

Photo of the Month

Chemical Engine

By Emilee Dehmer, research assistant

Chemical Engine

Rogers, Arkansas

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Rogers Historical Museum



On December 19, 1888 the Rogers Hose Company No. 1 was chartered. For 34 years, volunteers risked their lives to help serve and protect their community. Then in 1922, the unit reorganized and officially became the Rogers Fire Department.

While the department was still the Rogers Hose Company, the first power equipment was purchased in 1915. The RHC purchased a 1915 American LaFrance Chemical Engine for \$5,000. A chemical engine

differs from a pump engine, in the fact that it holds a set reserve and has no pump to be connected to an outside water source. The chemical tanks are filled with water, and bi-carbonate soda is dissolved into it. Sulfuric acid is then put into a receptacle at the top, and a rotation of the tank allows the two to effectively mix. The reaction of these chemicals forces the water out of the hose and the fire can then be extinguished. Chemical Engines however, were inefficient because when the supplies were expended it was difficult to restock during an emergency.

When the RHC purchased the chemical engine, they bought it with the intention to convert the truck to a traditional pump truck. They learned, though, that the cost to convert would be around the cost of a new truck, so they traded in the 1915 chemical engine for a 1919 pump truck. This pump truck cost \$8,500 and over the years was given the nickname "Old Hulda." No one knows what "Hulda" is however. The pump truck had no chemicals at all and needed to be connected to hydrants to receive water. The truck was retired in 1955 and can be viewed at the Fire Museum located at the Rogers Fire Department.

Today, the Rogers Fire Department has upgraded from "Old Hulda" and currently has 18 frontline emergency vehicles including: five engine companies, two truck companies, one heavy rescue unit, four ambulances, one airport fire response unit, two brush pumpers, and one command unit. Under the command of Fire Chief Tom Jenkins, the Rogers Fire Department continues to provide excellent service to the community, keeping the citizens safe from harm.

From the creation of the Rogers Hose Company in 1888 to the reorganization as the Rogers Fire Department in 1922; from a chemical truck to over 18 trucks; from original fire chief John H. Rebholtz to Tom Jenkins, the Rogers Fire Fighters have been dedicated to helping serve the citizens of the community for many years, and for many years to come.