

# Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center 2009 Year-End Report



**United States Forest Service  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Midewin National Tall Grass Prairie  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
United States National Park Service**



## 2009 End of Year Report

The Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center has come a long way. 2009 was the first full year we spent in our new facility and we couldn't be happier. Except for a few episodes with mice and insects, a drenching when entering the building on a rainy day and some oil stains on our brand new carpet, we found the facility to be perfect. In March we had our open house which was a small but great event with individuals from USFS, FWS, ILDNR, as well as folks from John A Logan College, Job Corps, and local Congressional offices attending.

The center this year went to 7 day coverage in May to support various Forest Service programs like recreation, trails, Law Enforcement, lands, engineering etc. In order to provide this extra coverage, a seasonal dispatcher (Diana Emmons) was hired, allowing us to cover the extra daily and weekly hours necessary to meet agency needs. I feel that this new practice was appreciated by folks working later into the evenings and that by having someone on the other end of the radio or phone "just in case" was a comfort. (That's what they say anyhow). Without this extra dispatcher, there would have been no way only the two of us (John and I) could of provided the extra coverage. This also allowed both John and me to take details, fire assignments, and just use our annual leave or sick days without being short handed in the center.

2009 was the busiest year we have had since we started documenting our workload, and this was with a mild national resource order year. The center was busy with local wildland fires and mutual aid assists (67), the aftermath of the wind storm that blew through here in May and a push at the end of 2009 for prescribed fires even though the National Weather Service stated that October was the wettest October on record. We increased our Law Enforcement and Search and Rescue assistance this year when compared to last years and I feel that this has been through our effort to work closer with our local Forest Service Law Enforcement folks as well as the county 911 centers. Our next goal is FWS!

We also had a record year of casual hire interest in 2009. 59 individuals, many from the local fire departments, signed up to work with us this year, which is a great tribute to our Fire Management Staff and their efforts in working with the departments. We also had 11 Job Corps students and staff whom we red carded and the 9 students were able to give us a hand on some local incidents in the fall which was a huge accomplishment because the Fire folks have been working for at least 2 years in getting these folks trained, equipped, and in the field. With all this added interest in casual hires, it did add a great deal to our normal workload basically because of the paperwork involved especially with the new rules about having everyone in GovTrip. However, all that hard work has payed off because we now have a good base of individuals to assist us if we need help.

2009 was our lowest in 4 years in sending overhead and crew resources out west on incidents, but that was mainly due to the locations of the wildland fire activity throughout the country which was mostly confined in Alaska and California. Unfortunately this year we were not able to get a Type 2 handcrew out, but the Midewin Hotshots spent back to back tours in Alaska as

well as time in California, Missouri and Ohio. John and I were able to get out at least once this year on fire assignments. John spent a month detail in Michigan and then spent a short stint in New Mexico, while I was able to spend 21 days in the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska (awesome).

In 2009 we also came on line with WildCad and WFDSS. WildCad which is a National computer aided dispatch tool which will provide us with greater initial attack procedures, better mapping, as well as greater data keeping. One aspect of this program is WildWeb which is a link showing the dispatch centers activity <http://66.134.213.74/WildWeb/WCIL-ILC.htm> . What is so great about this, we are up beside some of the larger centers in the country, which I feel shows how far our center and the Eastern Area has come in regards to the Wildland Fire/All Risk dispatching on a National level. WFDSS (Wildland Fire Decision Support System) WFDSS is a program designed for Fire Managers to utilize during incidents when formulating planning analysis. It is the dispatch centers responsibilities to initiate the incidents into WFDSS, so the managers can get in and do the next steps.

We have been working closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service on getting us a very large wall map designed to meet our interagency needs. We have some minor things to work out before putting it up on the wall, but it is going to look great once it is complete. We developed an Interagency Needs to Know briefing guide for visiting resources (helicopter, engine, overhead) which answers many of the basic questions about our operation, the area, and what to expect. (They are very cool). I have also been renewed for one more year as the Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team Chair.

All in all 2009 was a great year for us here at the Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center. We have come a long way since John and I got here and even more so since we moved into the new center. We feel extremely fortunate to have this facility and we look forward to the next year and all that we will accomplish.

## Activity

### SUMMARY YEAR-TO-DATE REQUEST TRANSACTIONS

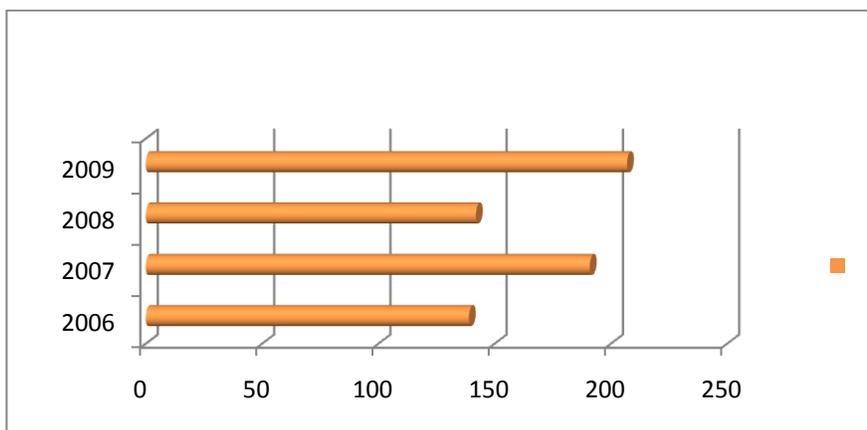
Red Catalog Name	Enter*	Delete	Place*	Retrieve*	Fill*	Infill	Reassign	Release	Cancel*	Cancel UTF	UTF*
Aircraft	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Crew	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	7	0	0	0	11	1	1	6	1	0	0
Overhead	94	1	31	6	302	5	10	81	8	0	24
Supply	16	0	1	1	13	0	0	0	2	2	0
<b>Summary</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>

2009 was a mild year in resource ordering activity on a national scale, but with the Derecho (Wind event) in May, the assistance to wilderness and trails in getting sawyers to Southern Illinois to help clear, and mobilizing the Midewin Hotshots, the dispatch center was still very active ordering and filling resource orders. The wind event in May was a devastating event here in Southern Illinois. The amount of resource damage throughout the area was amazing and because of sheer number of downed trees on the National Forest and Refuge lands, resources were brought in to give us a hand. Fish and Wildlife brought in 3 man crews from Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana, while the Forest Service brought in saw teams from Indiana, Minnesota and Michigan. All total we brought in about 30 sawyers between the two agencies to assist in our cleanup efforts. We also brought in a Type 3 Helicopter so Line Officers could take an aerial view of the damage on their lands.

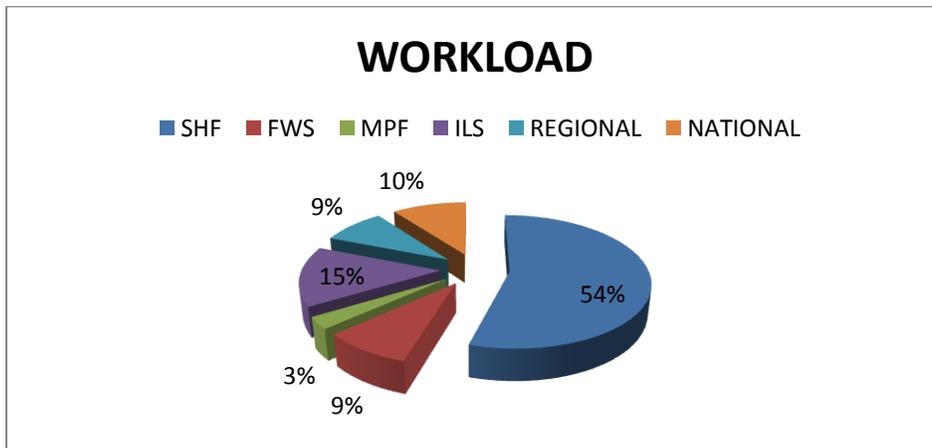
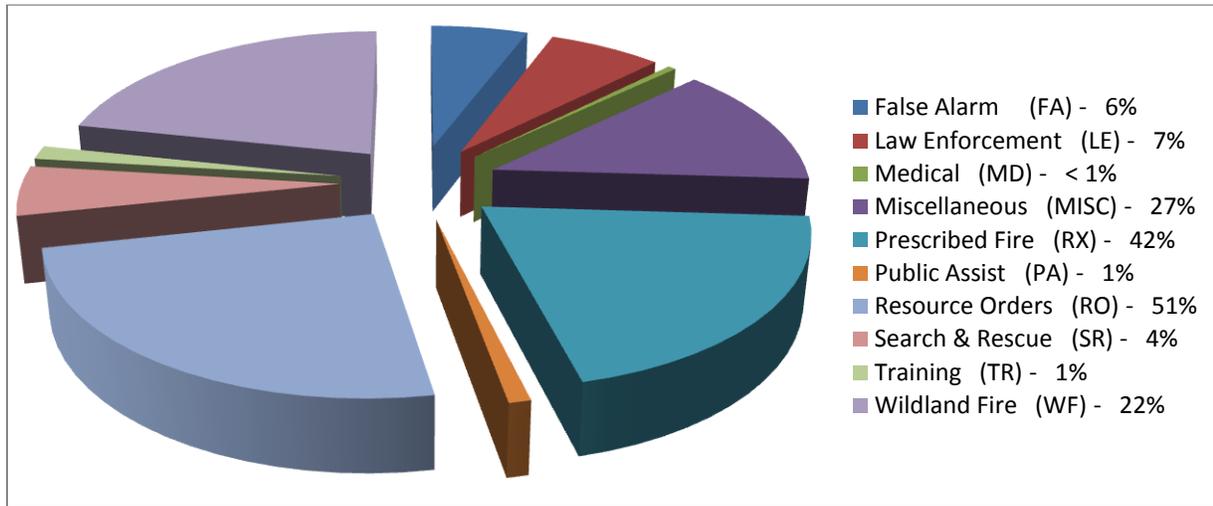
### Incident Actions:

2009 was the most active year with Incident Action workload we have had here in the Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center since John and I got here. Even though we did not mobilize resources out west much this summer, locally we were busier with wildfire, prescribed fire, law enforcement, and various other activities. We have made great strides in getting communications lines open and in place with the local 911 centers, and 2009 we saw improvement in notifications and requests coming into our center from the local county centers. The Forest Service was still our busiest workload, however activity with the various agencies are increasing and I believe each year there will be a increase in our participation especially in the mutual aid arena.

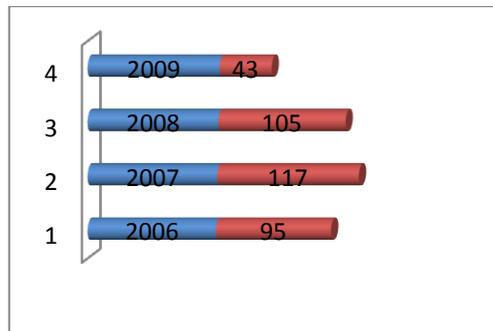
Incident Action Activity last 4 years



Incident Action activity breakdown for 2009



Due to the low participation in National incidents, our numbers were way below average for flight arrangements. Normally, making flight arrangements for personnel filling resource orders are a large part of our summer workload, but 2009 was not an average year by any means.



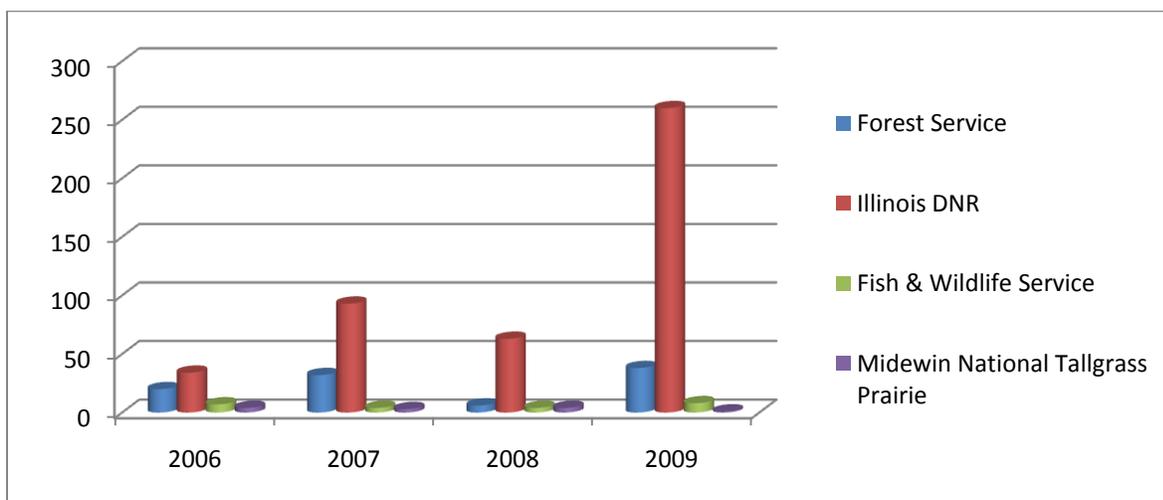
## Wildland Fires

The Shawnee National Forest and Crab Orchard and Cypress Creek National Wildlife refuges had a slight above average year for fires in 2009. We have had a large increase in State wildland fire activity reporting to us here in dispatch which allows us to include their activity on the National Situation report. Tom Wilson, Forest Fire Supervisor for the State DNR, has worked very hard at getting the fire departments throughout Illinois to report wildland fires. As you can see below, the number of incidents Tom has received in 2009 jumped dramatically, unfortunately, due to the reporting structure of the Fire Departments, the final total of 260+ fires (Tom continues to receive reports) were not included on the final National Situation Report because they were received after the final date for reporting.

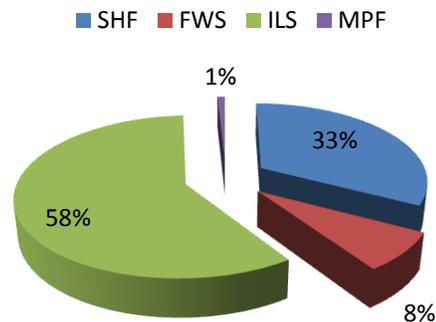
We have also been working closer with Cliff Berger and Don Wiley from the Fish and Wildlife Service here in Illinois in gathering information from the other 5 refuges in order to include them on the National Situation Report. There are 7 wildlife refuges here in Illinois and since we are the Coordination Center for Illinois, we want to make sure we are reporting all activity throughout the state for all agencies and I feel we have improved these efforts tremendously in 2009.

All in all we reported 115 fires for 1155 acres on the National Wildland Fire Situation Report in 2009. In actuality there were over 300 fires throughout the State of Illinois on all agency lands, but until we can get the Fire Departments to report their fires on a continuing basis year round, some of their fires will not be include on the final situation report.

### Fire Activity 4 year comparison



## 2009 Reported Agency Fires

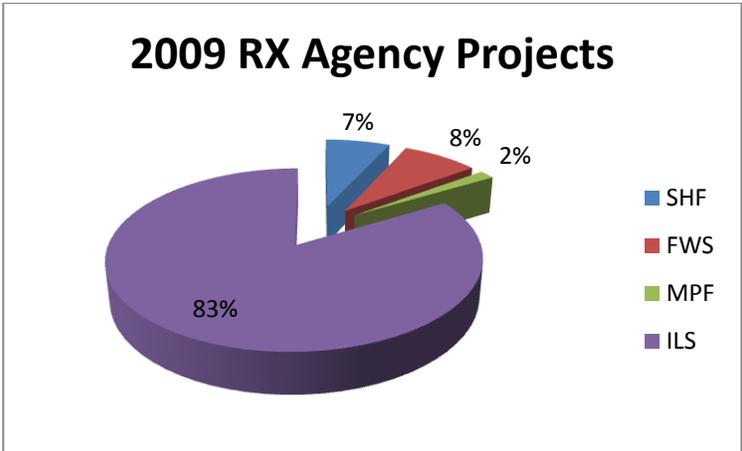
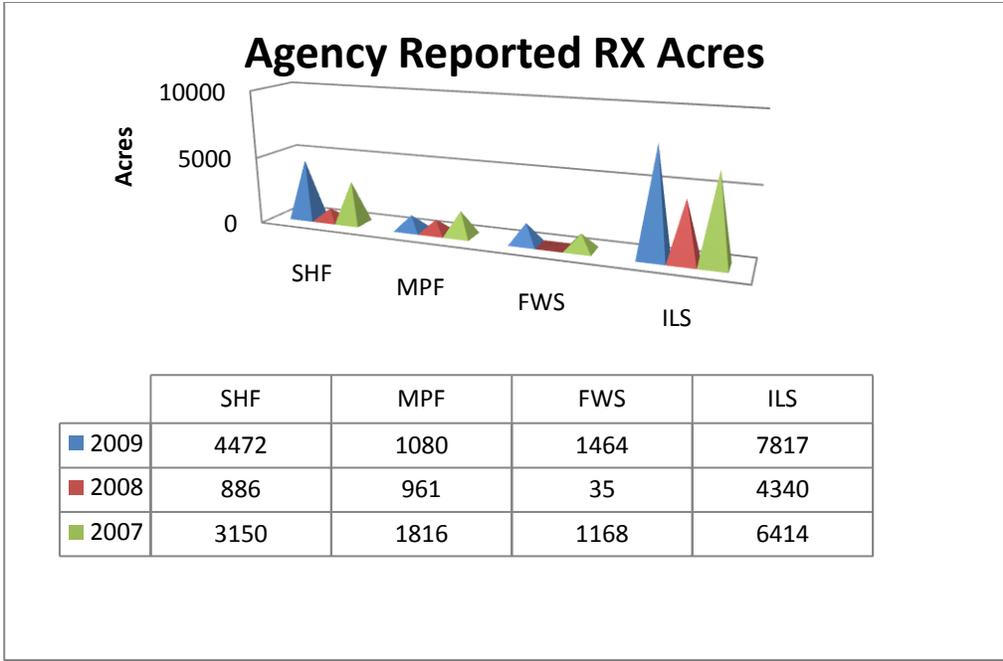


The above graph shows incidents which were **reported** on the National Situation Report therefore not all the State incidents are represented.

### Prescribed Fire Activity

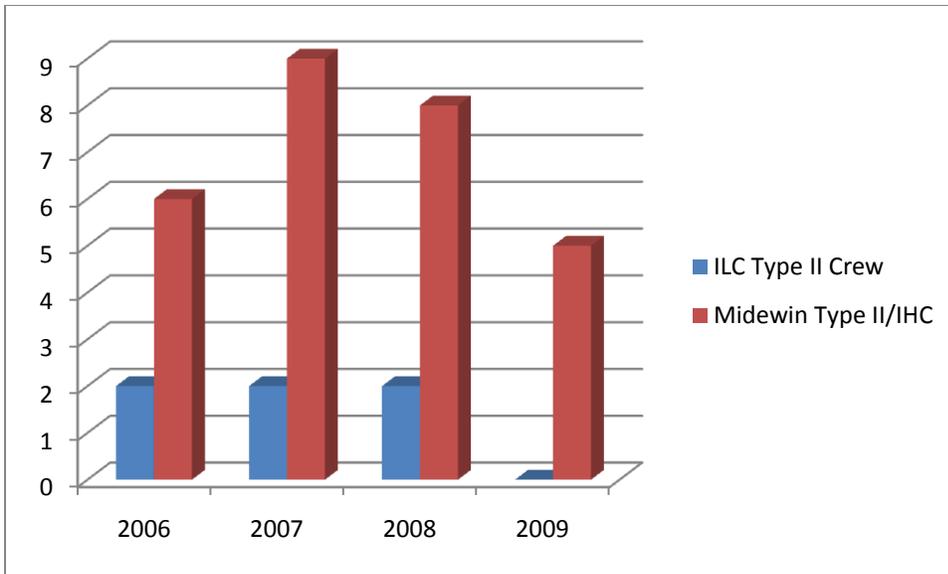
The prescribed fire activity this year was greatly improved over last year by all agencies, even with a wet October. The dispatch center was very active, especially in the spring, with prescribed fire projects. As you can see, the State DNR burns a bunch of acres and even though we do not participate much (except for reporting purposes) in their projects, there was an extended effort to keep us posted on when specific burns would occur (especially when they are down in the Southern part of the State). There also have been great strides, once again, with the DNR and FWS in getting this information into us for National Situation reporting purposes.

All in all the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service are still our most active agencies when it comes to the dispatch centers participation. We not only provide the radio communications for all of their burns, we also obtain and coordinate resources, work closely with the County 911 centers keeping them posted, as well as obtaining weather updates, resource availability, media participation, as well as reporting activity at the GACC and National Levels.



**CREWS:**

2009 was not a great year if you wanted to go out with a handcrew. With all the activity confined to California and Alaska we unfortunately were unable to get a Type 2IA handcrew out this summer. The Midewin Hotshots also had a below normal year on mobilizations, yet were able to spend time in Alaska and California as well as assist the Eastern Area Forests in wildland fires and prescribed fire activities.



## Casual Hire

As stated previously, 2009 was a record year for signing up casual hires. Unfortunately we were unable to use most of the casual hires, with only a few going out as single resources this year. As you can see, non agency affiliated individuals were our largest group. This was, however, the first year we signed up individuals from the local VFD's as well as having more SIU student participation than past years and I suspect this may increase some over the years.

