

BROOME COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION

BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

Port Dickinson Handles Commercial Building Fire With a Special Hazard

By Nicholas Griswold



D. L. Shelley Photo- Visible fire on the outside of the building as pumper tanker 35 lays a supply line.

At 1736 hours on Wednesday, April 5, 2012, Broome County Communications dispatched the Port Dickinson Fire Department (35) to alarm #12-033 for a reported building fire at 33 Phelps Street, the site of Erie Building Materials. Also on the initial alarm was a full response from Hillcrest Fire Department (55) and Tanker 66-1 from Chenango Fire Department. Upon arrival of Port Dickinson Police and Chief 55 incoming units were advised that there was a utility pole that had been blown onto the large wood frame and metal sided building by high winds and that a fire was burning on the roof of the building.

An immediate request was put in for NYSEG to respond due to the arching power lines still in contact with the metal siding on the building. A special request was also put in for a Tower Ladder from the City of Binghamton Fire Department (21). Shortly after command also requested an additional response from Chenango Fire for Rescue 66 for the cascade system and manpower and a response from the Chenango Bridge Fire Department (39) with Engine 39-1 and manpower. Broome Volunteer Ambulance was also dispatched to the scene for standby.



Upon arrival of Pumper-Tanker 35 a 4-inch supply line was laid from the hydrant at the entrance to Erie Building Materials. This line would be used to supply Tower 21 when it arrived. Engine 35 was used at the hydrant to pump to Tower 21 due to the low water pressure at the location. Other incoming units were advised not to enter the site in order to leave room for Tower 21 when it arrived.

Although no power lines were down in the area crews were still unable to flow any water due to the power arching from the pole onto the metal siding of the building. Once on scene NYSEG decided that to expedite the process of getting power shut off and allow the fire to be extinguished they needed to turn off power to the whole area. NYSEG then dropped the grid for the whole Village of Port Dickinson.

D. L. Shelley Photo- Oil that has run down the side of the building onto the ground catches fire from the arcing.

Crews were then able to enter the building through an open garage door where they encountered a

fairly heavy smoke condition inside. Dry chemical extinguishers were used initially due to the chance of electricity still being on to knock down small amounts of fire that had extended into the building. Once absolutely sure that power was off, Tower 21 was used to extinguish the fire that was on the roof of the building and that had now extended down the side of the building. A handline was also stretched into the building to finish extinguishing any fire that had extended inside.

Once the fire was extinguished crews began overhauling the roof area and checking for extension inside the building. Finding no further extension mutual aid companies were allowed to begin clearing from the scene. It was determined that high winds had blown the utility pole over and onto the building. This caused the oil inside several large transformers at the top of the pole to spill out onto the roof and run down the side of the building. The arcing from the power lines then set the oil

on fire which spread into structural members of the building.



NYSEG remained on scene for several hours removing the pole from the building and replacing it so that power could be restored to the business. No significant damage was sustained to any product inside the building. Fire spread was held mainly to the outside of the structure with minimal spread to the inside. All employees on site at the time of the fire made it out safely and no firefighters were hurt. All units and personnel were clear from the scene shortly after 2100 hours.

D. L. Shelley Photo- Water supply is established
NYSEG works to get power off in the area.



D. L. Shelley Photo - The crew of Tower 21 awaits further orders
as crews check for extension



D. L. Shelley Photo - Binghamton Tower 21 begins flowing water to extinguish the fire.



D. L. Shelley Photo- Crews from Binghamton monitor Towers ops as a crew from Port Dickinson is ready to enter the building. Smoke can still be seen coming from the garage with Tower 21 in the background