



2020

ANNUAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM CHIEF BUD BACKER



2020 was indeed a year of challenges. Some of which I'm sure you may have experienced as well in your business or at home. I cannot be prouder of our firefighters and staff for how they have responded and adapted to the many challenges faced in 2020.

We continued to hire additional firefighters to reach our goal of staffing each fire engine and ladder truck with three firefighters per unit. Ten firefighters were hired in 2020. Our goal was to hire 18, but our first class of recruits endured an on-again, off-again fire academy due to COVID-19 impacts. For that reason, we did not hire a second group, which set our schedule back a bit. We are now back on track and hired the first group of nine recruits in December of 2020 with a 2021 start date. Our current fire companies' minimum staffing goals will be reached on July 1, 2021, bringing all six companies to a staffing level of three firefighters each! The increased staffing levels will improve firefighter and public safety by providing the minimum number of firefighters necessary to conduct immediate rescue operations at a fire scene with the first arriving fire engine or ladder truck. Having reached safer staffing levels, we must continue our hiring trend to

address retirements and the need to staff future stations in Tehaleh and Milton.

The Pandemic affected everything that we do: emergency response, training, daily living in fire stations, public outreach, vehicle/equipment maintenance, supply management/acquisition, physical fitness, coordination with other agencies, to scratch the surface - all of which required updates to policies and procedures.

In March, we worked to protect our firefighters further and maintain our ability to serve the public during the Pandemic by establishing new decontamination protocols and acquiring new equipment. We obtained small countertop devices to disinfect disposable N95 masks, making them reusable as supplies were inadequate. Electrostatic fogging machines were ordered in late February when we saw "the train coming down the tracks." We increased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on medical incidents. For a time, we split crews assigning some to volunteer stations to reduce the probability of infecting a larger group of firefighters in the event of an exposure. Obtaining additional PPE was challenging to accomplish for several months, which required adaptation to using different PPE types.

We made it to August before experiencing our first departmental quarantines. Again, we relied on our firefighters' dedication as additional overtime was necessary to keep our units adequately staffed. At one point in November, thirty firefighters were quarantined or isolated (25% of our line firefighters.) Two firefighters were hospitalized, with one remaining out for over two months.

In March, we began holding our Fire Commissioner meetings virtually via webinars, a process that continued into 2021. The

webinars were open to anyone by signing in to observe. Information about each session is available on our website at www.eastpiercefirerescue.org.

Then came Labor Day and the largest fire in our history, the Sumner Grade Fire. A week that I'm sure our friends in Bonney Lake and Sumner will remember for some time.

High winds caused several power outages and downed powerlines throughout the region. We began fighting many fires that Monday evening, and then just after midnight on Tuesday morning, the Sumner Grade Fire broke out. For the first time in our history, we had to request activation of the Washington State Fire Mobilization Act, seeking resources throughout the state. Unfortunately, there were none to be had for a couple of days due to high fire activity statewide. Helicopters from the Department of Natural Resources and National Guard aided in saving many homes later that afternoon.

Ultimately, we did receive additional assistance from other departments dispatched by the State Fire Mobilization Act. Obtaining the help was crucial during that initial 48-hour period when we lacked the resources to respond to other emergencies. At times, 911 dispatches went unanswered as there was no one to send. Once additional help arrived and replaced our firefighters on the line, we could meet the community's other needs.

Our firefighters and many local mutual aid fire companies from the region fought hard for 48 to 60 hours without a break before being relieved. Their efforts were nothing short of heroic. The fact that only two homes and six other buildings were lost is a testament to their courage and dedication.

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The Sumner Grade Fire was a historical event for many of the agencies involved. We offer our thanks to the Bonney Lake Police Department, Sumner Police Department, Pierce County Sheriff's Office, Washington State Patrol, South Sound 911, Washington Department of Transportation, Bonney Lake Public Works, Sumner Public Works, Puget Sound Energy, and Corliss Resources.

2020 saw a downturn in call volume, which directly resulted from the impacts of COVID-19 on our society. There were fewer medical emergencies, most likely due to decreased activities, and some people were concerned about being taken to the hospital.

Thank you for your trust in providing us with the funding to provide for your safety. We would not be able to meet your needs without your support.

-Fire Chief Bud Backer

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Hired ten firefighters.
- Promoted two internal candidates to fill open Assistant Chief positions.
- Remained the most cost-effective career fire district in the county.
- Continued to provide service while several firefighters quarantined due to COVID-19.
- Prevented damage to hundreds of homes during the Sumner Grade Fire with no injuries to civilians and no severe injuries to firefighters.
- Minimum staffing of three engine companies (engines 111, 116, and 118) and ladder truck 113 increased to three firefighters on duty 24/7, meeting our goal at four of our six fire stations.

Bond Issue Milestones:

- Received the first two fire engines in September (four more due in 2021).
- Received the new ladder truck in December.
- Applied for permits to build the new Station 118 (Edgewood).
- Acquired land for a future fire station in Milton.
- Acquired land next to the current Station 114 (West Lake Tapps).
- Continued work to acquire land to relocate Station 112 (Prairie Ridge).

MISSION STATEMENT, VISION & VALUE STATEMENTS

Exceptional people providing compassionate service and rapid response to our community's diverse needs.

VISION STATEMENT

East Pierce Fire & Rescue is a regional leader in providing the highest level of fire and emergency medical and prevention services to a diverse and growing community with:

- Mission-essential staffing and training
- State-of-the-art facilities, equipment and technology
- A strong, diverse and sustainable funding base, while maintaining stewardship of taxpayer resources
 - A safe environment for our citizens through effective and comprehensive prevention and public education programs
 - A safe and healthy workforce

CORE VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our community and our employees are our most important resource.

We are committed to:

Doing the Right Thing

Integrity, Trust, Respect and Commitment

Everyone Must Make a Difference

Individual, Organizational, Responsibility, Accountability, Teamwork and Collaboration

Anticipating and Meeting Our Community's Needs

Proactive Planning, Innovation, Creativity, Responsiveness and Excellent Customer Service

“Where Compassion and Action Meet”



FIRE COMMISSIONERS | COMMAND STAFF | RETIREES

Fire Commissioners form a board elected by the public to represent the fire district. The board meets monthly to set budgets, establish policy and provide administrative oversight.

East Pierce Fire Commissioners serve six-year terms. Any resident, 18 years or older, who lives within the East Pierce service area is eligible to apply for an open position on the board.

All regular meetings of the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Board of Commissioners are held on the third Tuesday of every month. During the 2020 pandemic virtual meetings were facilitated which allowed the Board to continue to conduct business and serve the public. Virtual meetings were open to the public via links posted on the department website.



Fire Commissioner Board held virtual meetings.

Visit our website at www.eastpiercefirerescue.org for meeting minutes and agendas.

2021 EPFR Commissioners Meeting Schedule

- January 19
- February 16
- March 16
- April 20
- May 18
- June 15
- July 20
- August 17
- Sept. 21
- October 19
- November 16
- December 21



COMMAND STAFF



Bud Backer
Fire Chief



Jon Parkinson
Deputy Chief



Kevin Stabenfeldt
Assistant Chief
Operations/Training/
Volunteers



Jeff Moore
Assistant Chief
Emergency
Management/IT/
Logistics



Chuck King
Assistant Chief
Fire Marshal/
Prevention/Pub Ed



Russ McCallion
Assistant Chief
EMS



Brad Dyson
Battalion Chief
Medical Services
Officer



Matt Gilbert
Battalion Chief
Training Officer



Justin Doyle
Battalion Chief
A Shift



Jay Adams
Battalion Chief
B Shift



Rick Goetz
Battalion Chief
C Shift

2020 RETIREMENTS

Assistant Chief
ED GOODLET
23 Years of Service

Assistant Chief
JIM JAQUES
20 Years of Service

Firefighter
DALE MARIS
14 Years of Service

Lieutenant
ERIC MCLEROY
31 Years of Service

Lieutenant
KEVIN ROORDA
27 Years of Service

Battalion Chief
DOUG WALKER
34 Years of Service

Captain
LANE WALTHERS
34 Years of Service



EPFR SERVICE AREA



153
square miles

97,500
total population

86
CAREER FIREFIGHTER-EMTs

52
CAREER FIREFIGHTER-PARAMEDICS

9
VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS



CALLS BY TYPE FOR 2020

Emergency Medical Calls	7,899
Good Intent	1,239
Public Assist	947
False	521
Fire	313
HazMat	223
Other	21

TOTAL 11,163

TOTAL 911 CALLS BY STATION

Station 113 Sumner	2,594
Station 111 Bonney Lake	1,976
Station 112 Prairie Ridge	1,594
Station 124 Milton	1,516
Station 118 Edgewood	1,117
Station 116 Foothills	666
Station 114 Lake Tapps	709
Station 119 South Prairie	389
Station 115 Lake Tapps - East	308
Mutual Aid*	294

* Mutual Aid provided to neighboring fire departments

TREND: RESPONSE TIMES

Year	Dispatch to Arrival (in minutes)
2014	6:36
2015	6:43
2016	8:42
2017	7:35
2018	7:44
2019	7:34
2020	8:08

Response times for the fire service are important for two reasons—first, to save lives and second, to reduce the damage to someone's property. An emergency response to the scene can vary depending upon how far the emergency is from the fire station.

Response time starts when crews are alerted by dispatch of an emergency to the time crews arrive at the incident scene.



EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE HISTORY

East Pierce Fire & Rescue was founded on a strong commitment to customer service. The department's Mission, Vision and Values guide the actions of the district and its employees. Exceptional customer service and a concern for the employees and their families have become hallmarks of our culture.

EPFR was created when the City of Bonney Lake Fire Department, Pierce County Fire District 22/Lake Tapps Fire and Pierce County Fire District 24 merged in 2000 with the goal of providing a seamless response to emergency situations. Since then, the following mergers or annexations into EPFR have occurred:

- 2006: Pierce County Fire District 12 and South Prairie/Fire District 20
- 2008: Sumner/Fire District 1
- 2010: Edgewood/Fire District 8
- 2013: Milton Fire Department

Today, East Pierce serves a population of approximately 97,500 residents living in and around Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, the Ridge Communities, South Prairie, Tehaleh, Edgewood and Milton. The district



covers approximately 153 square miles and protects residents from 10 stations—six staffed and three volunteer, and one facility on Lake Tapps for the marine rescue unit.

All full-time firefighters are certified as either emergency medical

technicians (EMTs) or paramedics and can respond to both medical emergencies and fires.

An independently-elected board of commissioners governs the agency.



FIRE STATIONS AND STAFFING



Station 111 | Bonney Lake
18421 Veterans Memorial Drive E.
Fire Engine = 3 Medic Unit = 2
Battalion Chief=1 **On-Duty Firefighters: 6**

Station 112 | Prairie Ridge
12006 214th Ave. E.
Fire Engine/Medic Unit = 2
On-Duty Firefighters: 2

Station 113 | Sumner
800 Harrison St.
Ladder Truck = 3 Medic Unit = 2
On-Duty Firefighters 5

Station 114 | Lake Tapps
3206 West Tapps Drive E.
Fire Engine/Medic Unit = 2
On-Duty Firefighters: 2

Station 115 | Lake Tapps - East
1605 210th Ave. E.
Volunteer Firefighter Staffed

Station 116 | Foothills
10515 234th Ave. E.
Fire Engine = 3 Medic Unit = 2
On-Duty Firefighters 5

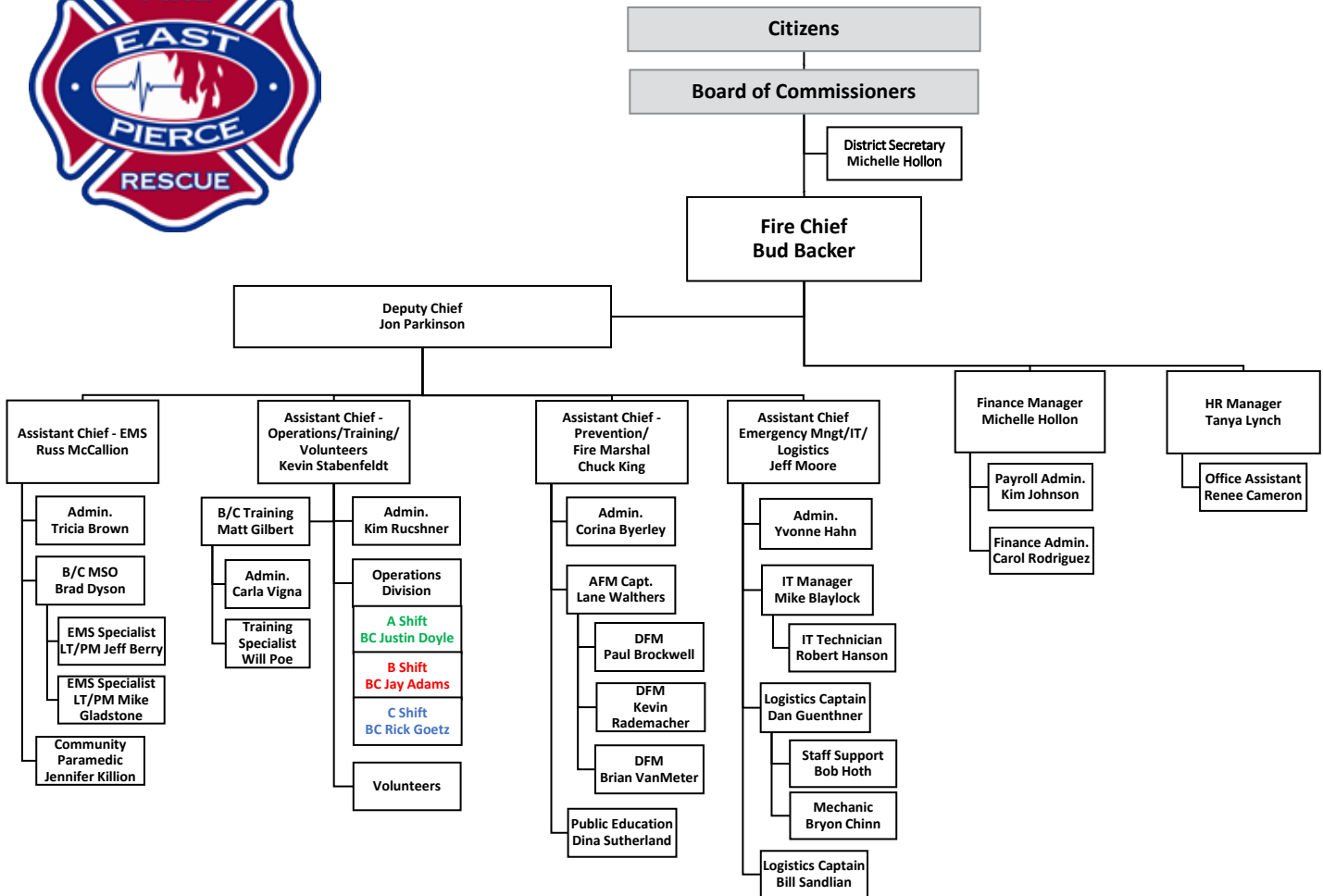
Station 118 | Edgewood
10105 24th St. E.
Fire Engine = 3 Medic Unit = 2
On-Duty Firefighters: 5

Station 119 | South Prairie
350 State Route 162
Volunteer Firefighter Staffed

Station 122 | Lake Tapps
2905 Sumner/Tapps Hwy. East
Marine Service Unit

Station 124 | Milton
1000 Laurel St.
Volunteer Firefighter Staffed

East Pierce Organizational Chart - 2020





SUMNER GRADE FIRE

On September 8th, 2020 (shortly after midnight) our community experienced one of the most significant fires in its history. A combination of high temperatures, low humidity, and strong winds (referred to as “red flag conditions”) struck the region over Labor Day weekend. While still under investigation, it appears a blown transformer caused by downed tree limbs initially started a fire on Myers Road in Bonney Lake which quickly spread due to the extreme fire conditions caused by the weather. The fire quickly grew to a multi-alarm incident, but due to other emergencies in the region, resources were limited.

By early morning, the fire had escalated to a State Mobilization which allowed resources from across the state to be diverted to the incident. Throughout the day on September 8th, the fire continued to grow in Bonney Lake and into Sumner as resources began to trickle in from surrounding counties. Unfortunately, emergency units were still scarce as the region dealt with numerous fires throughout Pierce County. Over the course of three days, fire departments in Pierce County handled 19 residential fires, 8 commercial fires, and 72 brush fires, in addition to the regular emergency call volume.

By the evening of September 8th, the fire had grown substantially, and eventually jumped across State Route 410 which prompted the evacuation of approximately 7,000 residents. By the end of the day, the fire had grown to nearly 500 acres and destroyed two homes and several outbuildings. In the days that followed, crews began to get the upper hand as more resources continued to arrive and the weather began to improve. At its peak, the Sumner Grade Fire had more than 100 personnel working the fire which included an incident management team and air support (helicopters). It took nearly two weeks for units to completely control the fire. Thankfully no serious injuries to civilians or firefighters occurred throughout the event.

While this incident was tragic in the loss of homes and property, we were fortunate the losses were not greater than they were. The successes seen on the Sumner Grade Fire can be attributed to many factors, which include:

- **Staffing Levels:** Thanks to the support of citizens, EPFR’s staffing levels have increased over the past few years. This allowed us to deploy near two-thirds of our personnel on the Sumner Grade Fire, while the remaining one-third remained on-duty to staff fire stations and handle normal emergency call volume after the first day.
- **Regional Support:** Support from numerous counties locally and across the State, as well as support from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), was critical in minimizing further property loss or injury.
- **Community & Businesses:** The support of our community was truly overwhelming and helped to lift the spirits of our firefighters who put in a tremendous number of hours and days working the fire.

This fire reminds us that while large scale forest fires are rare in Western Washington, they still can occur. Please visit www.eastpiercefirerescue.org for more information on emergency preparedness programs such as Firewise USA (protecting homes from wildfires) and 3 days 3 ways (emergency preparedness).



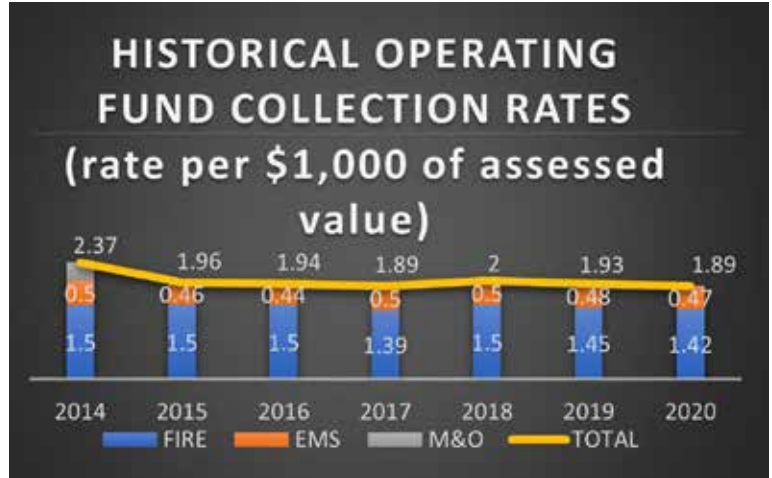
THE FINANCE DIVISION PROVIDES COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNTING, BUDGETING, PAYROLL ADMINISTRATION, DEBT MANAGEMENT, INVESTMENT, FINANCIAL REPORTING AND INTERNAL CONTROL SERVICES FOR THE DISTRICT.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue continues to be the only major fire district in Pierce County operating within the limits of the two primary levy sources for funding. Operating with only the Regular Fire Levy (\$1.50/\$1,000 A.V.) and the EMS Levy (\$0.50/\$1,000 A.V.) limits us to a maximum combined tax collection rate of \$2.00 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Most career fire districts operate with an additional Maintenance & Operations levy or a Benefit Charge, which brings their total rates well above what East Pierce collects (one agency is over \$3.00).

While this limits how fast we can address our staffing shortages, working within the \$2.00 for as long as we can ensures strong fiscal responsibility and controls costs for the public.

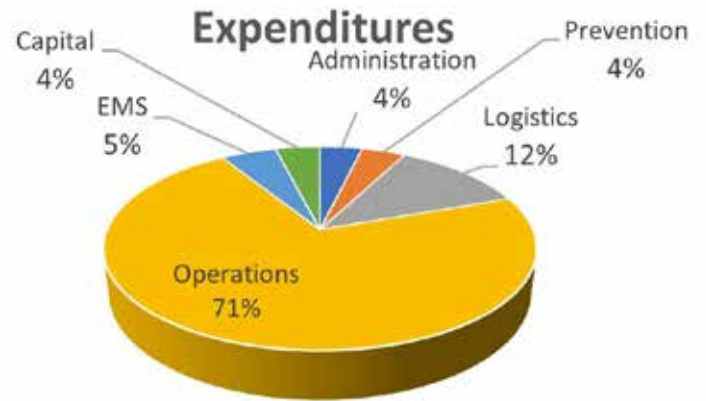
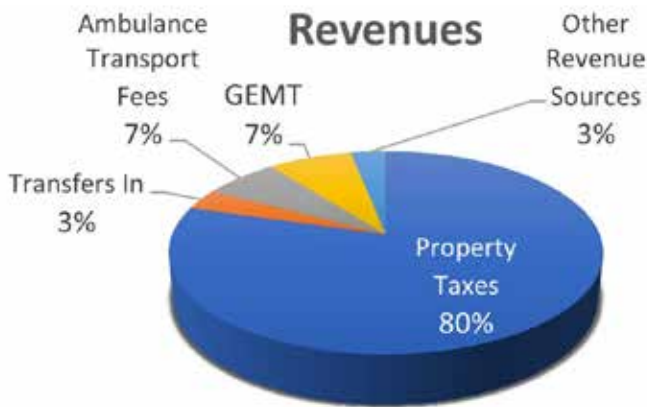
In 2020 the COVID -19 pandemic had a financial impact on the District resulting in an increase of expenditures in the amount of \$249,869.34. The district received federal funding in 2020 as part of the CARES ACT in the amount of \$61,230.63. The district will be seeking reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenditures through federal funded grants.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue is audited annually by the Washington State Auditor’s Office. At the end of 2020, the audit was completed for the 2019 fiscal year. The Auditor reported that EPFR met all the requirements outlined by the Board of Fire Commissioners and Wash-



ington State RCW’s and no findings were reported.

During 2020, revenues were collected in the amount of \$40,718,367.08 and expenditures were in the amount of \$39,762,802.44. Payments received in 2020 for the Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) program were in the amount of \$3,018,089 (Federal reimbursement for the transport of Medicaid patients). Ambulance fees collected in 2020 were in the amount of \$2,679,813. The 2020 collection for the district’s Unlimited Tax General Obligation (UTGO) Bond was in the amount of \$1,905,730 based on \$0.11 per 1,000 of assessed value.



2020 Operating Budget	Budgeted	Actual	Percent of Budget	Percent Over/Under
Expenditures	\$43,380,140	\$39,762,802	91.6%	8.4% Under
Revenues	\$40,553,588	\$40,718,367	100.4%	0.4% Over



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

THE EMS DIVISION PROVIDES CLINICAL DIRECTION, MEDICAL OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) OPERATIONS. EMS PERFORMANCE IS ANALYZED THROUGH A QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI) PROGRAM. EMS DIVISION STAFF WORK WITH THE TRAINING DIVISION TO COORDINATE AND DELIVER EMS-RELATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

East Pierce firefighter-EMTs and paramedics responded to 7,899 medical emergencies in 2020, an average of 21.5 medical 911 calls per day. Emergency medical services (EMS) call volume makes up 70.7% of the fire department's 911 workload.

EPFR provides a full-range of EMS services for the community, including "first response" by fire engines, basic and paramedic-level ambulance transport of patients, and patient assistance and care management through our Community Resource Paramedic program.

Fire engines, deployed at each of our six career-staffed fire stations, serve as "first response" units to quickly get medically trained firefighters to the scene of EMS calls. East Pierce also deploys four medic units (paramedic ambulances) which respond to EMS scenes and transport patients to area hospitals and specialized trauma, burn, cardiac and stroke centers. Four reserve medic units can also be deployed if there is a spike in the number of emergency medical 911 calls. To provide needed emergency medical services for the community, all EPFR firefighters are cross-trained at a minimum Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level, and 56 members are cross-trained and certified as paramedics.

EMT's receive 150 hours of training to provide basic emergency care, including splinting, bandaging, spinal immobilization, oxygen and airway management, administration of some life-saving medications, and automated defibrillation. Paramedics receive an additional 1,500-2,000 hours of medical training focused on clinical assessment skills and performance of advanced procedures used to stabilize critically ill or injured patients. Paramedics are certified

to administer intravenous fluids, give more than 40 medications, insert breathing tubes, and provide electrical pacing, cardioversion, and defibrillation. EMT's and paramedics work together as a collaborative team to meet our community's emergency medical needs.

In 2020, East Pierce medic units transported 5,403 patients to area hospitals - an average of 14.8 patients per day, a 7.2% decrease from 2019 and 3.4% below the previous 5-year average. This decrease in call volume for 2020 reflects the nationwide trend during the COVID-19 pandemic.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue's EMS call volume is predicted to increase steadily in coming years for reasons including:

- An increasing number of older "Baby Boomer" residents. Patients over age 65 typically call 911 at a rate 2 to 3 times higher than younger people.
- Increased shortages of primary care physicians result in people calling 911 and going to the emergency department when they cannot see their own doctor.



- The opening of new assisted living centers, adult family homes, senior apartments, and dementia care centers. Residents in these facilities generated between 2 and 3 EMS transports per person per year, a 911 call volume rate some thirty times higher than those of citizens living independently. In total, these care centers generated 13% of our total EMS call volume in 2020.

More than 69% of patients seen by EPFR crews are transported in medic units to area hospitals. Many patients, however, choose not to be taken to the hospital in an East Pierce medic unit. These "non-transport" patients will sign medical "release of responsibility" or "refusal against medical advice" forms.

7,899
Total EMS Calls

5,403
Patient Transports

86
Firefighter-EMTs

52
Firefighter-Paramedics

These patients typically present with minor injuries or illnesses which were treated at the scene. These patients may not require additional care, or the patients may decide to have family or friends take them to a hospital, clinic, or doctor's office.

Since 2004, East Pierce Fire & Rescue has provided emergency ambulance service to district residents with the goal of providing improved clinical care at no "out-of-pocket" cost to fire district residents. The district does bill, on the patient's behalf, private health insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and other insurance providers. For district residents, insurance co-pays are subsidized by the EMS levy providing hospital transportation at no "out-of-pocket" expense to the individual patient. We estimate that district residents save between \$900,000 - \$1,200,000 each year from this program.

A letter from the department's billing service may be sent to residents requesting verification of insurance information. Patients are required to submit this requested information to participate in the levy program. The letter also includes a description of what the ambulance transport charge would have been if they were not covered by the EMS levy.

When all available East Pierce units are already on calls - such as during a major fire- private ambulances and units from neighboring fire departments may respond into the district for "mutual aid". In this case, residents may have to pay for ambulance transport, depending upon which agency provided the service. Last year, 56 district residents were transported by mutual aid ambulances, or less than 1% of our total EMS patient transports.

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2020, EMS Division staff faced challenges unprecedented in emergency medical services. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) became scarce on a global scale limiting available PPE for EMT and paramedic use during incidents. The EMS Division purchased APR masks, CDC compliant goggles, and reusable face shields for every member. Crews were provided 40k N95 masks (10 times normal use) and 8,250 gowns (200 times normal use) over the course of the year.

Disinfection and sanitation equipment were acquired either through direct purchase or by grants from Pierce County Department of Emergency Management. Equipment included Profexus Sprayers, "Tri Jet Foggers", and UVC lamps. This equipment is used after each EMS call and played a critical role in providing clean and safe environments for both patients and firefighters.

EMS call volume was directly affected by the course of the pandemic throughout the year. As compared to 2019, call volume per month decreased by nearly 20% during the worst of the pandemic. However, while the total number of incidents decreased, the most severe call types increased in 2020 by 13%.

Training must go on. Even in a global pandemic. The EMS Division provided the equivalent of 10 weeks of (socially distanced and masked) ongoing medical training for the FF/EMTs and FF/PMs. While some training classes had to be delayed all required medical training was

completed. The EMS Division also completed the final evaluation and check-off for a newly hired group of FF/EMTs and FF/PMs.

2. Community Resource Paramedic Program

In 2018, EPFR became the first fire department in Pierce county to launch a "Community Resource Paramedic Program." These programs deployed across the United States utilize specially trained Community Resource Paramedics to work with patients in the community who struggle with chronic healthcare problems and social service issues.

These vulnerable persons often use 911 as their "lifeline", sometimes calling 911 daily, attempting to get needed help. Firefighters and paramedics responding to these 911 calls identify and refer these patients to our Community Resource Paramedic.

Once proper permissions have been obtained from a patient, the Community Resource Paramedic meets with the person to identify what needs the individual may have. It could be that the patient is unable to pick up their medications at a pharmacy or to get a ride to a physician appointment. Or perhaps the patient is falling frequently and is unable to care for themselves at home.

The two primary goals of this program are:

1. Get the patient the help they need.
2. Reduce the number of calls to 911.



FIRE PREVENTION

THE FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION PROVIDES A FULL RANGE OF SERVICES TO PROTECT OUR CITIZENS, VISITORS TO OUR COMMUNITY, AND EMPLOYEES OF OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES AGAINST THE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY THROUGH EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES. THE DIVISION APPLIES A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO FIRE PREVENTION AND ENCOURAGES ALL TO PRACTICE SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE DAY...EVERYDAY.



In 2020, the fire marshals reviewed 698 construction plans, performed 1,414 inspections, and completed 12 fire investigations within city limits. This was a decrease of 4% in inspections since 2019. Plan review and construction activity decreased by nearly 12% throughout the jurisdiction since 2019. Commercial development out-performed residential overall.

New construction of multi-family residential properties, schools, and industrial warehouses were the primary drivers of plan review and inspection activity on the commercial side. New residential construction remained consistent throughout the fire district. The City of Bonney Lake's municipal code requirement for the installation of residential fire sprinklers in all new residential occupancies resulted in significant residential plan review and inspection activity.

Plan review projects ranged from large commercial projects to small

tenant improvements and from single-family dwellings to multi-unit apartment complexes.

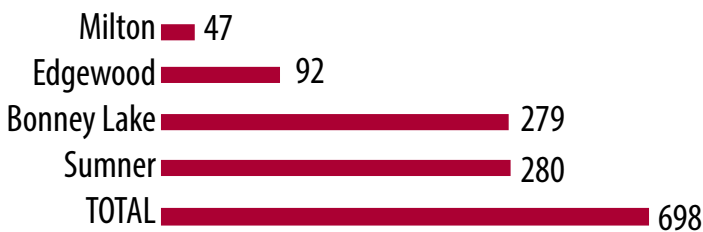
The fire marshals reviewed plans that included permits for special events, pre-application conferences, plat, SEPA, site plans, building plans, and plans for fire protection systems such as fire alarms and fire sprinklers.

The fire district is responsible for determining the cause of fires that occur within its jurisdiction. Many of the routine investigations were conducted by our Operations Division personnel, while more complex investigations were completed by East Pierce fire investigators and Pierce County fire marshals.

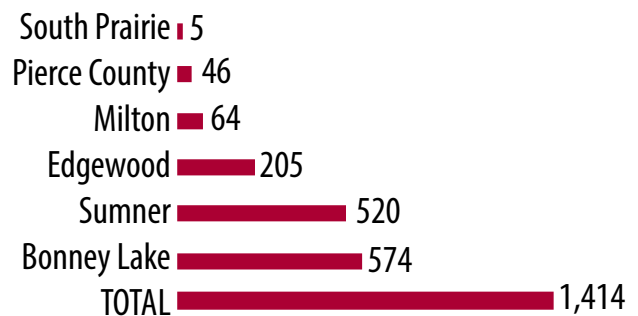
The Fire Prevention Division's five fire investigators share response duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In 2020, firefighters responded to 313 fire incidents, ranging from small rubbish fires to commercial building blazes. Seventy-two of those incidents required East Pierce personnel to extinguish the fire. East Pierce fire investigators conducted investigations for 12 of those fires that were located within city limits. The Pierce County fire marshals investigated an additional 22 fires within EPFR jurisdiction but outside of city limits.

The Fire Prevention Division consists of one Assistant Fire Marshal, three Deputy Fire Marshals, a Public Educator, and an Administrative Support Specialist with oversight provided by the Fire Marshal. The Deputy Fire Marshals provide plan review and inspection services. The Public Educator provides educational programs for citizens. The Administrative Support Specialist provides assistance to division staff and members of the public.

PLAN REVIEWS BY CITY



INSPECTIONS BY CITY/AREA





EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE PROVIDES NUMEROUS PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO HELP KEEP CHILDREN AND ADULTS SAFE FROM FIRE AND OTHER HAZARDS.



The driving force behind East Pierce Fire & Rescue’s public education programs is to reduce the risk of injuries and deaths from fires, drowning, medical emergencies, such as cardiac arrest, and other preventable causes. These programs are designed to teach children and adults how to recognize and avoid unintentional injuries through in-person learning, demonstrations and activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 significantly impacted the delivery of these programs, which stopped all in-person learning including Safe Sitter classes, fire extinguisher training, fire station tours and off-site visits, and CPR and First Aid classes. The delivery of characterization program assemblies in elementary schools and classroom-based drowning prevention curriculum in high schools also stopped.

Career and volunteer firefighters would normally provide out-

reach at many community events, including National Night Out, Summer Rhubarb Days, Daffodil Festival, Bonney Lake Days, Edgewood Community Picnic, Milton Days, community parades, and staff the annual EPFR Open House. All were canceled to help reduce community spread of COVID-19.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue rose to the challenge and offered creative ways to stay engaged and connected with our communities during this time of social distancing by providing a variety of virtual safety lessons and videos and countless drive-bys to help raise spirits.



2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EPFR crews participated in more than 80 drive-by convoys to help celebrate birthdays (for both young in years and young at heart), adoptions, retirements, and cancer remissions to name a few.

- Created a virtual classroom to engage students during distance learning.
- Posted engine tour and safety lesson videos to the department’s YouTube channel and Facebook page.
- Shared several “Story-time with a Firefighter” videos on YouTube and Facebook.
- Emphasized outreach efforts and community engagement on social media platforms.
- Prevention members maintained relationships with community partners by participating in virtual meetings to ensure important and needed work continued.



OPERATIONS DIVISION

THE OPERATIONS DIVISION PROVIDES FIRE SUPPRESSION, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AND TECHNICAL RESCUE RESPONSE FOR THE COMMUNITIES SERVED BY EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE.

In 2020, East Pierce career and volunteer firefighter-EMTs and firefighter-paramedics assigned to the Operations Division responded to 11,163 calls for emergency services. While the primary function of the Operations Division is to respond to emergency and non-emergency calls, division personnel also conduct building familiarization walk-throughs to assist them with pre-incident planning activities should firefighters be called back for an emergency. While on duty, the firefighters also participate in training, public education events, vehicle and equipment inspections and maintenance, and other routine activities.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue is a combination department utilizing both career and volunteer firefighters to handle a wide variety of emergencies. Career firefighters and paramedics are automatically dispatched to calls throughout the 153 square-mile district. If unstaffed volunteer stations are located closer to an incident, volunteers will also be dispatched to the scene along with career crews.

District fire stations are strategically located throughout the jurisdiction to enable a quick response. In 2020,



East Pierce Fire & Rescue Recruit Class 2020-01 being sworn in by Fire Chief Backer.

East Pierce responded out of 10 fire stations. Six of the stations are staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week by career firefighters. The others include three volunteer stations and a water rescue facility located on the north end of Lake Tapps. A regional 911 dispatch center, South Sound 911, sends the appropriate fire and EMS units from the fire station closest to the emergency

call.

The headquarters fire station – Station 111 – located in Bonney Lake, houses emergency response personnel in addition to the administrative offices for the district.

The Assistant Chief of Operations oversees the Operations Division. This division is split into three shifts, supervised by a Battalion Chief who works out of the headquarters station and manages the day-to-day operations of the shift. An Administrative Support Specialist is also assigned to the division.

In addition to responding to fire, emergency medical and rescue incidents, the Operations Division maintains four special operations teams comprised of personnel with specialized training. The special operations teams include: Wildland, Water Rescue, Hazardous Materials and Technical Rescue.





SELECTED EAST PIERCE FIREFIGHTERS ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE ON ONE OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS TEAMS MAINTAINED BY THE FIRE DISTRICT. TEAM MEMBERS ATTEND ADDITIONAL TRAINING BEYOND THE FIRE SUPPRESSION, RESCUE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING RECEIVED BY ALL CAREER AND VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL.

EAST PIERCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS TEAMS:

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TEAM:

HazMat members have been extensively trained and equipped to respond to a variety of incidents involving hazardous materials. When you have two rail lines, an interstate, large industrial complex, two pipelines and a couple of highways running through your district, you must be prepared for anything.

Maintaining a large team with all the proper equipment is an expensive operation, so the East Pierce HazMat Team is a member of the Pierce County Hazardous Incident Team, a multi-jurisdictional response team that includes hazmat-trained firefighters from West Pierce, Graham, and Central Pierce. In addition to the monthly training at East Pierce, the HazMat Team drills with the county team quarterly and with neighboring hazmat jurisdictions twice a year.

WATER RESCUE TEAM:

Members of the Water Rescue Team regularly practice skills and techniques they learn in various water rescue training classes. Team members gain hands-on experience diving at Lake Tapps and the Puget Sound. They also practice swiftwater rescue on local rivers.

The team provides surface, dive and swiftwater services when responding to emergencies on the many bodies of water in the area.

TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM: The East Pierce firefighters who belong to the Technical Rescue Team respond to extraordinary or highly dangerous rescue situations such as building collapse, confined-space entrapments, trench rescue, machine and vehicle rescue, and high-angle rope



EPFR Wildland Firefighting Team members deployed to assist with California wildfires.

incidents.

Before team members can respond to a call, they must have completed several hundred hours of demanding training demonstrating proficiency in specialties such as trench rescue, confined space, rope rescue and complicated motor vehicle extrications.

The East Pierce team is a member of the Pierce County Technical Rescue Team. Together they form a regional response throughout Pierce County. East Pierce crews have become proficient responding to numerous emergencies in isolated locations.

WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING TEAM: This team trains monthly in preparation of every fire season, refreshing past skills and learning new techniques before they must use them at a real fire. The team is comprised of career and volunteer firefighters who train to battle brush fires that occur with some frequency in our area.

The tactics, strategies, equipment and techniques for fighting wildfires is much different than fighting structure fires. The Wildland Team often must bring water to areas without fire hydrants, refill engines in remote locales and use chain saws and hand tools to clear brush surrounding a fire.

The team is also available to help neighboring districts. Occasionally, they are deployed to Federal or State wildfires, where the team gains valuable experience. In these cases, the Federal government or the State Department of Natural Resources pays for the cost of the firefighter's deployment.





EAST PIERCE FIREFIGHTERS MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE SKILLS AND ABILITIES THROUGH ONGOING TRAINING OVERSEEN BY THE TRAINING DIVISION. ALL CAREER AND VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL MUST UNDERGO ANNUAL FIREFIGHTING AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING.

Training and education are essential for maintaining and improving critical firefighting, rescue and medical skills. Training provides an opportunity to update members on new regulations and industry "Best Practices." It allows firefighters to become familiar with equipment and procedures and work efficiently and effectively on a wide variety of emergency scenes including house fires, vehicle collisions, medical emergencies, high-angle cliff rescues and hazardous materials incidents.

East Pierce firefighters receive training on a wide range of topics and skills from the most commonly used to the complex and unique. Crews practice rope rescue techniques, wild-land firefighting, swift water, underwater and trench rescue skills. These complex skills require frequent training and practice for members to maintain proficiency.

The EPFR Training Division is responsible for assessing training needs, developing a training calendar and curriculum, coordinating the delivery of instruction for specialized training programs—including special teams and EMS training—and then maintaining training records and certifications. Training Division members provide direct delivery of many fire and rescue training-oriented programs.

The Training Division also conducts evaluations of probationary personnel, crew-based training drills and assists in all testing for new employees and promotional processes.



East Pierce Fire & Rescue members training to treat a fire victim.

Career firefighters receive most of their training while on-duty, while evening and weekend training is geared toward the volunteer firefighter drills. Personnel also attend specialized classes outside the department at community colleges, workshops, and firefighting academies.

Managed by a Battalion Chief with oversight by an Assistant Chief, the Training Division also consists of two Training Lieutenants, and an Administrative Support Specialist.

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recruit Training

- Onboarding of nine new career firefighter recruits to include: a 2-week pre-academy, 13-week fire academy, and an 8-week post-academy.
- 13 Firefighters completed their probationary period from a previous recruit class.
- Acquired and prepared two residential training structures. These structures provide valuable training opportunities for our crews.

Conducted joint training evolution with EMS Division to create realistic fireground scenarios

Hosted joint Pump Academy with Buckley Fire Department

Began the transition to a new Driver Training Program

- Trained 12 new Emergency Vehicle Incident Prevention Program (EVIP) Instructors.
- Completed a Drivers Rodeo for two shifts.
- Completed three interagency After-Action Reviews.
- SR 165 Rope Rescue.
- Elhi Hill Brush Fire.
- Sumner Grade Fire.

Assisted in the rollout of the following tools and equipment:

- Carbon Monoxide monitors.
- eDraulic extrication tools.
- Pierce Engines.
- New hose loads.

2020 TRAINING HOURS BY CATEGORY

5,946

SUPPRESSION/
OPERATIONS

4,890

EMS

1,901

HAZ MAT

1,884

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

962

TECHNICAL
RESCUE

1,776

RECRUIT
TRAINING

696

WILDLAND
FIREFIGHTING

288

WATER
RESCUE

18,342

TOTAL HOURS
OF TRAINING

134

AVERAGE
NUMBER OF TRAINING
HOURS PER FIREFIGHTER

11.2

AVERAGE
NUMBER OF TRAINING
HOURS PER FIREFIGHTER
PER MONTH





VOLUNTEER DIVISION

THE VOLUNTEER DIVISION COORDINATES THE ACTIVITIES OF EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE'S FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (EMT) VOLUNTEERS. VOLUNTEERS RESPOND TO A BROAD RANGE OF EMERGENCIES INCLUDING FIRES, MEDICAL EMERGENCIES, VEHICLE COLLISIONS, HAZMAT INCIDENTS, "GENERAL ALARMS" AND NATURAL DISASTERS.

On a typical day, volunteers either respond from home to volunteer fire stations, staff volunteer stations or work at career-staffed stations side by side with career firefighters during a Volunteer Experience Opportunity Program (VEOP) shifts. VEOPs allow volunteers to gain valuable experience and training.

During a significant fire that requires many firefighters, or when there are an unusually high number of incidents, volunteers are called in to assist during what is known as a "general alarm". Depending on the type of emergency, a general alarm can range from 30 minutes to more than 24 hours.

Volunteers also serve our local community through public education. They participate in citizen CPR training, Open House events and other community outreach. The Washington State Board of Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Officers sets minimum standards for all volunteers and manages a disability and pension system.

Traditionally, the Volunteer Program has been a gateway to a career in the fire service. Over the past several years, many of our volunteers



Words of appreciation for first responders popped up across the Bonney Lake and Sumner communities for their efforts on the Sumner Grade Fire.

have become career firefighters with East Pierce Fire & Rescue or other neighboring fire departments in Washington State.

In today's society, it is becoming more difficult to maintain a volunteer program. We are thankful for the volunteers that we have and appreciate their commitment and

time they give to our community.

Volunteer response, training and participation was limited in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.





EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WORKS CLOSELY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES TO PREPARE AND MANAGE LARGE-SCALE EMERGENCIES.

The mission of the Emergency Management Division is to prevent, prepare, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards – natural or man-made. In the simplest terms, emergency management is the management of risk so that we can live with environmental and technical hazards and deal with the disasters they can cause. During a community-wide disaster, this team provides leadership, deploying highly trained emergency response forces.

Unlike a typical emergency response, emergency management is proactive. Effective emergency management relies on the integration of emergency plans at many levels. The Emergency Management Division works closely with personnel from local law enforcement, various school districts and city, State, and federal agencies. When disaster strikes, whether a severe winter storm or massive flooding, the Emergency Management Division has a plan.

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Helped plan and/or participated in the following events and exercises:

- Pierce County Emergency Operations COVID-19 response planning and activities.
- Washington State Mobilization and Pierce County Emergency Management response to the Sumner Grade Fire.
- Local Pierce County Neighborhood Emergency Teams (PC-NET).
- Pierce County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).
- Cities of Bonney Lake and Sumner emergency management planning.
- Mt. Rainier evacuation planning, workgroup meetings and tabletop exercises.





THE LOGISTICS DIVISION SUPPORTS THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS THROUGH THE ACQUISITION AND MAINTENANCE OF FIRE AND EMS VEHICLES, EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES, AND THE PROCUREMENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS NECESSARY FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO FUNCTION.



The Logistics Division of East Pierce Fire & Rescue coordinates the complex operation of supporting 11 facilities, 80 emergency response and support vehicles, and 175 employees in the most cost-effective and efficient manner. The Logistics Division deals with the procurement, storage, distribution, maintenance and replacement of the district's materials and equipment, and maintains the fire stations inside and out.

Logistics personnel order supplies needed for the fire district, such as firefighter uniforms, protective clothing and the tools firefighters use to fight fires and perform rescues. They have been certified to repair the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and taught to program radios. Logistics personnel repair some items in-house, like vehicle exhaust systems, to reduce costs of hiring the work out. The Logistics Division also coordinates the purchase and maintenance of major items such as apparatus, HVAC, and roof repairs and services.

The Logistics Division includes the Information Technology group, which is comprised of an Information Systems Manager and a Technician. They make sure all computers, printers and copiers are in working order across the district – plus they keep the network and phone systems running.

Information Technology staff are also responsible for the electronic tablets the firefighters use for patient care reporting and documentation during EMS calls. Vital health information can be transmitted wirelessly from the tablet to the

hospital saving precious time, especially for patients experiencing a cardiac event, stroke or trauma. Mobile Data Terminals, used in both the fire and EMS vehicles, provide maps and updates as the firefighters respond to 911 calls.

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Logistics Accomplishments:

- Replaced several staff cars due to excessive miles, wear & age.
- Refurbished a medic unit due to high miles and increased maintenance costs. Instead of purchasing a new medic unit, the patient care portion of the unit was removed, updated, and placed on a new chassis.
- Purchased two new engines and a ladder truck to replace aging apparatus to improve safety, unit reliability and maintenance costs. These purchases were funded by the 2018 Bond Issue.
- Completed facility upfitting and firefighter safety improvements in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.
- Completed respirator fit tests for emergency response personnel per State requirements. Each member was tested for the two respirators that are used during EMS incidents and fire incidents.
- Purchased and implemented battery-operated extrication tools and ventilation fans that replaced older gasoline operated equipment used throughout the fleet.

Information Technology Accomplishments:

- Upgraded apparatus tablet computers and mobile phones.
- Upgraded line personnel shift office computers.
- Configured new and existing computers to enable day staff to work from home in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.



“Where Compassion and Action Meet”

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