



**For Immediate Release**

## **City Fire Equipment Company Celebrates 60 Years Serving the Community**

***From home garage to \$6 million in revenue – and television to boot***

**East Hanover, NJ – April 12 – City Fire Equipment Company** of East Hanover is celebrating 60 years of providing fire safety services to the community throughout 2012. The company was founded in 1952 to fill used fire extinguishers for local building owners and today serves more than 4,000 customers throughout New Jersey and parts of Pennsylvania and New York.

City Fire was born in a marriage of fire safety and entrepreneurship in 1952 when Newark firefighter William J. Bretzger began filling used fire extinguishers for local building owners in his home garage in Newark.

“There were no fire codes then. Essentially the building owners needed to fill the extinguishers after they used them,” said Paul McGrath, president of City Fire, now of East Hanover, New Jersey. “He saw a need and filled it. He was a firefighter and a businessman.”

Bretzger soon was joined by his son, William Bretzger III, and City Fire quietly grew, in time moving into sprinklers and fire suppression systems, then fire alarms and most recently emergency lighting and cutting-edge fire suppression.

McGrath joined the company in 1981 as a fire extinguisher service technician and within four years became vice president. Over the next five years City Fire grew from a \$1 million company to \$3.5 million in revenue, leveraging off New Jersey’s 1983 adoption of the Uniform Fire Code, which continues to drive business development, according to McGrath.

Today City Fire Equipment Company employs 50 workers and services more than 4,000 accounts with 5,000 properties in the apartment building, health care, education, restaurant, warehouse, aviation, utility and public sectors. Annual revenue exceeds \$6 million. City Fire is one of only 25 fire safety companies fully state-certified out of more than 700 in New Jersey.

The entrepreneurship and commitment to service that led Bretzger to see a need and fill it remained the driving force behind the company’s growth and today serves as the foundation of its operations and future, according to McGrath, who became president in 1994.

“Our strength is we offer our customers choices rather than telling them what to do,” he said. “We evaluate their situations and tell them their options.”

City Fire hosts annual free fire safety seminars for fire officials and inspectors and building facility managers and engineers. The seminars serve as an additional avenue to serve key constituencies in the fire safety community, according to McGrath.

“The seminars are a way we bring fire protection people together with industry people to promote harmony and cooperation,” McGrath said.

City Fire also serves the business and fire safety communities through extensive participation in trade associations of both sectors, he added.

“We keep up with fire codes and how they affect businesses and belong to trade associations to share what we know,” McGrath said. “You seldom see a factory or restaurant that burned down ever again open up. That translates into lost property and jobs we are trying to help protect.”

City Fire holds ongoing training and education for all employees, including weekly training for all technicians; certification in the four levels of the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies; testing for technicians in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania; and on-site factory training by manufacturers’ representatives.

“The goal of our education and the way we conduct business is to reduce the threat of fire to people and property,” McGrath said. “That was what our founder did – he was a fireman.”

City Fire continues to introduce new products and services, maintaining their founder’s spirit of combining entrepreneurialism with customer service, according to McGrath. When the Fire Prevention Code was amended to require monthly and annual inspections of emergency lighting, including fire exit signs, the company designed a program to make property owners and managers aware of the change and help them comply with the requirements.

More recently City Fire introduced a state-of-the-art aerosol fire suppression system that protects expensive and sensitive business equipment in protected enclosures, such as telecommunications facilities, data centers and server rooms, recognizing the increasingly critical role technology plays in nearly every business, McGrath said.

City Fire also supports the communities in which it operates, according to McGrath, such as donating fire extinguishers to the East Hanover Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.

Just as William J. Bretzger was committed to serving whoever walked into his garage, City Fire continues to serve companies of any size, from the multi-thousand-square-foot factory or office building to the local nail salon, McGrath explained. Toward that end the company maintains a full-service shop on site for walk-in customers.

“Fire safety is essential to the well being of everyone – homeowners, businesses, communities as a whole,” McGrath said. “But on the business side it is just like every other sector. You have to treat the customer with respect.”

That commitment to customer service even landed City Fire on television, when it was included in an episode of “Construction Intervention,” the Discovery Channel series that follows construction veteran Charlie Frattini and his team of contractors and designers as they rescue businesses that are in danger of failing due to botched, delayed or impossible construction jobs.

City Fire was working at an East Rutherford restaurant prior to involvement by “Construction Intervention” and was the only contractor employed by the business that was fulfilling its obligations, according to McGrath. When “Construction Intervention” stepped in to rescue the restaurant and project, City Fire was retained to assist the show’s crews.

“Commitment to customer satisfaction and quality service has been at our foundation since 1952,” said McGrath.

### **About City Fire Equipment Company**

City Fire Equipment Company designs, installs and maintains all types of fire protection equipment, including fire alarm systems, fire extinguishers, fire sprinklers and special hazard fire systems. The company is fully insured and licensed as a fire protection contractor and maintains an intimate knowledge of local, state and national fire codes and is one of only 25 fire safety companies fully state-certified out of more than 700 in New Jersey. City Fire Equipment Company serves more than 3,400 customers and 5,000 sites. For information about service call 973.560.1600. Visit us at [www.cityfire.com](http://www.cityfire.com).

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