

La Crosse Fire Department

2020 Annual Community Report



Serving the Greater
La Crosse Area with
Quality Services Since 1896





Our Mission

We promote safety, reduce risks, and respond to calls for fire suppression, emergency medical services, and all-hazards rescue. We earn the community's trust through preparedness, professionalism, and dedication to service.



Chief Gilliam presenting Isaac with the official Lifesaver Award. Isaac helped to save a 5-year-old from drowning at Black River Beach in June of 2020.

Our Values - RISE

Respect reflects our belief that all persons have equal value and deserve our due attention.

Integrity leads us to honor our commitments and to do what is right.

Service drives us to put the needs of the community first.

Excellence encompasses our professionalism and dedication to continuous improvement of knowledge, skills, and abilities.



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Letter from Fire Chief Ken Gilliam

To the Citizens and Community Leaders of La Crosse,

As I wrote last year's opening for the Annual Report, we were just realizing the early phases and initial impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic. As predicted, **2020 was full of unexpected challenges**, yet the mission, values, and dedication of the men and women of the LCFD kept us on course while dealing with this global event and its significant local impacts.

Last March, it is fair to say that all city departments were being overwhelmed with pandemic related issues. In coordination with Mayor Kabat and Police Chief Kudron, we activated the **City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** and structured city management into a **Unified Incident Command (UIC)** team to address the closing of facilities and issues we were facing. This UIC structure worked effectively throughout 2020, and I believe that it provided positive outcomes and supported cross-departmental efforts to deal with this unprecedented event. The documented Incident Action Plans and recorded Command Briefings memorialized our efforts and will assist us with the ongoing recovery phase.

While I could write a book on the pandemic impacts alone, I will focus the remainder of this section on some broad statistics and an overview of our challenges and accomplishments during 2020. Despite the difficult year, we still managed to get traction on many of the goals set in our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Divisional highlights are throughout this report, and a summary of key highlights for 2020 are as follows:

- In March, we **closed our fire stations to the public** to limit spread. Important events like swearing in and promotional ceremonies were done without family and off-duty members present. We managed to pull off a socially-distanced Engine/Tender 10 dedication ceremony, with a memorial dedication to Chief Edward Sciborski who died in the line of duty in 1964.
- For many months, we had three fire companies working round the clock out of the **La Crosse Center (Rescue 1), Logan High School (Rescue 2) and Central High School (Rescue 3)**, in effort to limit the number of personnel in the tight quarters of the fire stations. Thanks to our personnel, and the three facility groups for successfully partnering with us.
- We provided **support and security for the spring election sites** during the ramp up of the initial pandemic concerns.
- We responded to **6,296 incidents in 2020**. Similar to fire departments across the nation, our annual call volume was lower compared to the year prior due to much of the economic and public events shutdown. While incident numbers were down, we did witness an uptick in more serious events, and especially heightened and "high risk" response issues related to EMS response and increased personal protective equipment (PPE) protocols.
- We unfortunately witnessed **one fire-related civilian fatality** due to an incident involving a fully involved garage fire.
- We also witnessed an increase in **drug overdose fatalities** and worked with the County Medical Examiner and the La Crosse PD to help mitigate these incidents. These overdose incidents keep us focused on our partnership efforts with the regional "Alliance To Heal" collaborative.
- Due to the **pandemic-related budget impacts**, we were unfortunately forced to lay-off one Code Enforcement Technician position. Our Occupational Safety/Emergency Management Coordinator position was vacated. We had to end our contract providing ARFF services to the Airport, which also eliminated a Captain position.
- With the reduction in total staffing to meet revised budgetary goals, we also reorganized two positions to better serve the organization's needs. Our Captain of Admin Technical/Public Relations was promoted to **Division Chief of Technical Services/Administration Support**. We also demoted a Battalion Chief position to permanently establish a **Captain/EMS Coordinator** position to better manage our expanding EMS programs and services.



- We realized the impact of the **long-term military deployments** of three of our members who also serve in the National Guard. We thank our military reserve members (listed on page 32) and their families for their service.
- We completed a **new recruit academy**, and hats off to our staff and six new personnel for dealing with the frustrations of additional pandemic precautions during this rigorous training program.
- With the help of a grant, we continued with the expansion of our **Officer and Engineer Development** training programs. Our annual hours for training dramatically increased in 2020 thanks to the dedication of all our personnel.
- We completed two technology transitions which strengthen our **records management systems**, moving our incident and activity data to the ImageTrend platform, and completing our transition of policy and procedure management into the Lexipol Knowledge Management System platform.
- We completed work on our **“Community Risk Assessment”**. This completed assessment will prioritize our education, prevention, and partnership efforts into the future. We also completed several versions of a Covid-19 Impacts Assessment throughout the duration of the EOC activation.
- We completed the City’s **Emergency Operations Plan** and **Continuity of Operations Plan** and these living documents will better support citywide emergency management efforts.
- We secured capital funding and engaged in replacing the 80-year-old Fire Station #4 on Gillette Street. Several properties around the existing fire station have been acquired and design plans are well under way towards building a **new Fire Station #4**, with additional spaces for a new northside Police Station #2 and new Community/Training Room. I look forward to the ground breaking in the first half of 2021 and eventually an awesome ribbon cutting ceremony.
- We continue to strengthen our partnership with Gundersen Tri-State Ambulance and our **Paramedic First Response Program**. We currently have twelve active paramedics with a couple more in training. I am optimistic about progress towards the completion of a long-term Ambulance Franchise Agreement with our emergency response partner.
- We expanded our partnership with Mayo Clinic to address our **Health and Wellness Program goals**. We made great strides on implementing exercise training programs, and I am optimistic that we will soon achieve our goal of annual NFPA 1582 compliant physicals for all firefighters.
- We participated in an UWL/La Crosse County-funded study completed by the Wisconsin Policy Forum, which explores **regional Fire and EMS collaboration opportunities**. We will continue to engage with our neighbors who are interested in further exploration of the options identified by this study. We continue to strengthen local mutual-aid and statewide MABAS response plans.

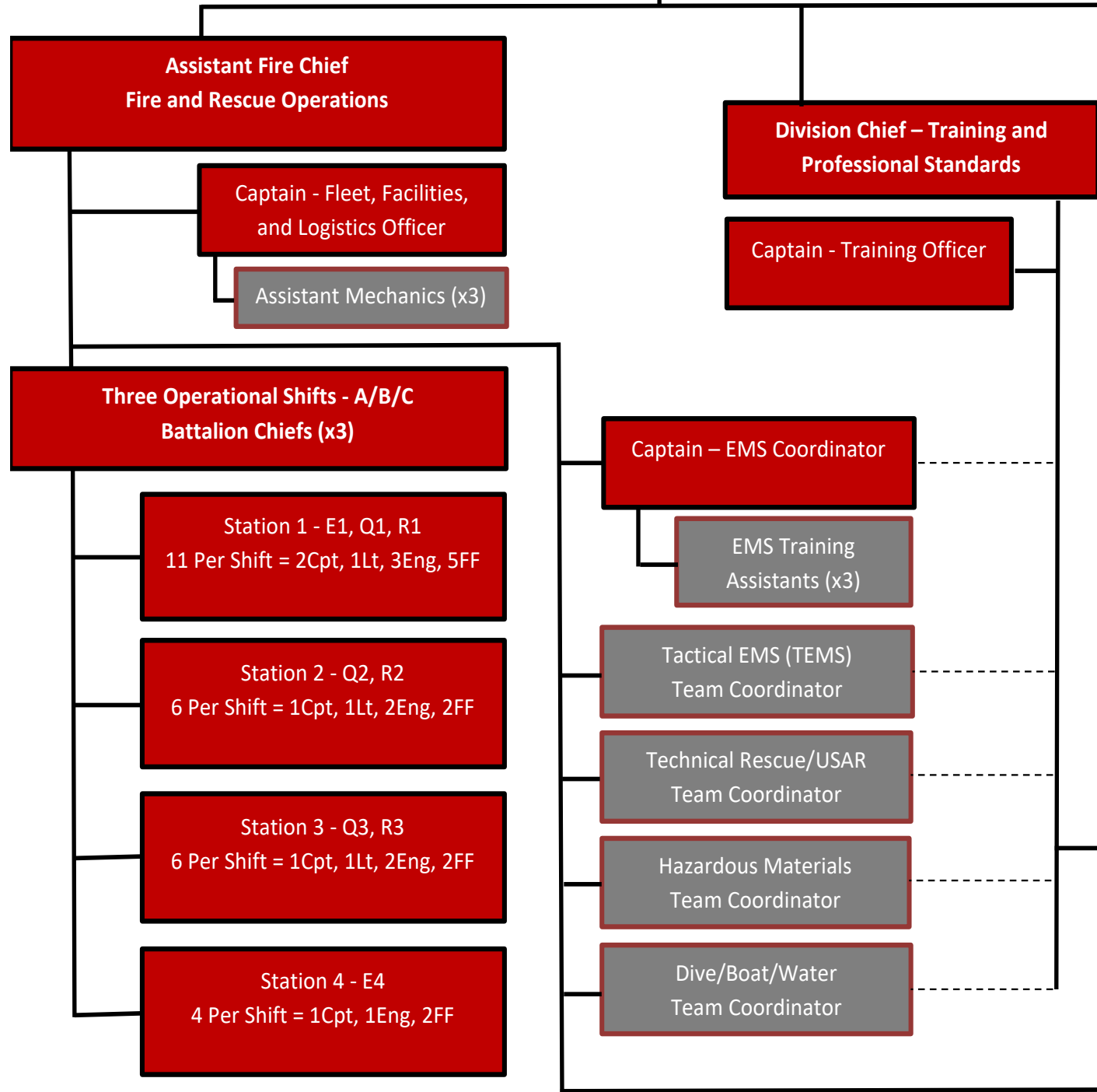
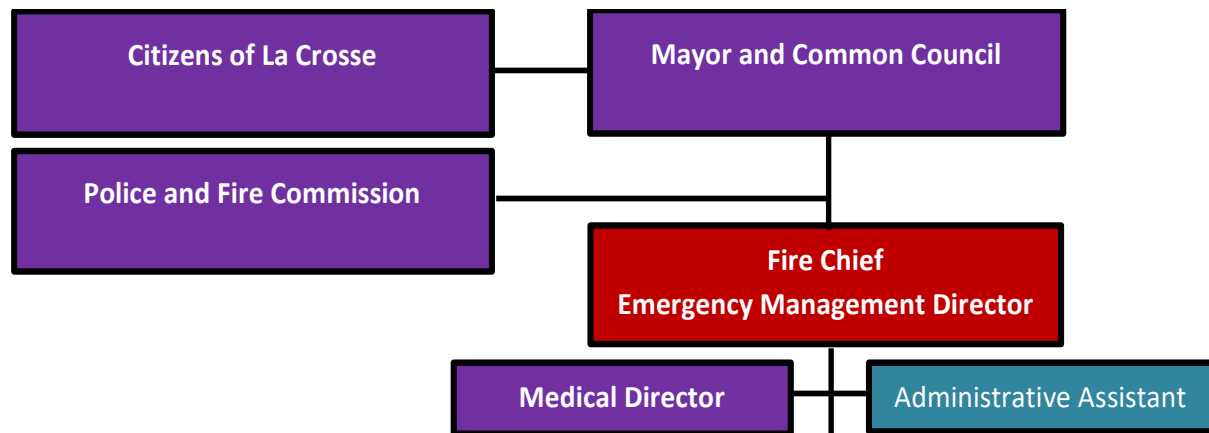
The accomplishments listed throughout this report are just an overview of the exceptional work being done at the LCFD. We remain actively engaged with the community as we work to educate, promote safety, reduce risks, and provide prompt and skilled response to calls for help. We strive to be a great place to work. We plan hard, train hard, and work hard to make sure that everyone gets home safe.

Thank you for taking the time to review this La Crosse Fire Department Annual Community Report.

Respectfully,

Ken Gilliam
Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director







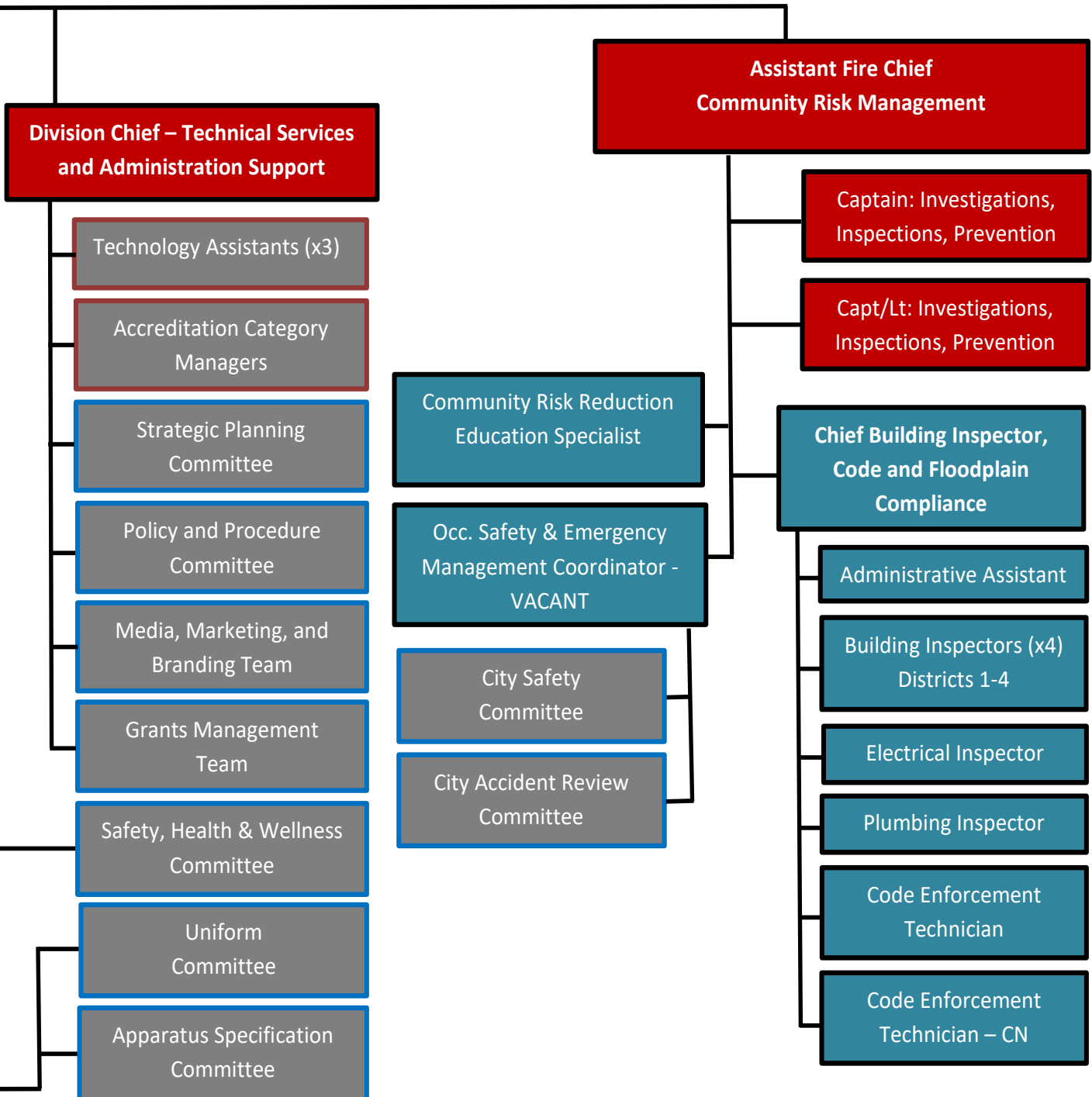
La Crosse Fire Department Organizational Chart January 2021

Color Coding

Sworn Uniformed Staff

Civilian Staff

Dual-Staffed Positions = NO FTE.





Accreditation

Division Chief Steven Cash Captain Lance Tryggestad



2020 was a long and challenging year that tested the community and the fire department alike. Through all of its challenges, the La Crosse Fire Department saw many positive changes and realized many improvements along the way.

In March, shortly after the City opened its **Emergency Operations Center** in response to the pandemic, the LCFD updated the City’s Emergency Operations Plan and its Continuity of Operations Plan. These documents were completed with input from every City Department. The completion of these two documents fulfilled goals established in the Department’s Strategic Plan. The two documents are critical to City Leaders in the event of a large-scale disaster or emergency. The **Emergency Operations Plan** is a document that lays out what needs to be done and by whom. It is designed to be used for the first 12-24 hours of a crisis event. The **Continuity of Operations Plan** is a planning document used to help in decision making for each department after the initial 24-hour period and extending into the long-term situation.

Another significant improvement that the LCFD made was upgrades to its records management system. This move comes with an improved user interface and streamlines our data collection and record-keeping. This records management system also comes with a suite of metrics and data analytical tools that aid in identifying areas for additional improvement. Continual quality improvement is one of the LCFD’s goals to meet in maintaining our accreditation.



Speaking of accreditation, the LCFD completed its first **Annual Compliance Report (ACR)** for the current accreditation cycle. The purpose of the ACR is to ensure that the Fire Department has maintained compliance with all core competencies established by the Commission of Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) and document any changes that have occurred in the previous year. Another purpose of the ACR is to evaluate our performance data and compliance with the strategic recommendations for improvements made by CFAI when we were re-accredited. It is my pleasure to report that the results of our ACR concluded that the **“La Crosse Fire Department has demonstrated that it is in compliance with all stated standards and core competencies.”** And that the **“Commission on Fire Accreditation International accept the La Crosse Fire Department Annual Compliance Report and that the agency retain their Accredited Agency Status.”**

Finally, the LCFD completed transition of our Accreditation Manager assignment. Division Chief Steven Cash has moved into the role of Accreditation Manager, replacing Captain Lance Tryggestad. The LCFD expresses our gratitude to Captain Tryggestad for all of his time and effort invested in ensuring that the LCFD maintained its accreditation status over the last few years.

2020 Personnel Changes

Promotions and Appointments

*Steven Cash	Division Chief of Technical Services	May 1, 2020
Tim Knudsen	Captain of Inspection	August 20, 2020
*Steve Kramer	Lieutenant	August 14, 2020
*Jay Lindahl	Lieutenant	August 14, 2020
Steve McCluskey	Engineer	August 14, 2020
Nicholas Woslager	Engineer	August 15, 2020
Josh DeFlorian	Rescue One Operator	September 10, 2020

New Hires

Cole Adams	Firefighter	March 23, 2020
Brian Fox	Firefighter	March 23, 2020
Josh Kois	Firefighter	March 23, 2020
Colton LeClaire	Firefighter	March 23, 2020
Erin Miller	Firefighter	March 23, 2020
CJ Sordahl	Firefighter	March 23, 2020

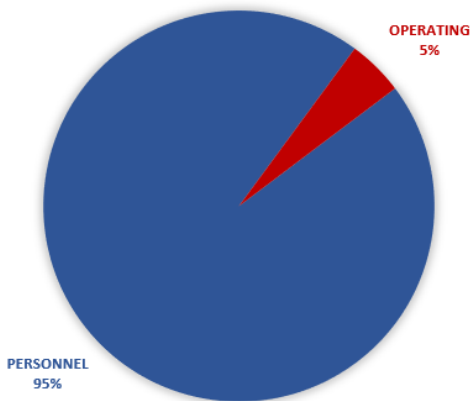
Retirements

Jason Herbold	23+ years of service	January 8, 2020
David Schneider	27+ years of service	July 15, 2020
Brent Thielen	16+ years of service	November 6, 2020

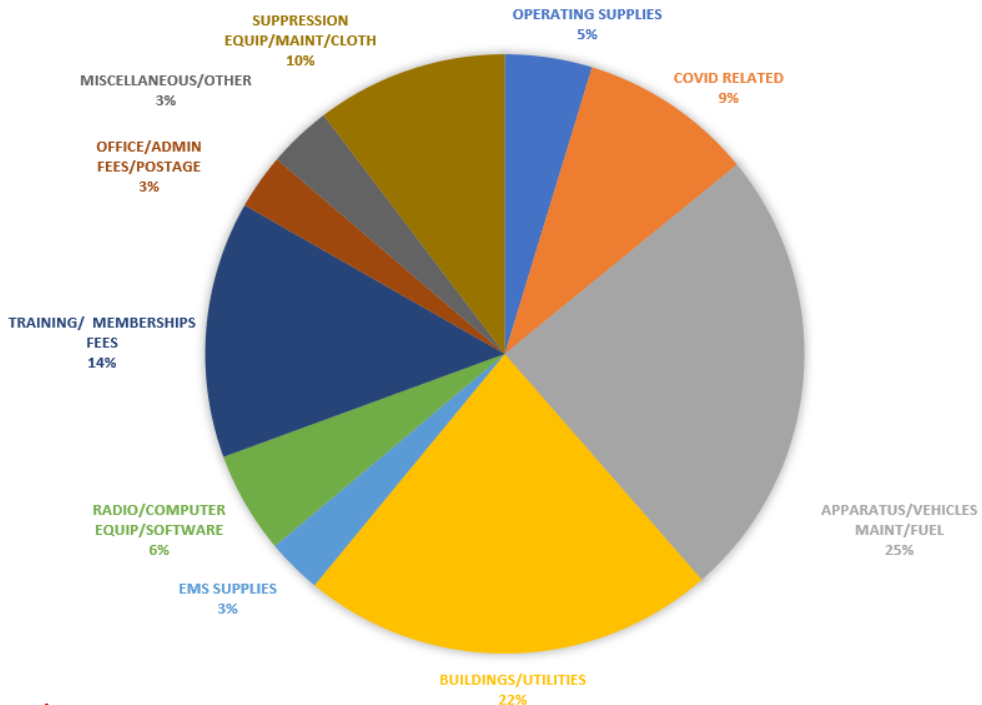


2020 Operating Budget

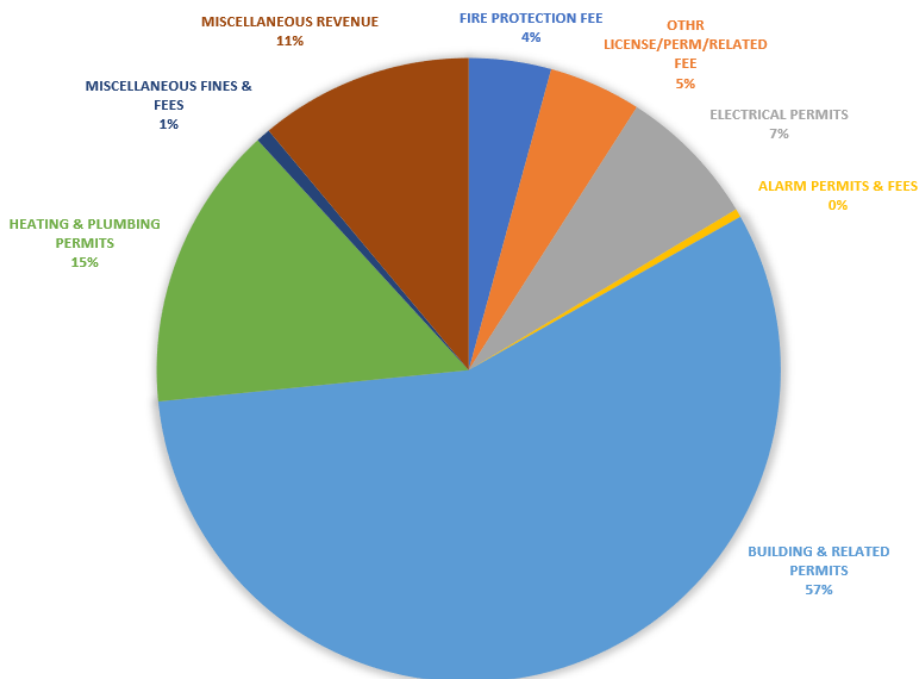
Total 2020 Expenses: \$12,144,508.91



Total 2020 Operating Expenses: \$562,005.81



Total 2020 Revenues: \$1,255,104.46



Notable Grants and Alternative Funding

Assistance to Firefighters Grant

\$435,100.00

The 2020 Training Budget was supplemented by a \$435,100 FEMA AFG grant. The Primary goal of the AFG is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments. The grant was awarded in late 2019 and was to be used by late 2020, but due to COVID the grant spending deadline was extended out through September 2021. The grant covered training costs for NFPA 1002- Driver Operator certification, NFPA 1021-Fire Officer I, II, III and IV certifications, NIMS compliant Incident Management Training and Officer Development. With this grant, we were able to get all of our engineers NFPA Certified in Driver/Operator-Pumper. All of our officers and officer candidates were able to complete the NFPA Fire Officer 1 class. Twenty-four firefighters were able to complete a 64-hour NIMS Compliant Blue Card Command and Communications training program, with all Officers also completing an 8-hour refresher on Incident Management communications. Finally, all officers began taking part in an officer development program hosted through Ethical Leaders in Action. Although we completed all of this training in 2020, many more classes and seminars had to be canceled or postponed until after the restrictions of the COVID Pandemic are adjusted.

Hazardous Materials Response Grant

\$140,123.41

Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Sub-Grant. Training and Planning grant funded by US DOT (EPCRA administers the planning portion). The purpose is to improve the delivery of EPCRA and enhance planning efforts with a focus on transportation. Training grants are to be used by HMEP sub-grantees for the funding of training activities that enhance the capabilities of states, territories, and Native American governments. Training should be developed and delivered in accordance with requirements for emergency responders under National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 472. Training grants are to be used by HMEP sub-grantees for training public sector employees to respond safely and efficiently to accidents and incidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials.

Fire Prevention & Safety Grant

\$104,761.90

The purpose of the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards by assisting fire prevention programs and supporting firefighter health and safety research and development. FEMA awarded us these funds for a new Fire Safety Trailer. Supporting this application and award, the LCFD partnered with the Holmen Area Fire Department to meet eligibility requirements for this regional project.

Dairyland Power

\$20,000.00

In 2017, the Common Council approved a contract between LCFD and Dairyland Power. The LCFD USAR Team continues its partnership with Dairyland Power to serve as a rescue resource for their Genoa, WI facility. This agreement provides our LCFD USAR Team with unique training opportunities within their facilities. These opportunities include confined space training inside their large furnaces and rope rescue training working off their 500-foot tall smoke stack.

Division of Community Risk Management

Assistant Fire Chief

Craig Snyder

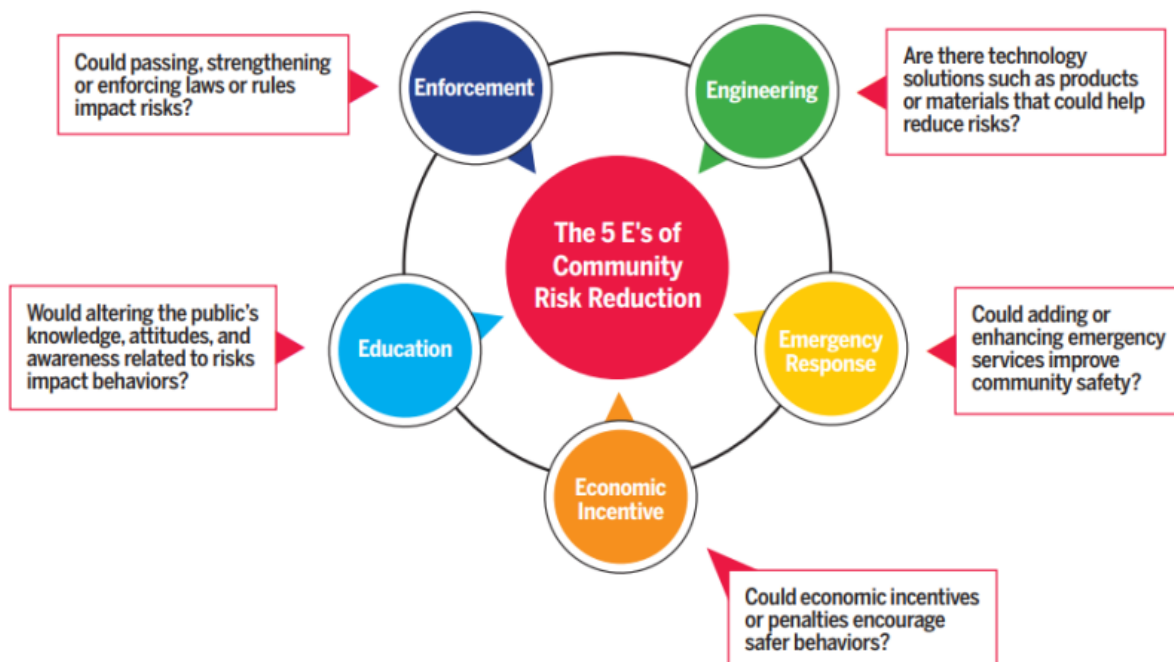


The Fire Department Division of Community Risk Management is tasked with identifying and prioritizing local risks and integrating the strategic investment of resources to reduce their occurrence and impact to the community. In other words, it is a process to help the La Crosse community find out what our risks are then to develop a plan to reduce the risks viewed starting with those identified as high priority.

Responsibilities of the Division of Community Risk Management include, but are not limited to, fire and building inspections, fire prevention and suppression inspections, life safety inspections, code enforcement, plan reviews, risk assessment, and fire investigations.

The La Crosse Fire Department's Community Risk Educator, Pat Corran, has completed the Community Risk Reduction Assessment in the winter of 2020, and will move to develop a **Community Risk Reduction Plan** beginning the first quarter of 2021.

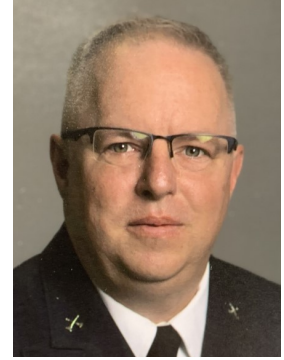
Through the **5 E's of Community Risk Reduction**, the department will continue its mission of providing a safe environment for the residents, visitors, and stakeholders of the community of La Crosse. Through a partnership approach supported by the community, the goals of the department are to alleviate and minimize community-wide safety risks, raise awareness amount community stakeholders, study and assess risks and implement strategies to reduce risks on strategically prioritized basis, and to ensure that all citizens, property owners, projects, and developments are risk informed. Along with our public education, fire prevention, and outreach efforts, Pat Corran will continue to work together with citizens and community groups to identify and minimize risks within the community.





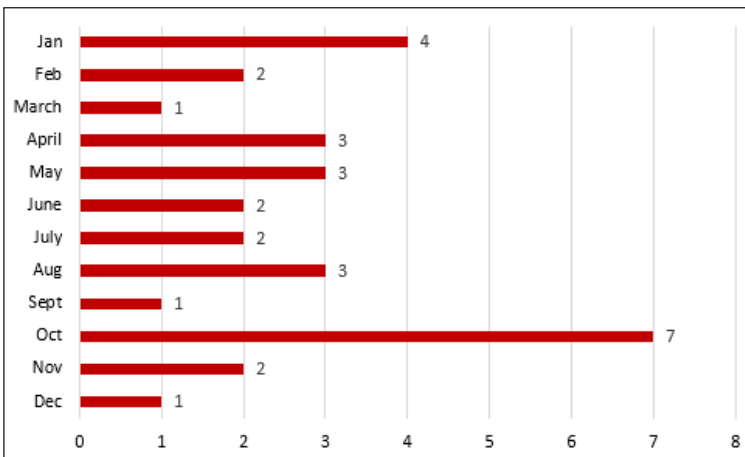
Division of Community Risk Management Fire Investigation

Captains Tim Knudsen & Kyle Soden

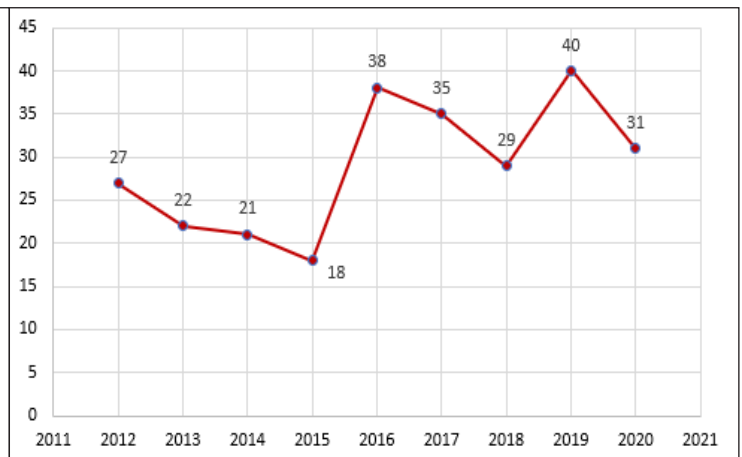


The Division of Community Risk Management’s Fire Investigators were challenged with investigating **31 fire scenes in 2020** to perform cause and origin investigations. The La Crosse Fire Department has three Fire Investigators who are certified to the levels of **“Fire Investigation Technician”** and/or **“Certified Fire Investigator”** by the International Association of Fire Investigators (IAAI). Although Captain Steven Cash was promoted to Division Chief in 2020, he still remains an active investigator with the fire investigative team and has recently achieved his Certified Fire Investigator designation. Congratulations Steve! The designation of Certified Fire Investigator takes approximately **five years** to obtain and the La Crosse currently has **three** Certified Fire Investigators on it’s staff.

2020 Investigated Fire Scenes - By Month



Total Investigated Fire Scenes - Annual



Fire Investigation Scene Photos



Division of Community Risk Management Community Risk Educator Pat Corran



2020 posed several challenges for the Division of Community Risk Management, including our annual Fire Prevention Week Programs for all public and parochial elementary schools in the La Crosse School District. This year's campaign was delivered virtually with help from fire department members and the WKBT news team who assisted in the filming of our virtual events. The theme for 2020 was **"Serve up Fire safety in the Kitchen!"** The 2020 campaign focused on cooking fire safety in response to home cooking fires representing the leading cause of U.S. home fires, with nearly half (**49%**) of all home fires involving cooking equipment; unattended cooking is the leading cause of these fires.

Cooking continues to be a major contributor to the home fire problem. The City of La Crosse compares to the rest of the nation with approximately **45% of the annual fire calls** in the City being in response to cooking-related issues. The good news is that the vast majority of these incidents are highly preventable and this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign works to better educate the public about where potential cooking hazards exist and basic but critical ways to prevent them. Annually, the La Crosse Fire Department reaches **over 8,000 children and adults** in La Crosse and surrounding communities presenting information regarding fire prevention and safety and community risk reduction.



Unfortunately, 2019 brought the end to the La Crosse Fire Department's "Fire Safety House". The previous Fire Safety House was originally put into service in 1993 with a refurbishment occurring in 2007. In 2020, the La Crosse Fire Department was able to **secure grant funding from several sources** including The La Crosse Community Foundation, Kwik Trip, Gundersen Health, LHI, State Farm, and FEMA that will be used in the purchasing of a new Fire Prevention Safety House in 2021. The new Safety House will be a welcome addition to our Fire Prevention efforts and will be utilized to teach fire prevention to children and adults throughout the region.

Community Risk Education Notable 2020 Events

Date	Event	Outreach	Amount of People
Feb 4th	Washburn on the Park—Safety Talk	Older adult education & outreach	25 facility residents
Feb 27th	Speak on CRM at UWL public health class	Improved relations with UWL	50 students & 1 internship
March 8th	Washburn Neighborhood Garden Expo	Increased community involvement	500 people
Aug 11th	City of La Crosse Mask Handout	COVID prevention	10,000 masks distributed
Aug 19th	Viterbo RA Fire Safety Training	Improved education and outreach	40 RAs
Sept 9th	Fire Extinguisher Training Family & Children's Center	Improved education & outreach	5 learners
Sept 22nd	UWL Rent Smart	Increased safety for rental properties	30 students
Sept 25th	Cooking Safety Media Day	Public outreach & education	3 media interviews
Oct 4th-10th	Virtual Fire Prevention Week	Public outreach & education	8,000 students & adults
Oct 17th	City of La Crosse Mask Handout	COVID prevention	2,500 masks distributed
Nov 4th	WTC Fire Extinguisher Training	Public outreach & education	30 students
Nov 8th	LCC Foster Home Fire Safety	Public outreach & education	25 foster families



Check out our 2020 Fire Prevention Week Videos on YouTube:

City of La Crosse WI Fire Department



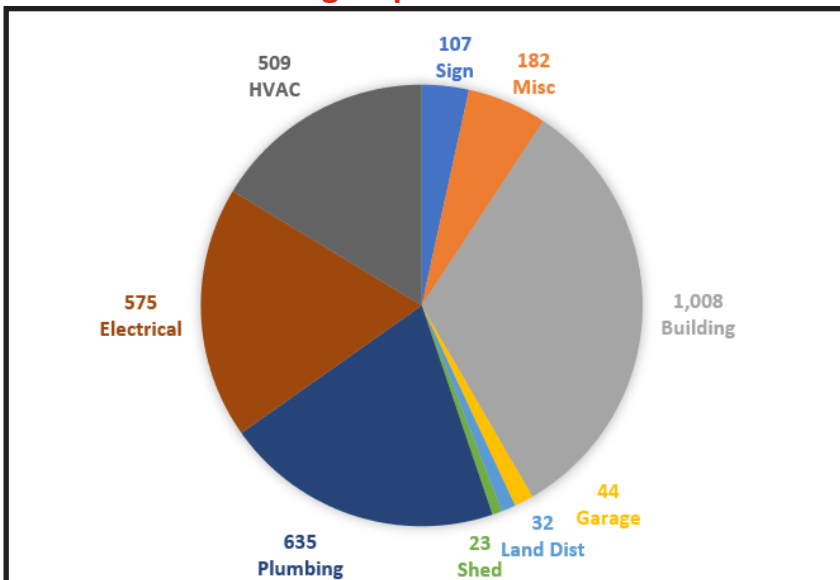
Division of Community Risk Management

Chief Building Inspector David Reinhart

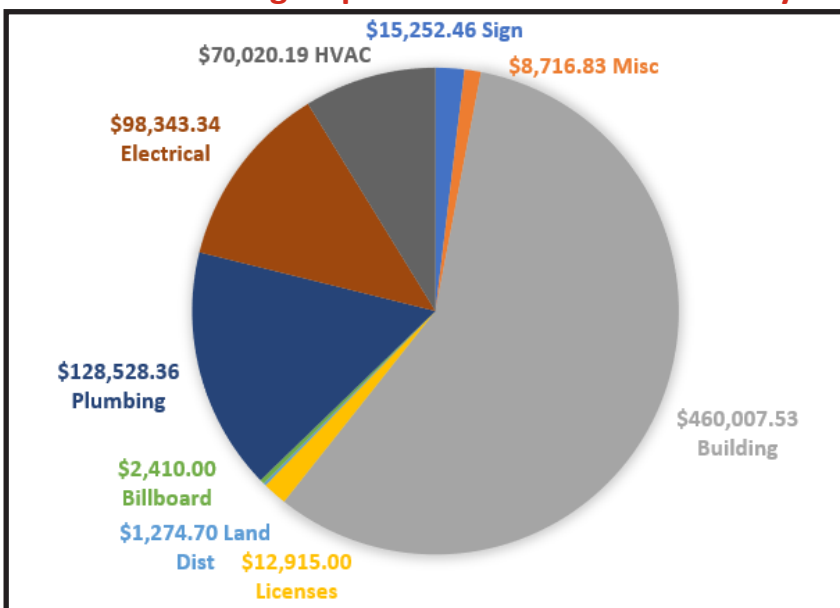


The Division of Community Risk Management also provides a **full range of inspection services** that includes: plan review, construction review, and property maintenance inspection field operations; full electrical, erosion control, HVAC, and plumbing inspection operations; investigation of code violations on private property; floodplain management; tavern and rooming house inspections; sign inspections; electrical and gas licenses; and assignment of property addresses. **Our division takes great pride in ensuring** that La Crosse continues to be a safe place to live, work, and visit.

2020 Building Inspection Permits Issued



2020 Building Inspection Annual Fee Summary



In 2020, the Division's Building Inspectors and Code Enforcement Technicians managed:

- **25 registered** vacant buildings
- **Maintenance enforcement** activities decreasing from 5,514 incidents in 2019 to **3,483** in 2020
- **31 newly** constructed residential buildings
- **10 newly** constructed commercial, industrial, and institutional structures
- **33 construction additions** to single-family dwellings
- **76 construction alterations** to commercial buildings
- **24 decks** constructed
- **29 garage/utility buildings razed**
- **7 commercial structures razed**
- **21 residential buildings razed**

Division of Community Risk Management Fire Inspections

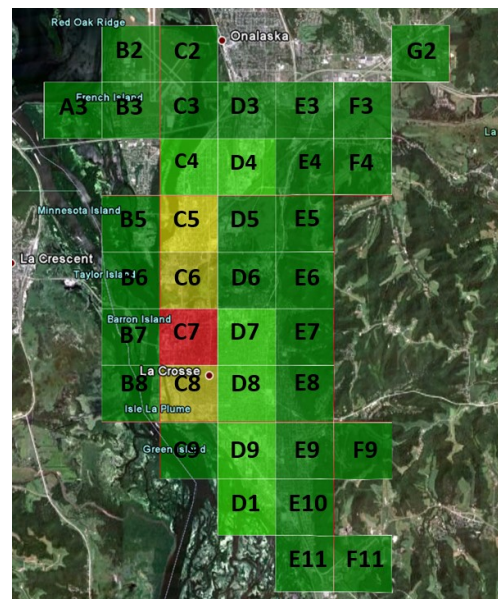
The LCFD has **two full-time fire inspectors and 25 fire officers (Captains and Lieutenants)** who perform approximately **6,000 occupancy and fire safety inspections annually**. These inspections are performed in accordance with Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) 314 and the City of La Crosse Municipal Code.

The LCFD began assessing community risks within the City in 2010, and completed a formal Community Risk Assessment in 2020. This assessment gathered information and provided the following response analysis: district overview, special hazards, occupancy risk assessment, occupancy analysis emergency call history, and fire flow analysis. Fire inspections are performed for all commercial properties and all three-unit or larger residential properties. **The City is divided into 41 planning zones**; which are approximately one mile by one mile. Using this data, inspections are assigned to LCFD officers to execute one or two times throughout the calendar year.

2020 Fire Inspections/Occupancies

# of Total Inspections	5,339
# of Total Completed Inspections	5,314
# of Total Re-Inspections	285
# of Total Completed Re-Inspections	265
# of Total Occupancies	2,892
# of Completed Occupancies	2,880
# of Un-started Occupancies	4
# of Follow Up Occupancies	38
# of Unresolved Violations	369
# of Resolved Violations	361
% of Occupancies Inspected	99.86%
% of Occupancies Completed	99.59%

Planning Zone Map



Examples of the most common fire code violations:



Division of Training and Professional Standards

Division Chief Todd Adams



The LCFD Training and Professional Standards Division is responsible for training the men and women of the Department to be confident, competent, and professional emergency service providers, community educators, and code enforcement officers. Our Division sets high standards and defined expectations for our personnel, in effort to consistently provide the best possible service to our community.

The COVID-19 pandemic and cases of civil unrest created a unique year for the United States, the City, and the LCFD in 2020. The impact of these events resulted in challenges that required us to change the way we typically operate in our daily routines, while responding to emergency calls, while safely training our probationary firefighters, and in maintaining our required credentials and certifications. All aspects of training had to be accomplished in a safe and socially-distant manner. The pandemic has taught us how to be more flexible, intuitive, innovative, and patient. Our personnel were able to adjust to the “new normal” of wearing face masks, distancing ourselves from each other, and training in small groups and virtual classrooms. The results of national civil unrest frequently occurring brought new challenges to our scene safety and security. These issues were addressed through collaboration with the La Crosse Police Department and cross-departmental training.

Despite all of the adversity in 2020, our Division managed to document **35,766 hours of individual training**, we coordinated more than **300 classes**, and trained in **six new recruit firefighters**. To accomplish this, we utilized **62 internal instructors and five external instructors** to meet the NFPA, OSHA, DSPS, and ISO mandated **20 hours per month/per individual** of required training. We exceeded the goal and realized an **average of 25.9 hours** of training per month/per individual. These statistics are a true testament to the importance we place on training in within our organization.

Our Division cannot manage more than 35,000 hours of training working alone. We relied on the support of our sworn and civilian personnel, an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), and external instructors with specific expertise. Working together, we facilitated a comprehensive training program that developed the professional men and women who provide essential services to our community.

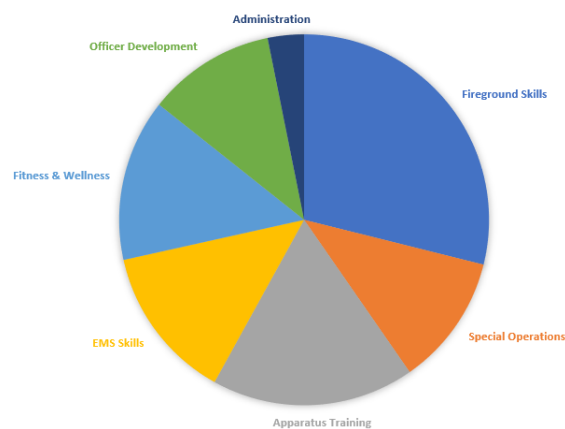




2020 was a unique year for the Division while managing constantly changing and pandemic-related group training rules, while still maintaining compliance with mandated NFPA, OSHA and State requirements. Our goals for 2021 will continue to provide training that encompasses all of our personnel, from probationary employees up to our senior administrative staff. We will continue to work with our community partners and neighboring response agencies, in effort to foster great relationships and to develop a well-trained, professional, and prepared La Crosse Fire Department.

Total 2020 Hours by Topic:

Fireground Skills	10,333.19
Special Operations	4,091.01
Apparatus Training	6,336.50
EMS Skills	4,821.60
Fitness & Wellness	5,055.19
Officer Development	3,995.75
Administration	1,132.91
Total 2020 Training Hours	35,766.16



i would like to thank the following for their continued support of the LCFD Training and Professional Standards Division. **The City Building Rehab Program, City Community Risk Management, City Streets Department, Gundersen Lutheran, Mayo Health Care, Western Technical College, University of Wisconsin La Crosse, Don's Towing, Mathy Construction, Dairyland Power Company, Hess Excavating, J.F. Brennan/Brennan Marine, Marine Land, BNSF Railroad, XCEL Energy and all other community partners for providing support and unique training opportunities. You are greatly appreciated!**



All photographs were taken during various training exercises during the 2020 Probationary Academy.

Division of Operations: All-Hazards Fire, EMS, & Rescue

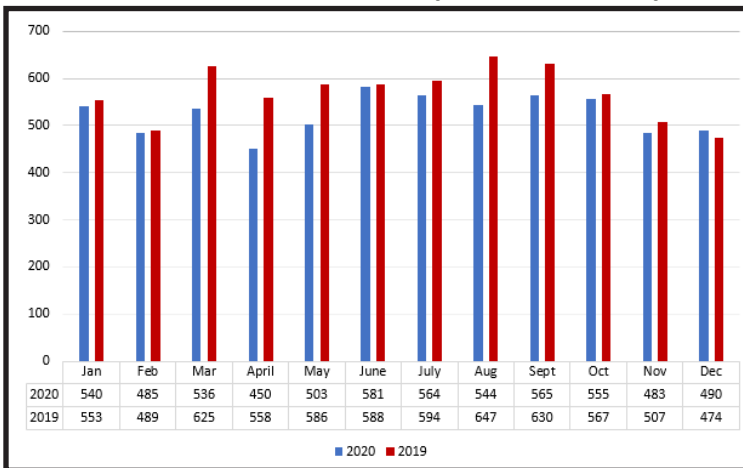
Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Murphy



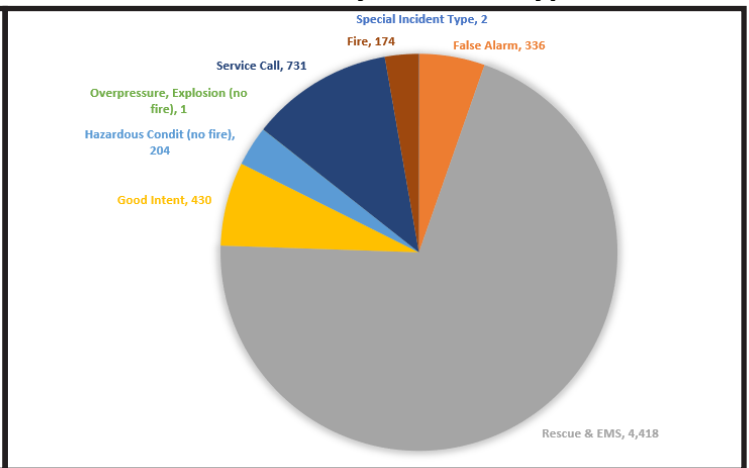
The LCFD responds to all hazards in our community and 2020 was no exception. Shortly after the year began, we were tasked with managing our response to the COVID 19 virus. Several staff members were reassigned to the Emergency Operation Center and our crews began to assess how we would respond to emergency calls related to COVID. This became even more difficult when our Firefighters and their family members became infected with the virus. We adapted quickly, created new policies and procedures, and even stationed some of our crews at three remote locations; the La Crosse Center and the two high schools.

We continue to adapt to the pandemic as new information is available. We responded to a total of **6,296 incidents, including 174 fires and 4,418 EMS calls**. In 2020, our firefighters **contained fires to the room of origin 100%** of the time after they arrived on scene. Well trained firefighters responding from strategic locations result in excellent outcomes. We continue to meet or exceed our National Fire Protection Association staffing standards for fire suppression response with at last 15 firefighters on scene more than **90%** of the time.

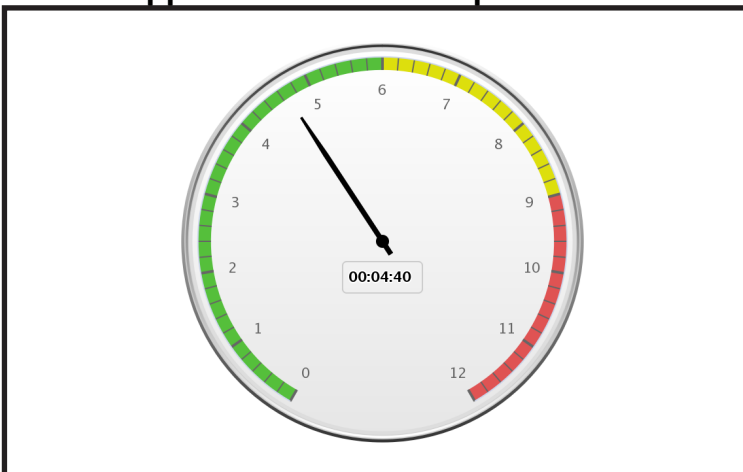
Total Calls Per Month (2019 vs. 2020)



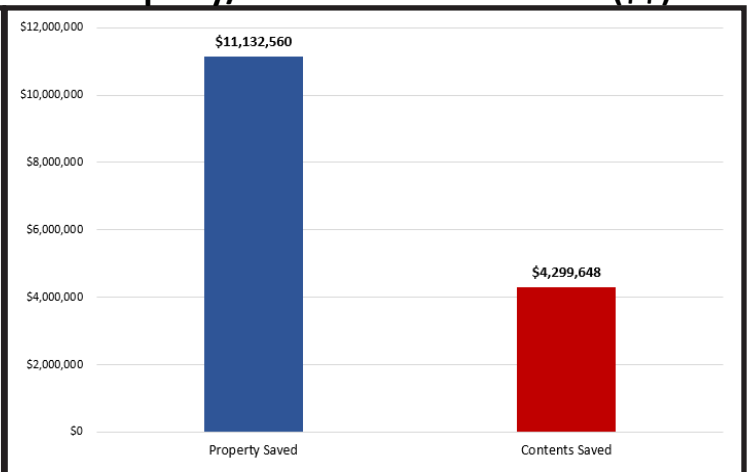
2020 Calls By Incident Type



Apparatus Median Response Time



Property/Contents Saved In 2020 (\$\$)





We took delivery of a **new Fire Engine in 2020** that replaced a 1995 Engine, and it also carries 2,000 gallons of water which allowed us to replace a 1985 Water delivery truck as well. This Engine was **dedicated in memory of Assistant Chief Edward Sciborski**, who died in the line of duty in 1964. Fire trucks have changed a lot since 1985, and the new trucks allow us to respond in a much safer vehicle with modern equipment, while providing service and reducing risk for the city.

Six new firefighters joined our team in March of 2020. These probationary firefighters have been training hard and are preparing for any emergency that they may be called to. The health and safety of our firefighters continues to be a priority at the LCFD. Daily exercise has always been something our crews did together and that daily routine has been challenged by social distancing requirements, however physical fitness remains a priority. The firefighters in La Crosse recognize how fortunate we are to have such amazing support from our community and our community leaders.



Division of Operations: Emergency Medical Services Captain/EMS Coordinator Jim Hillcoat

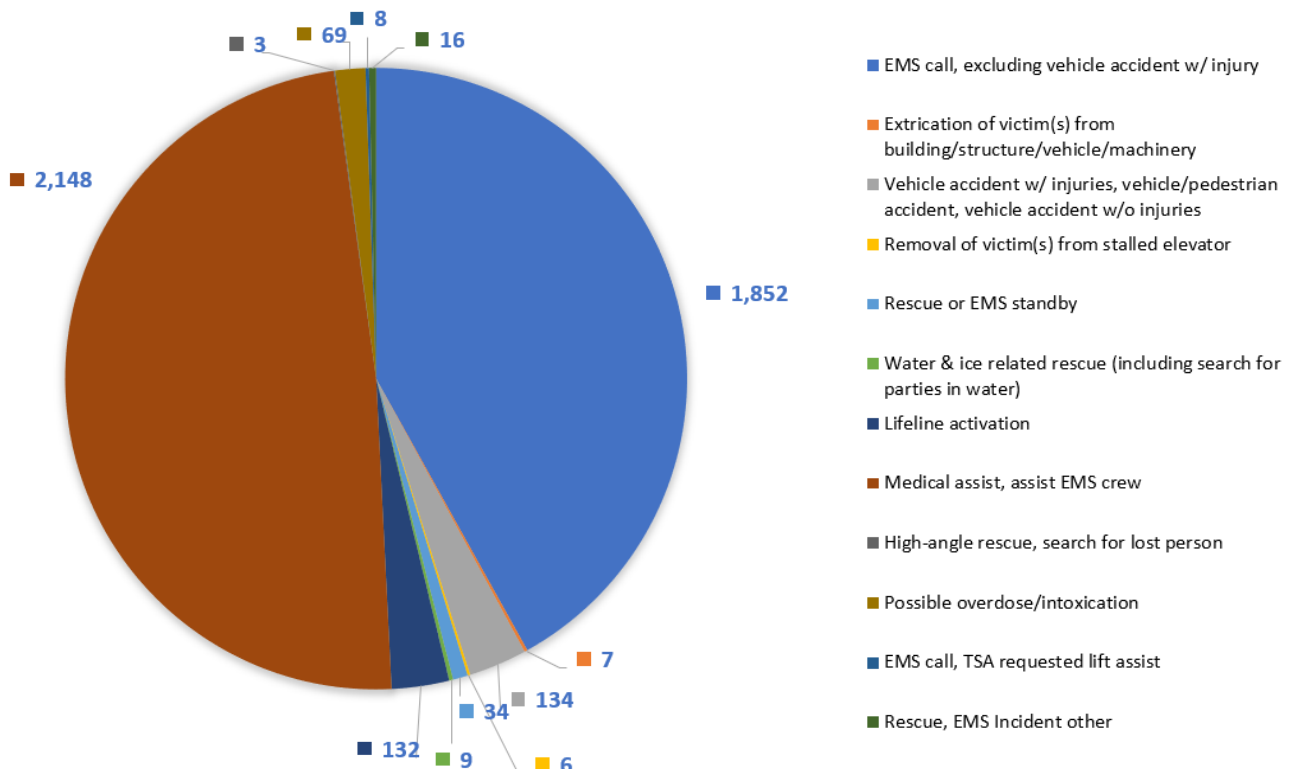


The LCFD has been providing emergency medical services (EMS) to the City of La Crosse since 1975. The department's **EMTs and Paramedics** currently provide the best, most up to date pre-hospital medical care possible. The LCFD responded to **4,418 medical related calls in 2020**, with heightened safety precautions involved due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020 brought many challenges and changes to our EMS operations. The LCFD has been on the front-lines battling this pandemic and managed to provide the same high level of response throughout 2020 despite the challenges. Our number one priority throughout the 2020 pandemic was to protect our EMTs and paramedics and this was accomplished through many procedural changes. Dispatch protocols were updated to minimize risks of exposures and personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements changed dramatically to ensure the maximum protection for our responders. The logistics challenges to maintain an adequate supply of required PPE for our responders was extremely difficult, especially early in the year. However, with the aid of funding from the CARES act and working closely with our vendors, we adapted and overcame the obstacles. Keeping our personnel safe kept us on the front-lines and we delivered the highest level of service to our residents throughout 2020.

In the midst of the pandemic, we found ourselves also dealing with a significant opioid overdose problem in our community. The LCFD responded to **69 overdose calls** in 2020. Narcan and other medications carried by EMS were in short supply due to production challenges caused by the pandemic. Expirations on Narcan were extended by the FDA so that EMS providers would not run out of the life saving drug.

2020 Emergency Medical Service Calls





Expanding Advanced Life Support paramedic service capability within the LCFD has remained a priority. There are now **13 paramedics** practicing within the LCFD. Two more Firefighter EMTs are in training and are expected to be practicing by the fall of 2021. The LCFD achieved its goal of procuring the necessary equipment to provide paramedic level service from all four fire stations in 2020.

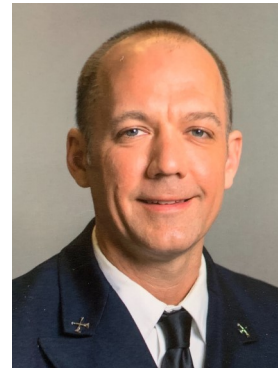
Quality training and a robust **Quality Assurance Program** continue to ensure that the LCFD is providing the best emergency medical services possible. Each month, LCFD EMTs and paramedics have skill training provided by an EMS Coordinator and EMS Trainers. Additionally, for increased skill development and as a requirement of their LCFD paramedic status, LCFD paramedics are required to complete 12 to 24 hours of ambulance duty with Gundersen TSA. Our strong partnership with Gundersen Tri-State Ambulance and aligned training continues to show its value on calls for service. A joint quality assurance committee with members from Gundersen TSA and LCFD meet monthly to review EMS calls and achieve continuous improvement.

Our success is measured by outcomes. We achieve positive outcomes from emergencies because we have the people, the training, and the tools which we wouldn't have without community support! We appreciate the support of the community and look forward to **providing life-saving high-quality service** in 2021 and beyond.



Division of Operations: Hazardous Materials Team

Captain Blane Neher



The La Crosse Regional Hazardous Materials Team (HAZMAT) is a 25-member unit that specializes in **responses to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive related incidents**. The team was formally established under the direction of Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) in July 2000. The department has been designated by WEM as a National Incident Management System (NIMS) "Type 2" asset. Our team currently provides hazardous materials response for **nine counties** in West Central Wisconsin. Within this area, we protect 90-miles of the Mississippi River, 287-miles of rail lines, and 121-miles of interstate. Every team member is required to attend at least 48-hours of Hazmat Team drills per year, along with standard competency-based exercises designed to maintain technician-level skills.

Our team also operates as a **Radiological Field Team** for the WI Department of Health Radiation Protection Section. The team trains and prepares for response to radiological/nuclear incidents that could require rescue, reconnaissance, mitigation, and sampling operations. The **state provides 100% of the funding** for both the Radiological and HazMat teams. The funding includes worker's compensation and reimbursement for costs incurred during responses with no responsible party.

In 2020, our team responded to **16 calls** for service, seven of which were for gas line breaks. With the significant number of natural gas line calls, our team purchased specialized clamps to help mitigate these very hazardous emergency situations. Our department has developed a standard emergency response protocol for gas line breaks by focusing on isolation, evacuation, air monitoring, and suppression.



2020 HazMat Reponses:

02/04: Semi Diesel Spill
04/08: Bio Hazard Response
04/23: Semi Diesel Spill
05/27: Polyphosphoric Exposure

05/27: Natural gas line break
06/01: Semi Diesel Spill
06/04: Bio Hazard Response
07/08: Oil Spill on the water
07/10: Natural gas line break
07/28: Natural gas line break

08/10: Freon Leak at Business
09/29: Natural gas line break
10/13: Natural gas line break
11/02: Natural gas line break
11/11: Natural gas line break
11/19: Gasoline Spill

Division of Operations: Urban Search and Rescue

Captain John Bayer



The La Crosse Fire Department Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team is a 23-member unit that specializes in various technical rescue disciplines. The mission of the USAR team is to prepare for and respond to **technical rescue emergencies** both locally and regionally. These emergencies may involve structural collapse, major extrication or disentanglement, confined space rescue, trench rescue, flood and swift water rescue, high/low angle rope rescue, and wide area search.

The LCFD USAR Team continues it's partnership with Dairyland Power to serve as rescue resource for their Genoa, Wisconsin facility. This agreement provides our team with unique training opportunities within their facilities. The opportunities include confined space training inside their large furnaces and rope rescue training on their 500-ft tall smoke stack. Our partnership agreement remains in place through 2021.

Along with the training and responding to emergency technical rescue incidents, LCFD USAR provides personnel on stand by for special events like the EPIC Bike Race and the Hixon 25k and 50k. These events are becoming more popular with hundreds of people competing in biking or running through the Hixon Forest and Human Powered Trails. Unfortunately, this can often times result participant injures in remote parts of the trails that require our team members to use specific equipment and skills to locate and treat the injured party.



2020 Tech Rescue Responses:

05/23	3401 Quarry Road	Hixon Forest	Located, treated, & removed a hiker who was injured while running the trail
09/14	4499 Grandad Bluff Road	George's Point	Located, treated, & removed a hiker who had fallen approximately 20-feet off the South face of George's Point.
12/09	29th Street & Ebner Coulee Road	Base of Grandad Bluff	Located, treated, & removed a person who was injured while riding a bike

Division of Operations: Water/Ice/Dive Rescue

Captain Tom Griffith



The mission of our Water/Ice/Dive Team is to provide the community with rescue and recovery capabilities in **all water environments**, from surface and ice related emergencies, to underwater rescue and recovery. Our team is capable of searching for and collecting evidence or other significant items. The team serves the city and the surrounding region with a 19-person team that includes **11 Divers** who are certified in a variety of specialized rescue diving operations. All of our Divers have been **certified** through Dive Rescue International, Profession Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), or National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), and they all must pass annual water fitness and scuba skills tests. All members of the team are trained in dive operations, sonar use, boat operations, underwater camera work, ice rescue, and water based EMS.

The La Crosse Fire Department participated in **1,409 hours** of water rescue, ice rescue, boat and sonar operations, and dive related training in 2020, including cross training non-team members of the department. This cross training allows for rapid response to safely rescue and render aid to victims involved in any and all water related emergencies. We were able to conduct training on our Dry Land Access Vehicle (DLAV) and streamlined our flood response as well. This year, we also had two divers in training, and were able to get them certified in most disciplines they needed. Completing their dive training to become certified divers on the department is another goal for 2021. In 2020 our divers were still able to conduct **151 dives**, and have recorded **901 total dives** since September of 2015.



2020 Water/Ice/Dive Responses:

2/23-2/26	Ice Rescue (search for drowning victim)	07/05	Boat fire
05/27	Water rescue	07/18	Search for person in water
06/03	Near drowning rescue	08/31	Search for person in water
06/05	Watercraft rescue	09/05	Watercraft rescue
		10/16	Watercraft rescue

Division of Operations: Tactical EMS Firefighter Frank Garritano



The department’s six-person Tactical Emergency Medical Services Team (TEMS) continued to grow and develop into a cohesive team while serving and positively contributing to the City of La Crosse. The pandemic restricted the team’s ability to train in groups, per social distancing guidelines. However, the team adapted and did our best to maintain our various medical skill and readiness to respond to high-threat situations.

In 2020, we had a total of **12 incident callouts**, and participated in more than **117 hours of training**. A diverse set of skills are required for Tactical Operations to be effective and maintaining those skills and being in a state of readiness are the primary focus for this team. Some training topics covered this year were: specialized rescue operations, tactical combat casualty care, team movement and concepts, injured/downed officer situations, and self-aid/buddy aid for ERT Officers.



2020 TEMS Responses:

February 7th	May 12th (two callouts)	May 30th	September 29th
March 16th		June 3rd	October 14th
May 9th	May 29th	July 30th	October 30th

One of the positive things that came out of this year was the continued development of the **“Stop the Bleed”** training program led by Firefighter Brandon Scharmer and Captain Jim Hillcoat. This training is beneficial for traumatic situations; whether someone else is causing harm or you are assisting an injured person after an accident. “Stop the Bleed” program is a partnership with the La Crosse School District and is in the final stages of development.

KNOW YOUR STATION LOCATION

**AIRPORT FIRE
STATION:**
2841 FANTA REED RD

STATION 4:
906 GILLETTE ST

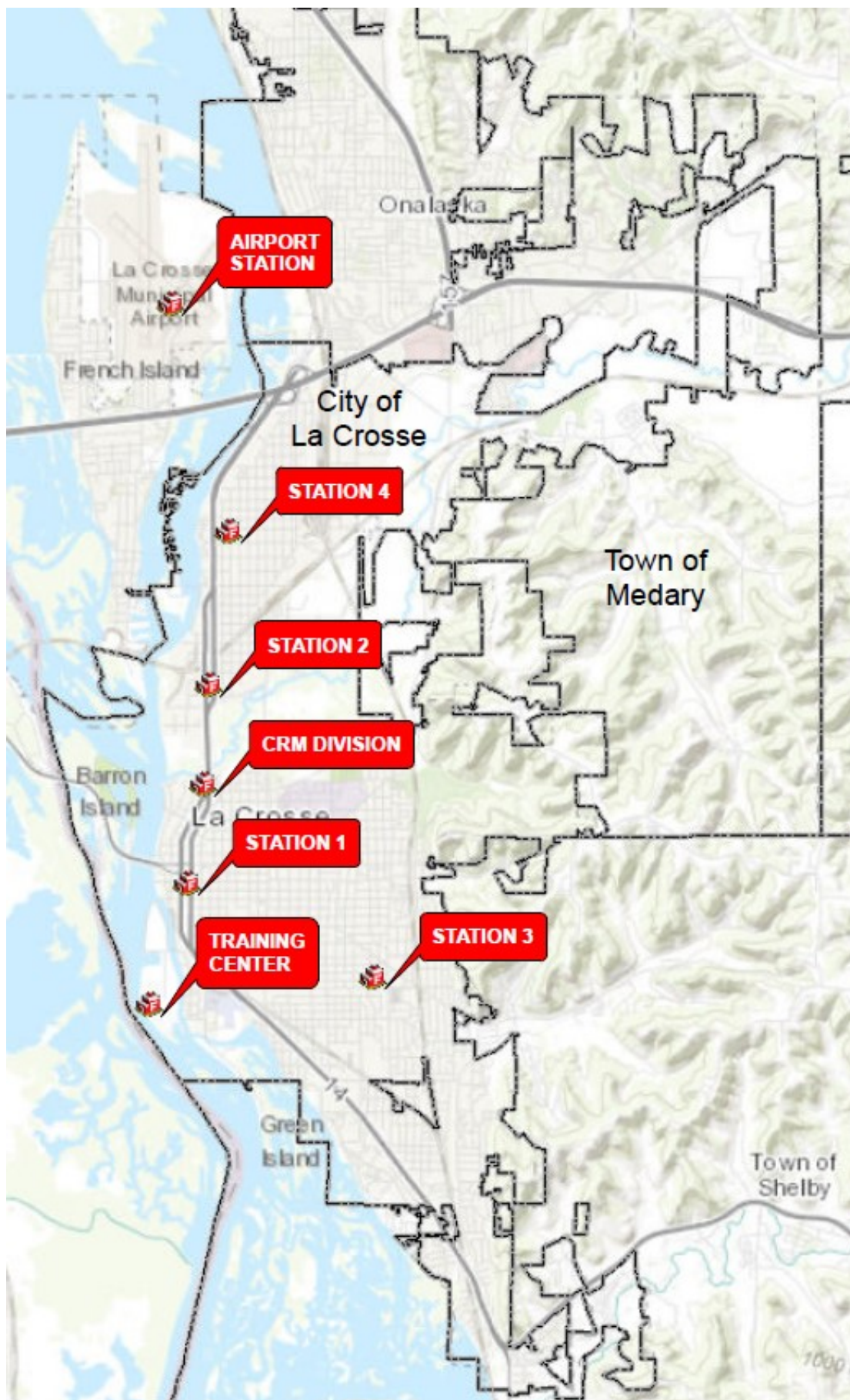
STATION 2:
626 MONITOR ST

**COMMUNITY RISK
MANAGEMENT:**
CITY HALL
400 LA CROSSE ST

STATION 1:
726 5TH AVE S

TRAINING CENTER:
ISLE LA PLUME

STATION 3:
1710 LOSEY BLVD S

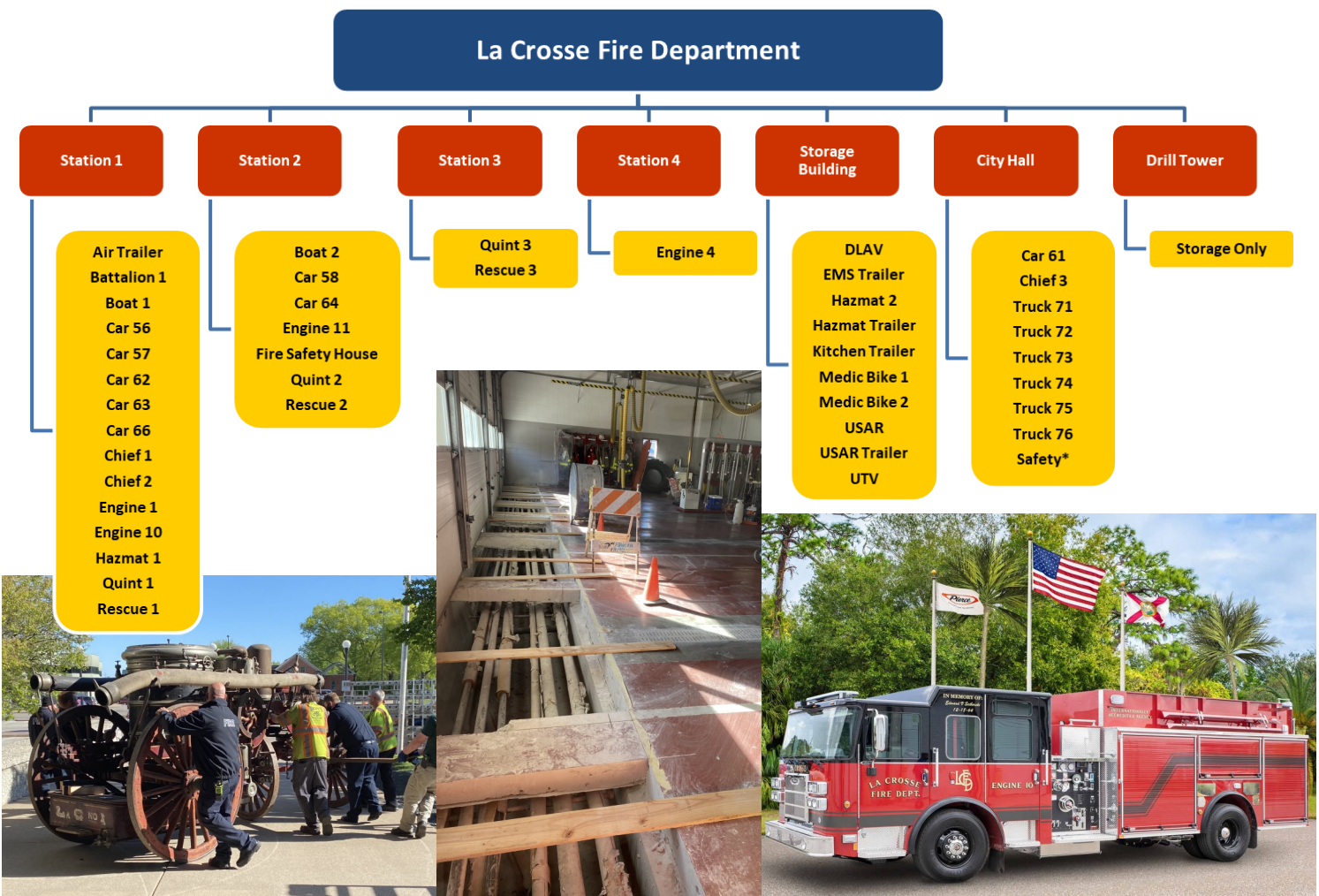


Division of Operations: Fleet, Facilities, & Logistics Officer Captain Bill Treanor



Operating under the department's Division of Operations, the department's Fleet, Facilities, and Logistics (FFL) Officer's responsibilities include coordination of repair and maintenance of fire apparatus and support vehicles, and all of the department facilities. This includes annual maintenance and testing of pumps and firefighting equipment. The FFL Officer is supported by three Firefighters who are assigned in dual-roles as Assistant Mechanics on each of the three operational shifts. This four-person team coordinates with many other members of the department who are assigned to annual equipment testing and maintenance duties to ensure that all equipment, apparatus, and facilities are operationally ready, in compliance with state and federal laws, and ultimately safe for department personnel and those in the community, who we serve.

Additionally, the department provides apparatus and equipment maintenance support for vehicles and equipment at other area fire departments. These services are provided on a cost-recovery contractual basis and supports our regional partners with cost-effective maintenance and testing services. We believe that these services support good mutual-aid relations and provides an opportunity for regional interoperability advancements.









Ryan Rushton

MN National Guard
C Co 2-211
Flight Medic



Andrew Servais

WI Air National Guard
115th Fighter Wing

Serving Our Country & Community

Honoring our firefighters for protecting our nation and our local community.

WI Air National Guard
115th Fighter Wing

Cole Doblar



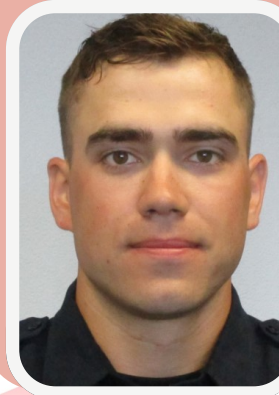
U.S. Army Reserves
469th Engineer
Company

Kyle Soden



MN National Guard
C Co 2-211
Medevac

Clayton Anderson





Bryon Stein

The Department awards a **“Firefighter of the Year”** award to an employee who is selected from a group of peer nominations.

This award is decided by a committee of peers and recognizes department personnel for their community service excellence, both on and off duty.

In 2020, the organization was pleased to present **Bryon Stein** with this distinguished and well-deserved award.

Engineer Bryon Stein has worked for the department for over 25 years.

Per AC Murphy, “Bryon Stein is widely recognized for his expertise in extrication techniques. He has the heart of a teacher, and he shares his knowledge both formally and informally around the department. He’s the go-to person for just about anyone here.”

*“I’m just one spoke in the wheel”
and “I’m just one of the guys who
tries to keep the ball moving
forward.” -Bryon Stein*

Stories that Show the Bravery & Courage of our Firefighters & the Impact They Have on Others



In addition to Isaac (who was shown on page 2), three other good Samaritans were recognized in the rescue efforts on Black River Beach: Kailee Andress & Jennifer Jahnke assisted with the rescue and Allison Rogers assisted with CPR.

City of La Crosse Police Officer Sherdan was presented with the LCFD Life Saver Award for his quick-thinking and fast-reacting efforts in a water rescue off of Cass Street bridge, prior to LCFD arrival.

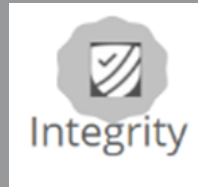




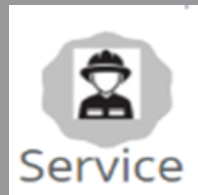
La Crosse Fire Department staff manned hand washing and sanitizing stations at polling locations for last April's election, when the pandemic was in its early stages.



Respect



Integrity



Service



Excellence



City of
La Crosse Fire
Department



City of La
Crosse WI Fire
Department



@lacrossefire



@laxfd



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