HARRISONBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT

Annual Report 2021

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Mission:

The mission of the Harrisonburg Fire Department is to enhance the quality of life for the community by protecting their health, safety, and welfare through fire suppression, emergency medical services, prevention, and public education

Vision:

To be committed to providing a professional level of emergency service that continually enhances the quality of life, health, safety and welfare of the community we serve

Values:

Integrity: Consistency of actions and values, doing what is right

Professionalism: Skill, judgment and behavior that is expected of those that are highly trained

Safety: Ensuring the health and well being of employees and customers alike

Teamwork: The actions of a group to achieve a common purpose

Excellence: The state of superior service

LETTER FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Welcome to the 2021 Annual Report of your Harrisonburg Fire Department! Once again, the women and men of this Department continue to operate at the highest level of professionalism and preparedness in response to the ever-changing environment in which we live. Like 2020, the impact of the pandemic continued to be felt, but thousands of lives were saved through a comprehensive vaccination program implemented through the Office of Emergency Management, under the leadership of Paul Helmuth, in cooperation with the Central Shenandoah Health District. Firefighters rolled up their sleeves to help administer tens of thousands of vaccines in clinics and events throughout the city. We remember, and mourn with our community, the lives lost because of the pandemic, but we take solace in knowing that fear was eclipsed by concerted cooperation, communication, and coordination. We are honored to have been able to play a role in combatting this generational threat. Our community is emerging more resilient and even better prepared for the next challenge we may face.

Several notable accomplishments are detailed in the report. The Department was awarded a federal grant to retroactively install fire sprinklers at Fire Station #2 and Fire Station #3. This action will significantly enhance the safety of our firefighters and the community by more effectively protecting our fire stations against fire. Fire Station #1 was sprinklered in 2018 during a major renovation and a planned replacement of Fire Station #4 (future) will add sprinklers to that facility. Considered critical infrastructure, fire stations are essential to ensuring the continuity our city relies upon in providing service.

Additionally, Travis Karicofe (the Department's EMS Officer) successfully secured a United States Department of Justice grant to initiate a Community Paramedicine program focused on engaging with individuals experiencing mental health crisis, substance dependency, and homelessness. The goal of the program is to connect individuals in need of help with resources, instead of directing them to the Emergency Department or involuntary detention. This three-year grant is the first of its kind awarded to a public safety agency in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Kim Smith (Administrative Professional) spearheaded a new community connection event in which over 200 new winter coats were acquired for children in the city and distributed through the school system. This effort, supported by numerous organizations, is emblematic of the spirit of giving and support that the city of Harrisonburg is known for.

Late in 2021, Harrisonburg City Council took the extraordinary step of approving the construction of a fifth fire station in the city. An identified need for many years, the new fire station will significantly reduce response times, improve the quality of life for residents and visitors, and positively impact the City's ability to attract new businesses. Planned for the City's Park View Section, the new fire station is tentatively planned to open in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

As you review this document, please take note of several retirements, promotions, and additions in personnel. You will also read about new technologies designed to help firefighters see in smoke-filled burning buildings and learn more about efforts to prevent incidents through the Community Risk Reduction Division. The most important point is to acknowledge the tremendous accomplishments of the women and men who define the Harrisonburg Fire Department – they are our most valuable and critical resource.

We are committed to your safety and will continue to lean forward into the future!

If you have any questions, or want to learn more about our Department, please contact us at any time!

NEW MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILY

Firefighter
Austin Collins

CRR Specialist
Leslie Pullen

Temporary EM Assistant
Jan 2021-Dec 2021
Adrienne Moos

Firefighter II
Chandler Hardy

HFD WELCOMES NEW MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Dr. Peter Williams. a prominent local Emergency Department physician, became the new Medical Director for the Department in January. Dr. Williams holds a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences from The George Washington University and a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Virginia. Dr. Williams completed his residency in Emergency Medicine at the University of Maryland in Baltimore before coming to Harrisonburg in 2009. Before becoming a physician, Dr. Williams served as a firefighter/paramedic with the City of Fairfax, VA Fire Department.

Dr. Peter Williams

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

City Council takes historic action, adding Fire Station 5:

The HFD strives to meet a response-time goal of four minutes 90% of the time in accordance with national standards. Rapid response translates into better outcomes for people experiencing serious medical emergencies and allows firefighters to more effectively and efficiently combat fires with less property loss. In 1983, the City annexed land increasing its total area to 17.42 square miles. At that time, two fire stations were added, bringing the total current compliment to four.

Over the past 40 years, population and call volume have steadily increased. The City's northwest quadrant experiences the highest response times, exceeding 6 minutes. This section of the city includes the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Eastern Mennonite University, and a rapidly growing industrial sector. In December, City Council voted unanimously to provide funding for the addition of fire station #5 which will dramatically enhance the safety of residents and visitors, while positively impacting insurance premiums for everyone. The City is pursuing federal grants to provide staffing and is using ARPA funding to support construction. When open, the City will have 21 on-duty firefighters to protect our community.

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HFD Secures Federal Funding for Community Paramedicine Program

In December, HFD was awarded a United States Department of Justice grant to implement an innovative program known as "Community Paramedicine" in the City of Harrisonburg, This first-ever award in Virginia, in the amount of $600,000, will allow the Department to pro-actively engage in efforts to provide assistance to individuals experiencing mental health crises, the unhoused, substance dependency, and access to critical services. The program will fund two full-time positions and one part-time position for the next three years.

The Community Paramedicine program has three primary objectives:

1. Provide direct engagement and services to under-served and at-risk populations in the City.
2. Decrease demand on local emergency departments by re-directing individuals to more appropriate resources.
3. Coordinate with other government and non-governmental agencies to ensure a more effective safety net for individuals.

The program will apply best practices from other public safety agencies that have already implemented similar programs with a goal of having personnel trained and in service by January 2023. We look forward to partnering with other agencies and organizations in the community with similar goals.

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HFD held its first annual "Coats for Kids" event. The goal of the event was to provide 100 new, unused winter coats for Harrisonburg City School students. With the help of individuals in the community, the Denton Family Foundation and Steven Toyota we were able to exceed our goal and provide the students with over 200 coats.

The Department was awarded an AFG grant for $181,000 to retrofit Fire Station #2 and Fire Station #3 with fire sprinklers. This grant allows us to protect our people who live and work at the fire stations 24 hours a day. Fire Stations 2 and 3 are critical infrastructure, providing essential emergency and non-emergency response for fire and life safety within the City.

HFD received its Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) Certification in August. This allows us to complete point of care testing to begin to treat patients prior to them arriving to the Emergency Room. This advanced cutting edge level of care is provided by HFD paramedics with a goal of more responsive directed treatment upon arrival in the emergency department.

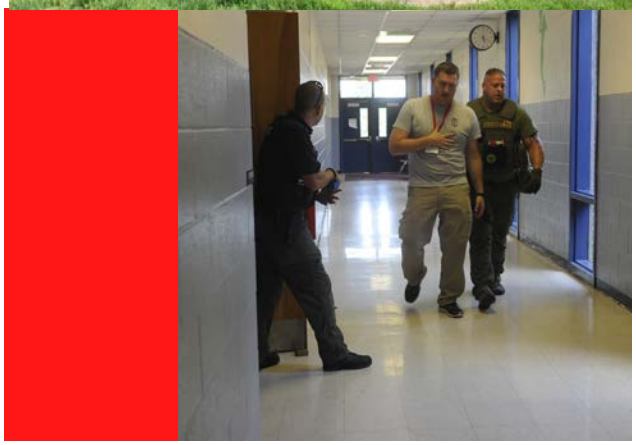
Emergency Medical Services

Fire Department Assisted with Patient Transport	Fire Department Provided ALS Care	Cardiac Arrest Resuscitation Attempts	Successful Cardiac Arrest Resuscitations	Fire Department Assisted with Childbirth
147	**472**	**32**	**11**	**1**

The Harrisonburg Fire Department is the designated provider of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the City. All firefighters are trained to the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level. Additionally the Department has trained personnel to provide Advanced Life Support (paramedic) care. These individuals bring the emergency department to the patient.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

HFD Wins National Award for EMS:
In June, the Department was presented with the 2021 Heart Safe Community Award for Small/Mid-Sized Community Category by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, recognizing the Department's out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rate which is more than five times the national average.



SWAT Medic Program:
This year we added four new members to the SWAT Medic Team: Robert Hilley, Brandon Dyer, Zeb Lilly and Keith Link. This program assists the Harrisonburg Police Department with SWAT operations, potential hostile events or other special situations that may require medical assistance with a primary mission of providing emergency medical care to police officers and citizens injured or taken ill during high risk law enforcement operations.

Emergency Management

During 2021, Emergency Management continued to work with the Virginia Department of Health and the
Central Shenandoah Health District
in responding to the ongoing pandemic

4,735 reported cases of COVID-19 which is 8% increase over previous year

Harrisonburg had 169 patients hospitalized

Harrisonburg had 72 residents died from COVID-19

**The City of Harrisonburg had 2 employees
who died from COVID-19**

Emergency Management helped to coordinate vaccination clinics throughout the City as well as coordinating the availability for city and city school employees to be vaccinated during the first two quarters of 2021.

Vaccination clinics were also coordinated with the health district, Rockingham County, and the City for communities throughout the area, as well as regular clinics at JMU and the health department.

Testing locations were re-established during the third and fourth quarters of 2021 to meet the needs of
decreased availability of tests.

Community Vaccination and Testing Clinics by Central Shenandoah Health District and Sentara RMH Medical Center:
144 Vaccination Clinics
47,497 Vaccines Given
31 Testing Sites
1,231 Test Administered

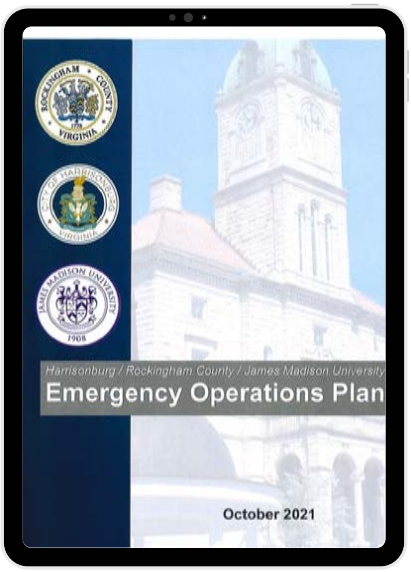
Janssen COVID-19
Vaccine
5 doses of 0.5 mL
intramuscular injection

"Herculean Task"

Paul Helmuth receives recognition for his work with the COVID19 response

City staff, Mayor Deanna Reed and Dr. Laura Kornegay of the Central Shenandoah Health District all agree there is one person central to the city's response to the pandemic - Paul Helmuth, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator of Harrisonburg Fire Department.

Emergency Management



The Harrisonburg/Rockingham/JMU Emergency Operations Plan was updated and approved by City Council in October of 2021. The next renewal will be in October of 2025.

The UAV/Robotics team, operating under Emergency Management, had a busy year with over two dozen missions. Most missions were assisting law enforcement.

Overall, Emergency Management was busy, but most operational responsibilities were focused towards response to the pandemic. Moving forward, Emergency Management will take on roles of preparing the city for Continuity of Operations (COO) planning and training and exercises for city staff.

Promotions:

Battalion Chief:

- Benjamin Zimmerman

Captain:

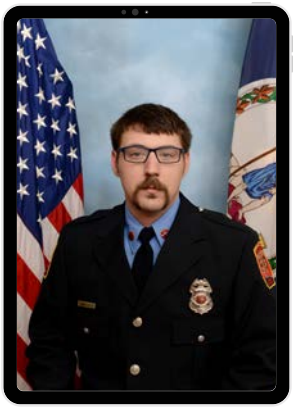
- Kris Whitesell

Lieutenant :

- Joseph Walker

Master Firefighter:

- Robert Fulk



Master Firefighter:

- Chris Daniels

Firefighter II:
- Cody Stephenson

Firefighter II:
- Damian Clark

Firefighter II:
- Emily Walter

Firefighter II:
- Chandler Hardy

Firefighter II:
- Dustin Rice

Firefighter II:
- Michael Thompson

Milestone Anniversaries

Donnie Babb
20 Years

Jeffrey Pitsenbarger
20 Years

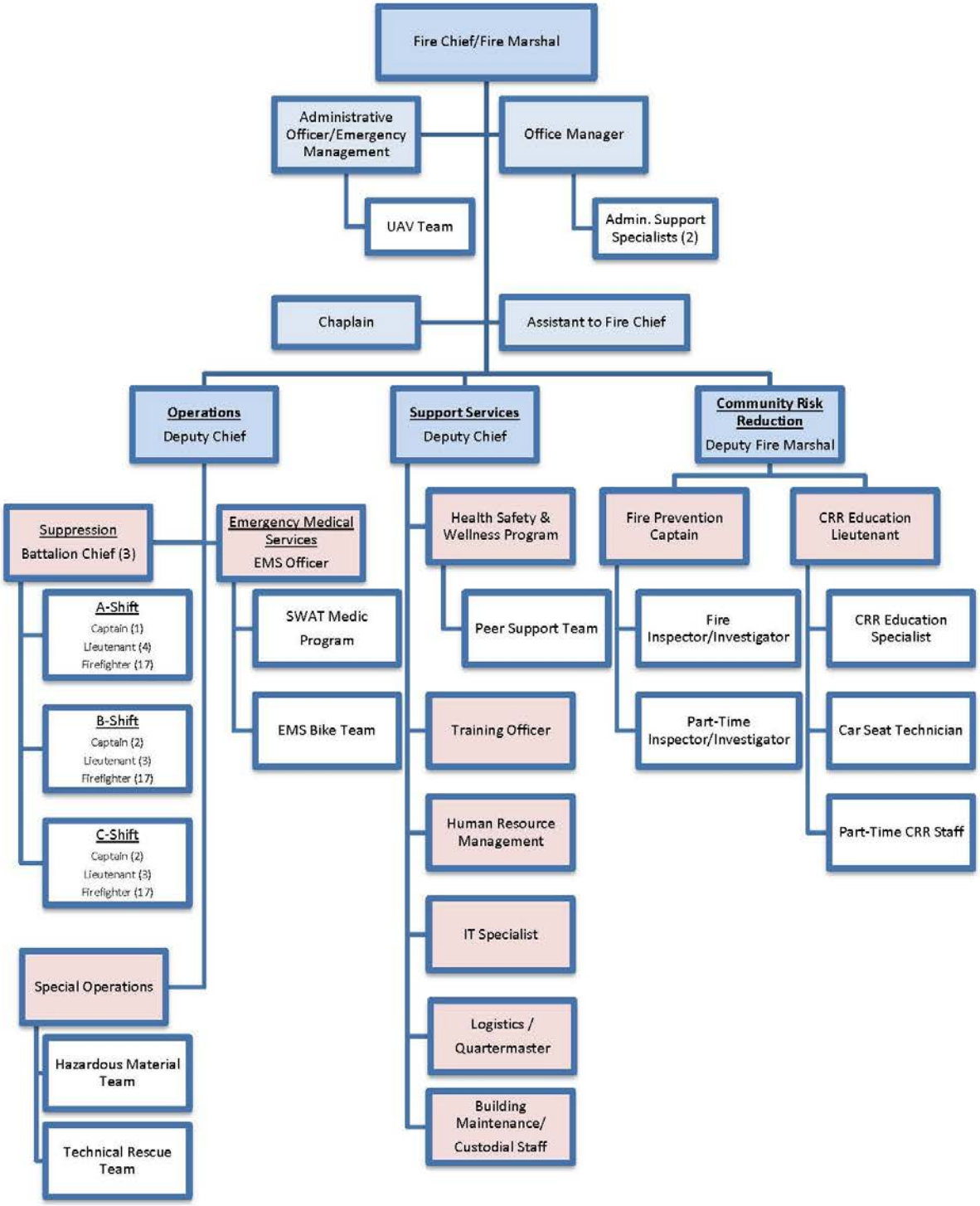
Morgan McComas
20 Years

Justin Knighten
15 Years

CJ Smith
10 Years

Zach Franklin
5 Years

Organizational Chart



Department Services and Station Locations

- FIRE SUPPRESSION
- EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
- SPECIAL OPERATIONS:
  - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE
  - TECHNICAL RESCUE
- COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION
  - FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY EDUCATION
  - FIRE INSPECTIONS
  - FIRE INVESTIGATIONS
- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

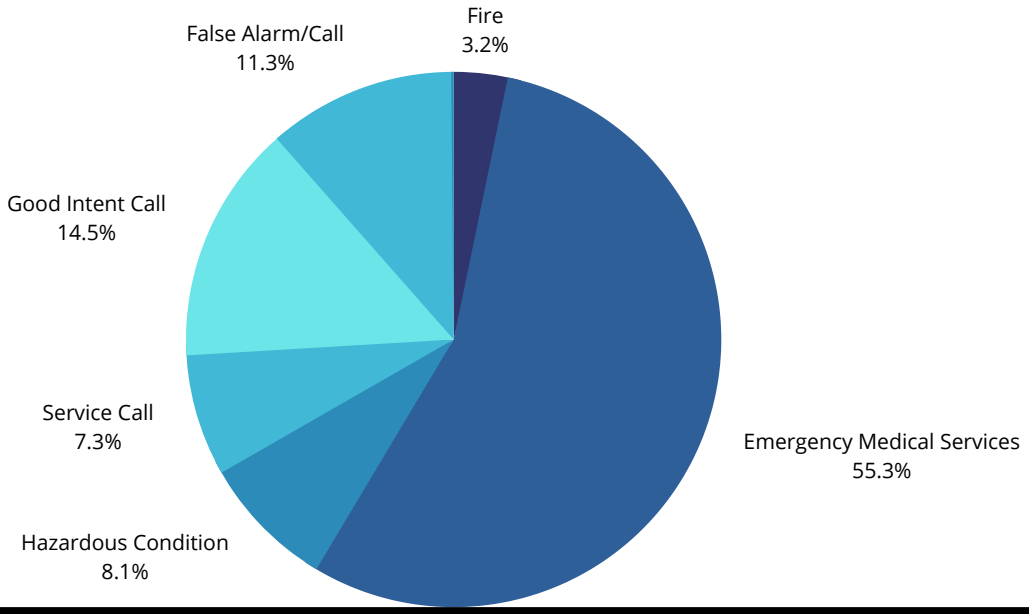
STATION 1:
80 MARYLAND AVENUE

STATION 2:
380 PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD

STATION 3:
299 LUCY DRIVE

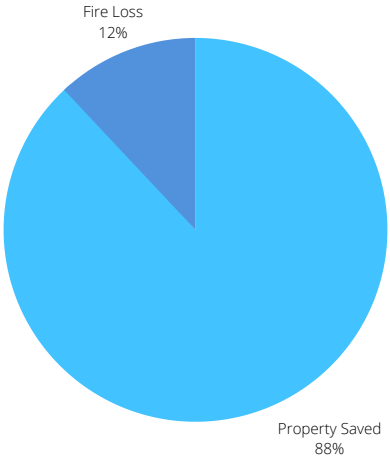
STATION 4:
210 EAST ROCK STREET

BY THE NUMBERS
RESPONSE STATISTICS



NFIRS Incident Type	2021 Reported Calls
Fire	180
Overpressure/Explosion	7
Emergency Medical Services	3,066
Hazardous Condition	451
Service Call	407
Good Intent Call	801
False Alarm/Call	629
Severe Weather	0
Special Incident	1
TOTALS:	5,542

BY THE NUMBERS
RESPONSE STATISTICS



Fire Loss by Occupancy Type	# of Fires	EST. Value Lost	Est. Value Saved
Assembly	2	$1,000	$843,000
Educational	0	$0	$0
Health Care/Detention	3	$154,000	$8,521,800
Residential	51	$366,142	$149,364,378
Business	5	$64,101	$3,063,099
Industrial	0	$0	$0
Manufacturing	2	$1,005,000	$47,995,000
Storage	1	$0	$100
Outside/Special Property	29	$140,951	$1,979,280
TOTALS:	93	$1,731,194	$211,766,657

BY THE NUMBERS
RESPONSE STATISTICS

Mutual Aid Given Responses	YTD	107

Casualties	YTD
Civilian Deaths	0
Civilian Injuries	2
Firefighter Injuries	8
TOTALS:	**10**

OPERATIONS

MAJOR INCIDENTS:

On November 30, 2021 the Harrisonburg Fire Department responded to Packaging Corporation of America located at 930 Pleasant Valley Road in the City for a report of fire in the structure. Crews arrived to find fire through the roof of the industrial plant. The incident grew to three alarms, which brought crews from Rockingham County, Augusta County and Shenandoah County to the scene. There were no injuries related to the fire which caused over one million dollars in damage. Despite the serious nature of the fire, the business was able to remain open and operational.

On December 9, 2021, members of the HFD (as part of the Division 2 Technical Rescue team) responded to assist Shenandoah County with a person trapped in a trench that had collapsed. Crews arrived on the scene of a high stress incident with personnel from Shenandoah County actively attempting to rescue the trapped person. Division 2 team members quickly went into action to ensure the trench was safe for personnel to enter, allowing the extrication process of the trapped person to begin. Within approximately one hour, crews had successfully removed the trapped person from the trench. The adult male was transported to the hospital and was predicted to have a full recovery from injuries sustained.

OPERATIONS

INNOVATION INVESTMENT:

The Harrisonburg Fire Department is proud of its long-standing commitment to integrating technology to save lives. For over 15 years, every firefighter riding on fire apparatus has been provided with a thermal imaging camera (TIC), allowing firefighters to see through smoke, enhance visibility, and more quickly locate the source of fires inside structures. In the summer of 2021, a workgroup comprised of firefighters and fire officers reviewed and analyzed multiple TIC's in preparation for replacing all cameras with the newest generation of technology. Using Aid to Localities monies from the Commonwealth of Virginia, the department purchased FLIR K53 and K55 cameras. These new cameras dramatically enhance our firefighters ability to locate trapped occupants and hidden fires within a building. These devices also assist in locating firefighters who become lost in structures.

Training Division

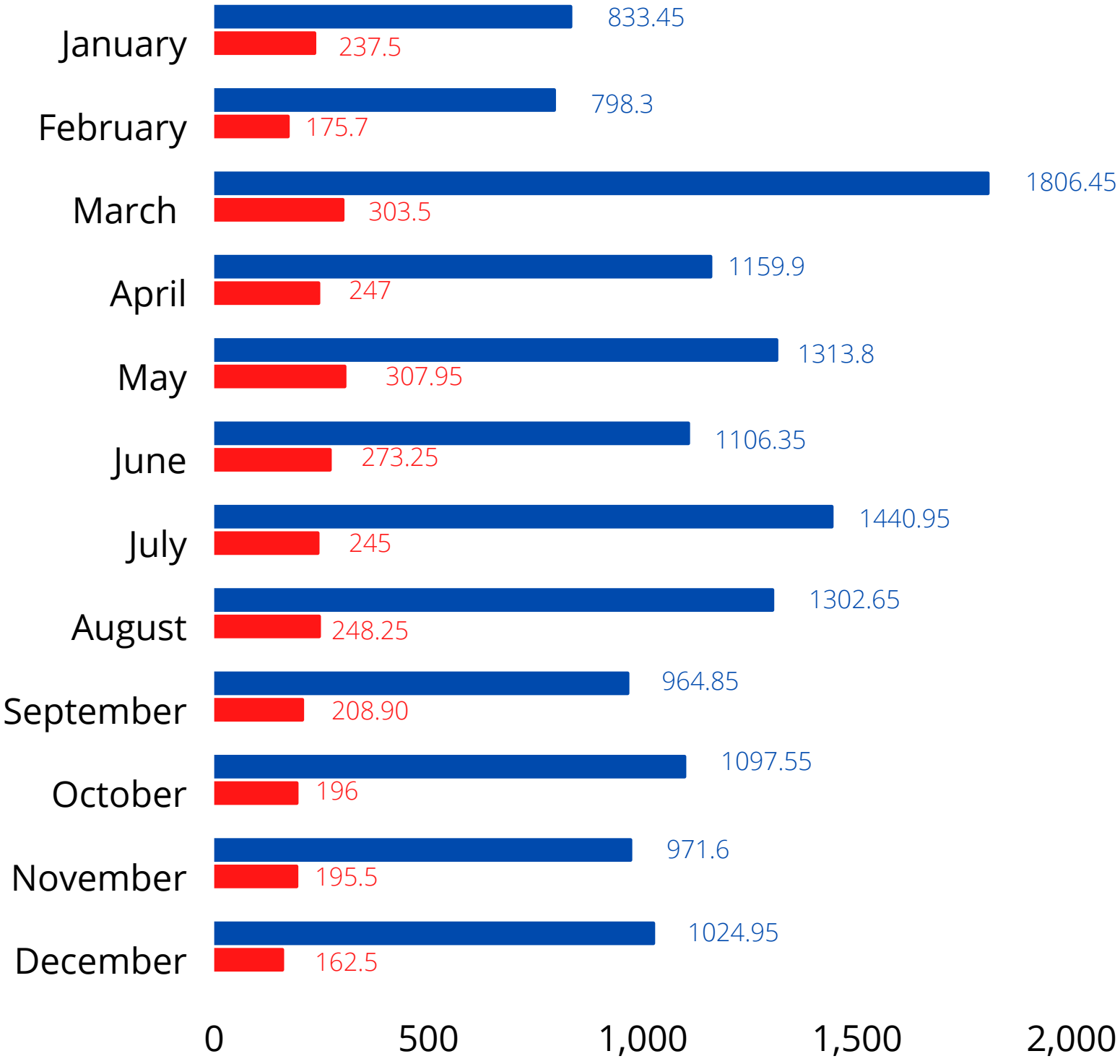
Like most departments, 2021 began with innovative methods for conducting training in an environment of flexibility at the forefront. Absolute transparency and understanding from top to bottom was a necessity when postponement, cancellation, or change in venue occurred. Unconventional classrooms were constructed to not only ensure spacing, but also to retain a positive learning environment. Collaboration with neighboring departments provided the ability to adhere with CDC guidelines and/or state and local regulations. All of which may sound negative but, it provided everyone the opportunity to "adapt and overcome"-the very motto we advocate in training.

In 2021, Lantz Construction, in conjunction with the Community Services Board, donated a building slated for destruction. Personnel from the HFD and RCFR were able to participate in complex fireground simulations designed to hone skills and improve decision-making. The HFD Training Division continually seeks to partner with businesses and property owners in the community are interested in allowing firefighters to train on buildings scheduled for demolition

HFD personnel remained steadfast with on-shift training to ensure sustainability in skills and safety practices, including:

- "Reacting, Preparing, Responding" safety training
- Firefighter Survival practical evolutions
- Columbia Gas virtually presented "Gas Emergencies"
- Harrisonburg Police Department Captain Kidd presented "Complexities of the Hispanic Culture"
- Public Utilities presented training on the City of Harrisonburg's Water Distribution System
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management's Hazardous Materials provided their simulation trailer for use in practicing hands-on applications
- Work Performance Evaluations
- Human Resources presented in-person training for "Reasonable Suspicion" for supervisors
- Regional drills for our HTR and HazMat teams
- Testing of fire hose, all ladders and fire apparatus pumps
- "Active Shooter" drills

Training & Physical Fitness Hours



Training 13820.8 Hours

Physical Fitness 2801.05 Hours

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION (CRR) DIVISION

Record Fire Prevention Month

In 2021, the CRR Division completely re-imagined its Fire Prevention Month outreach program under the leadership of Lieutenant Erin Stehle. This new format reached several thousand people and lasted an entire month, rather than the traditional week dedicated to such activities.

We partnered with EMU and JMU to host fire safety programs on campus, provide fire extinguisher training to different groups, hosted several field trips, and participated in many community helper events.

Fire Prevention Month Statistics

- 52 CRR activites/events
- 4,239 People reached

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION

2021 marked our 18th Annual Free Pizza/Free Smoke Alarm Night. Each year with the help of our partner Cici's Pizza and many volunteers, we are able to provide free pizza and free smoke/carbon monoxide alarms to Harrisonburg City residents. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Almost three out of five home fire deaths are caused by fires in properties with no smoke alarms (41 percent) or smoke alarms that failed to operate (16 percent). It is critical to the safety of our residents to have properly working alarms, as well as a fire escape plan to increase their chances of survival in a fire. We are proud to host this community event each year and keep our Friendly City safe!

Pizza Night Impact:

- **1,001 Smoke alarms checked**
- **39 Carbon Monoxide alarms checked**
- **73 Smoke alarm batteries replaced**
- **104 Smoke alarms installed**
- **3 Carbon Monoxide batteries replaced**
- **39 Carbon Monoxide alarms installed**

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION

Rockingham Insurance Fire Safety Contest

For the past 13 years, we've partnered with Rockingham Insurance to host a fire safety art contest for Harrisonburg City elementary and middle school students. Each year the art contest is based on NFPA's fire prevention week theme. The contest continues to grow and in 2021 we had a record number of over 100 art entries. Winners and their families are invited to a banquet at one of the City's fire stations to celebrate their accomplishments. We look forward to receiving more entries in 2022!

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION

The Harrisonburg Fire Department participates in the the Virginia Department of Health Safety Seat Distribution and Education Program, for the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. The Safety Seat Program is a statewide child safety seat distribution and education program offered free of charge to eligible families.

2021 Child Safety Seat Program Outreach

- **232** Child Safety Seats Inspections
- **28** Child Safety Seat Problems Found
- **204** New Child Safety Seats Installed

Public Education and Other Activities	2021
Fire & Life Safety Education Classes	172
Number of Persons Reached	10,601
Smoke Alarm Inspections	1,084
Smoke Alarm Installations	150

FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

- 2,294 Fire Inspections
- 5,111 Violations Cited
- 125 Pre-Fire Plans Conducted
- 49 Incidents Investigated
- 6 Investigated Intentionally Set Fires
- 1 Investigated Environmental Incident

- **Fire Inspections:** The Fire Marshal's Office conducts fire and life safety inspections in a variety of buildings throughout the City including hotels, schools, nursing homes, restaurants, business offices and manufacturing facilities

- **Fire Pre-Plans:** Firefighters conduct routine pre-plans. These plans are not inspections, but rather a survey of the property from a safety standpoint. They are used to identify potential hazards to responders in the event of an emergency.

- **Fire Investigations:** The investigation of fires has a direct impact of the prevention of future similar incidents. The identification of the cause and origin of a fire allows for information sharing that can be used to educate our community in preventing similar events resulting from human error. This information can also be used to develop codes or ordinances that are designed to prevent such events.

CAD SYSTEM UPDATES

We tested and underwent a substantial software upgrade to enhance security and reliability to the CAD system, including but not limited to thoroughly testing response plans for emergency events, mapping, mobile app capability, GPS positioning, preplan population and overall general functionality to help ensure compatibility with end user experiences.

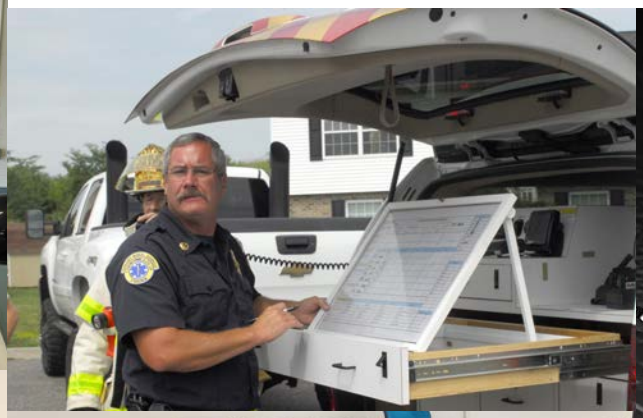
- Replaced station desktops
- Replaced front line apparatus computers
- Upgraded vehicle camera system
- MobileEyes inspection software acquired for Fire Prevention Division
- Evaluated and selected a new preplan and mapping program-First Due

FIRE STATION ALERTING

We went live with a new Fire Station Alerting system which allows for simultaneous dispatching of multiple companies to emergency related events. As soon as units are assigned in CAD, they are dispatched from their home station through an automated process., decreasing the time to turnout for calls.

Taking up...Retirement

Battalion Chief Scott Allison (B Shift) retired in August. Thank you, Scott, for your more than 33 years of service!



WE'RE EXCITED TO BE YOUR NEIGHBOR!

STATION 5 COMING TO PARK VIEW

BUILDING A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

THIS NEW FIRE STATION WILL HELP:

REDUCE RESPONSE TIMES CITY-WIDE
IMPROVE PROPERTY INSURANCE RATES
CREATE A SAFER HARRISONBURG

MORE DETAILS COMING IN 2022!

Connect with us:

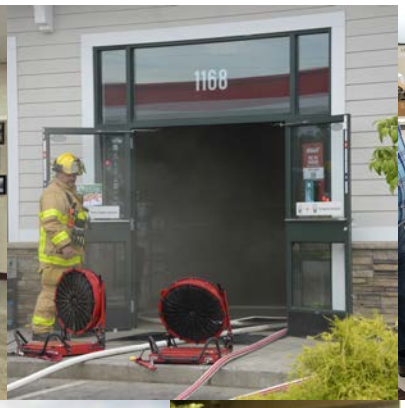
WEBSITE:
https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire

FACEBOOK:
Harrisonburg Fire Department

ISTAGRAM:
HARRISONBURGFD

TWITTER:
@HFDVA

PHYSICAL/MAILING ADDRESS:
101 N. Main St. 3rd Floor
Harrisonburg, VA. 22802
540-432-7703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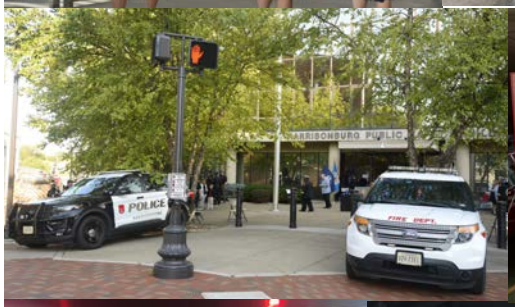
HARRISONBURG
FIRE DEPT.


POLICE
FIRE DEPT.

HARRISONBURG
ENGINE CO. 25
ENGINE CO. 25

BRIDGEWATER

HARRISONBURG
FIRE DEPT.
DEPT

HFD
FIRE DEPT.