



# 2023 Year in Review



## Vernon Township Board

David Hawkins  
Tim Plank (Chair)  
Marybeth Sears

## Fire Territory Board

McCordsville Town Councilor Greg Brewer  
Fortville Town Councilor Tonya Davis  
Vernon Township Trustee Florence May (Chair)  
VTFD Chief Mark Elder (ex-officio)

## Vernon Twp Building Corp

Jeff Augustinowicz (Chair)  
Brendan Harnett  
Robert Holland



## Partnerships Produce Success

Over the past five years, Vernon Township partnered with the Towns of McCordsville and Fortville to found the Vernon Township Fire Department and Fire Territory; established a sustainable financial foundation with two 24/7/365 fire stations, career firefighters and paramedics while replacing 25+ year old fire engines and purchasing three ambulances. This evolution would normally take a decade but together we rapidly establish a career fire department for our residents and businesses.

In addition, the Township team works closely with our colleagues in the non-profit community, the Vernon Township Library, Mt Vernon Schools, Hancock County and so many others to ensure our residents receive the services and programming outlined on the next few pages.

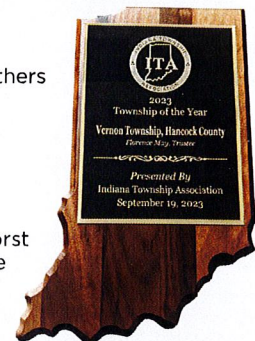
### Our collaborative efforts were recently recognized at the State and County levels:

**2023 Township of the Year** - Indiana Township Association

**2023 Bobby Keen Healthy Community Award** - Hancock Health Foundation

Vernon Township provides services when our community members are having the worst day of their life. Their house is on fire. They are experiencing a medical emergency. They have lost their job. We hope you never need our services but if you do, we are here to help. Please visit our websites to learn more about our services.

*Florence May*, Trustee Vernon Township







## Staffed to Achieve

In 2023 we announced a full time staff structure to better support the township.

Deputy Trustee **Stacy Nielsen** was elevated to Director of Administration to oversee financial matters, property and human resources. This role is critical as our full-time employee numbers have grown. Stacy was particularly important in serving as the project manager during the construction of VTFD Fire Station 432 in McCordsville.

In Township Assistance, **Jenny Kriger** was promoted to full-time administrator and earned recognition from IN DEPT of Workforce Development. She handles a large quantity of requests for rental, utility, medical and other forms of assistance. She collaborates with numerous non-profits including F.A.R.M, Love Inc, ICAP and Salvation Army.

**Tony Buechler** was named our first Director of Support Services. He is tasked with maintaining township property including stations, headquarters, vehicles, apparatus, 4 historic cemeteries and the community garden. In addition, he is ensuring our historic cemeteries stay protected during this time of community growth. Thursday Pools are creating a garden and trails around the Caudell-Simmons Cemetery (CR 1050 Fortville) ensuring improved public access points. The Town of McCordsville is building a strategic ditch and wrapping the new Town Center development around the cherished McCordsville cemetery (600 S) to protect it for future generations.

## Gardens of Vernon Township



Generously fueling our progress is \$30,000+ in financial and in-kind support from Garmong Construction, Community Foundation of Hancock Cty, GBC, Hancock Cty Farm Bureau, STS, INPS, Greencycle, Fortville Action, MIBOR, Purdue Extension, Hancock Cty Soil & Water Conservation District, and NineStar.

At 602 Vitality Drive in Fortville our community garden is growing. Eagle Scout Caelan Alford's new garden shed is adorned with a vibrant mural by local artist Mike McEvers. Our environmental stewardship includes a certified monarch way station, beehives and bat houses. Our garden includes 20 donor plots that provide weekly vegetable donations to the F.A.R.M food pantry. Volunteers helped plant 67 native trees/shrubs and remove more than 50 invasive species. The garden club also hosts monthly public education programs and nurture a Seed Library partnership. Our cover crop program and more than 90 native pollinators contribute to a sustainable garden.



## Township Assistance At A Glance

- 136 Total Assistance Requests
- 90 Approved Financial Assistance Requests
- 21 Households received Utility Assistance
- 26 Households received Housing Assistance
- 1 Household received Emergency Shelter
- Many of the households received food pantry assistance from F.A.R.M.
- Others were referred to appropriate non-profits or other assistance providers.







# Top 6 Accomplishments



## 1. Opening of New Fire Station

Vernon Township Fire Department (VTFD) Station 432 was constructed north of the tracks in McCordsville and opened in August 2023. VTFD firefighters moved from a mobile home at the former McCordsville Volunteer Station into the new 24/7/365 station in August 2023. Vernon Township now operates two full time stations with locations in both Fortville and McCordsville.



## 2. Purchasing of New Ambulances

Our medical runs were 71% of our total runs in 2023. VTFD purchased a new ambulance with delivery anticipated later in 2024. In addition, a more reliable used ambulance was purchased to back-up for both stations.



## 3. Conducting Proactive Planning

VTFD shift personnel started preplanning walk throughs with local businesses in 2023. This process allows our firefighters to become familiar with the layout of interiors and potential hazards.



## 4. Expanding Career Staff

In 2019 the new fire department was made up of volunteers and paid part-time staff. In 2023, 11 career personnel were hired taking our total career staff to 33.



## 5. Securing \$100,000 in Grants and In-kind Services

VTFD received nearly \$100,000 in support. The FEMA grant helped pay for a lifesaving LUCAS device, a mechanical chest compression system. In addition, VTFD was the recipient of a Location Alerting System for Station 431 in Fortville. Hancock County purchased the Location System to bring the Fortville Station Alerting System in line with other departments in our area. The new station in McCordsville was built with the Location Alerting System ensuring our entire department has up-to-date equipment.



## 6. Engaging our Community

VTFD is committed to engaging our community in healthy living and fire prevention practices. Our staff supported CPR training for 80 card holders and an additional 40 individuals for hands only option. VTFD also supported 34 community events in Fortville and McCordsville.





Supporting our healthy, safe and growing community

# by the numbers:



**55**

First Responders  
& Support Staff



**6min 8sec**

Avg Response Time



**7,401**

Training hours in fire,  
EMS, code enforcement,  
haz mat, and more



**300**

Fire Prevention  
Inspections



**1,681**

Incidents responded  
to in 2023



**445**

Hours of Fire Corps  
volunteer time



**2x 24/7**

Two stations designed to  
support McCordsville,  
Fortville and Unincorporated  
Vernon Township

