



HARRISONBURG | VA FRIENDLY BY NATURE



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Federal grant allows HFD to install fire sprinklers in two stations

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Two Harrisonburg Fire Department stations are now protected by fire sprinklers thanks to a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The grant, valued at \$181,000, was obtained through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, coupled with funding from the Virginia Aid to Localities program, an annual contribution funded through fire-related insurance coverage based on population. Fire Station #2, located on Pleasant Valley Road, and Fire Station #3, located on Lucy Drive, began installation of the sprinklers earlier this year.

The project helps make the Harrisonburg community safer in a number of ways.

“Placing fire sprinklers in these stations accomplishes three critical goals,” Fire Chief Matthew Tobia explained. “First, it safeguards the lives of the firefighters who occupy the fire stations 24 hours a day; second, it ensures that critical infrastructure the City relies upon to provide service is not destroyed by fire; and finally, it demonstrates our commitment to advocating for fire sprinklers in all structures, including homes and businesses.”

HFD currently has four stations, with a fifth on the way. In addition to Station #2 and #3, Fire Station #1, located on Maryland Avenue, had fire sprinklers installed in 2018 when the station underwent a major renovation. The new Fire Station #5 already includes plans to have fire sprinklers when construction begins in 2024. Fire Station #4 has a central alarm monitoring system and is slated to have sprinklers when the station is replaced in the future.

“Using federal and state grant monies to have fire sprinklers installed in these fire stations represents a creative strategy to improve our community’s resiliency without impacting other equally important projects,” Harrisonburg City Manager Ande Banks said. “I applaud the team who pursued the grant and subsequently led the project through completion, including Mike Brady, Deputy Fire Marshal Mike Armstrong, and Fire Administrative Officer Paul Helmuth.”

According to the United States Fire Administration, “Fire stations are often just as susceptible to fires as other structures. On average, 150 fires per year occur in fire stations. (Probably many more small ones go unreported.) The most common hazard is a fire that starts within an apparatus. Another leading cause is kitchen appliances left on during a response. Some of these fires have resulted in substantial damage and sometimes personnel injuries.”

The project (valued at approximately \$290,000) was awarded through a competitive bidding process to Lantz Construction, in Broadway, in partnership with Anne Arundel Fire Protection, Inc., and Mid-Valley Electric. Mather Architects provided the architectural design work and consulting. Harrisonburg Public Utilities and Harrisonburg Public Works contributed significantly to the project with site work at both stations.



(Above) Fire Stations #2 and #3 now have working fire sprinklers thanks to a federal grant from FEMA.

The Harrisonburg Fire Department is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire or on Facebook®, Twitter® and Instagram®.

The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,700 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

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