and experience. The starting salary range is $78,000 to $87,000. The Town provides a generous benefits package which includes health, dental, vision, life insurance, long-term disability and paid vacation and sick leave. Additionally, the Town provides a retirement plan through the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS).

Signal Mountain is an AA/EOE Employer

If you are interested in this position or have questions on position or salary and benefits please contact Ms. Brunelle at the address below before applying. To apply now for this great opportunity please submit your cover letter and resume to Ms. Brunelle. Position will remain open until filled; first screening date is August 31, 2023

More information is available on our website: https://signalmountaintn.gov/

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townmanager@signalmountaintn.gov