

# La Crosse Fire Department 2013 Community Report



*Serving La Crosse and Southwestern WI Quality Emergency Services Since 1896*





## **Mission Statement**

**The La Crosse Fire Department serves all who live in and visit the city of La Crosse through excellence in fire protection, safety, emergency medical services, rescue, and educational services at the highest professional standard in a compassionate, ethical, and cost effective manner.**

## **Our Core Values**

- **High Quality Services**
- **Cost Effectiveness**
- **High Ethical Standards**
- **Competence**
- **Communication**
- **Commitment**
- **Responsiveness**
- **Excellence**
- **Leadership**
- **Integrity**



# Key Organizational Strategies for LCFD

In 2013, the La Crosse Fire Department identified the need to develop and implement a strategic plan that will guide its operations over the next five years. Integral to the development process was community consultation with key stakeholder groups to determine public expectations regarding service levels and necessary improvements. The agency conducted four community focus group interviews to gain valuable input on community expectations. Both internal and external feedback was consistent in terms of reporting that professionalism, pride, and commitment were among the greatest strengths of the agency. The top issues were then turned into the goals and further into time framed objectives which are stated below.



**Goal 1: Improve Internal and external communications**

**Goal 2: Engage in “community firefighting’ with our citizens**

**Goal 3: An innovative work place focused on service excellence**

**Goal 4: Strategically placed and efficient equipment, apparatus and stations**

**Goal 5: A highly skilled workforce**

**Goal 6: An accountable and transparent agency with strong leadership**

**Goal 7: A safe and healthy work environment**



## *From the desk of Fire Chief Gregg Cleveland.....*

Mayor Tim Kabat  
Members of the Common Council  
Members of the Police and Fire Commission  
Citizens of the City of La Crosse,

On the following pages is the overview of the fire department's community report for 2013. It has been a challenging year for the fire department; however, the persistence and determination of the men and women of the La Crosse Fire Department allowed the department to continue to provide excellence.

Some of our accomplishments for 2013 include but are not limited to:

- Development and implementation of a Tactical Emergency Medical Team that works collaboratively with the La Crosse Police Department providing medical care in high risk incidents to emergency responders and potential patients
- Continued progress towards department Accreditation with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International
- Achieved containing fires to the room or object of origin 100% in 2013 after fire department arrival
- Replaced an aging 1990, 100 foot platform aerial ladder with a 2013 Pierce 100 foot platform apparatus
- Received a \$27,500.00 grant for specialized training and equipment to improve our fire response efforts in high rise buildings
- Accepted into the Wisconsin Emergency Medical Services Division's Naloxone Pilot Program
- Achieved a 19% survival rate for patients who suffered a cardiac arrest as compared to a national survival rate of 6%
- Responded to all calls in the City in 4 minutes or less 87% of the time
- Average response times to incidents was 2 minutes and 40 seconds
- 90th percentile response time was 4 minutes and 19 seconds to all incidents in the City



The fire department had another financially sound year in 2013. The fire department completed 2013 with a budget surplus of \$37,857.00. Good financial planning and execution allowed the fire department to achieve this outcome.

Looking ahead to 2014, we have some opportunities and challenges. The Department was accepted into the Wisconsin's Division of Health's Naloxone Pilot Program. This program will allow the fire department to carry Naloxone, commonly referred to as Narcan, to treat heroin and other opioid overdoses. Our target date for implementation to carry Narcan is February 1, 2014.

Working with other city departments to address the issues facing our neighborhoods will be a continued focus for the fire department in 2014.

We are very excited that we may become an accredited agency in 2014. We anticipate moving to the final phase of our accreditation journey by having a peer review team assigned to make the final evaluation of our department in 2015.

The fire department has had another successful year in 2013 and I am very excited for 2014. I would like to thank our computer clerks Adam Markert, Andy Formanek, Kyle DuMez, my secretary Barb Glomstad, and intern Catherine Lie for their assistance in putting our community report together for 2013.

Respectfully,

*Gregg A. Cleveland*

Gregg A. Cleveland, Fire Chief  
La Crosse Fire Department





# ABOUT US:

## What We Do:

- Fight fires to save lives and minimize property and environmental damage
- Provide emergency medical services
- Provide specialty rescue services such as vehicle extrication, technical rescue, hazardous materials response and water/ice rescue
- Investigate cause and origin of fires
- Enforce public safety codes



## Who We Are:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Occupied Positions</u>
Fire Chief	1
Assistant Chief	1
Division Chief	5
Facilities Maintenance Mechanic	1
Captain	15
Lieutenant	11
Apparatus Engineers	23
Firefighters	35
Administrative Assistant	1
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>93</b>

### **Total Years of Experience:**

1237.78 Years

### **Average Years of Experience**

**Per Personnel:**

13.3 years

90 of 93 positions (97%) are “boots on the ground” personnel providing direct services to the public.

## Demographics & Services Provided:

The City of La Crosse Fire Department currently operates out of four fire stations that cover 22 square miles. Those stations are staffed with a minimum of 24 personnel each day. There are two Engines, three Quints (Ladder Trucks), one or two Light Rescues, one Heavy Rescue, two fire boats and a Command Vehicle in service each day to serve the citizens and visitors of La Crosse. In addition, each shift has specialists in the areas of water and ice rescue, hazardous materials response and mitigation, and technical rescue, which consists of confined space rescue, trench rescue, high angle (rope) rescue and structural collapse rescue. These specialists are available at any moment to respond to any one of these incidents. The water rescue team covers approximately 17 miles of the river while the technical rescue team covers about 4800 acres of bluff land. The hazardous materials team is a State sanctioned Regional Team that is able to respond to any level of hazardous materials release within all or part of nine counties in the region. Within this area the team covers 90 miles of the Mississippi River, 287 miles of railroad track, and 121 miles of interstate highway.

In 2012, the City of La Crosse Fire Department responded to 4,947 incidents. Of those calls, the fire department responded to 3,694 emergency medical calls.

The La Crosse Fire Department Inspection and Arson Bureau conducted 5,852 inspections. Out of these inspections, there were 3,539 violations. Ninety-three percent of those violations (3,054) were corrected. The bureau also investigated 37 fires. They provide community education through a number of different programs. Most of these programs are targeted to children, teaching them fire safety and prevention. In 2012, the bureau delivered 115 educational/ safety programs or demonstrations.



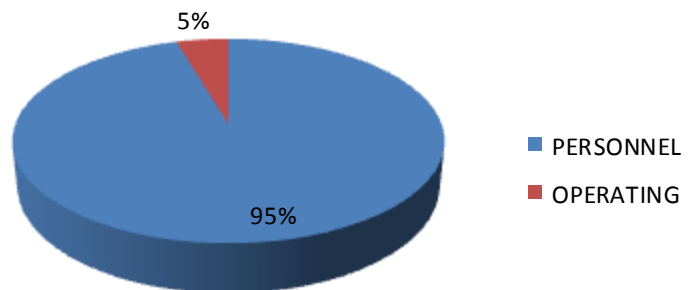
# 2013 BUDGET



**Total Fire Department Budget for 2013:**

**\$10,545,614.43**

## Operating Budget



### Capitol Projects and Equipment:

- Purchased a 100 foot aerial platform. This replaced a 23 year old apparatus.
- Completed emergency generator replacement for Fire Station 1. This project replaced a 50 year old generator and provides power to the entire building in case of an electrical emergency.
- Refurbishment of training ground burn rooms which allows the fire department to continue with live fire training evolutions.

### Grants

The Department received two area grants totaling \$30,000 from the Franke Foundation and the La Crosse Community Foundation. These grants were used to purchase the Kitchen Fire Safety Trailer, which will be used for community education in the prevention of home cooking fires.

The Department received an assistance to fire fighters grant in the amount of \$32,180.00. This grant was used to purchase high rise firefighting equipment, and also provided high rise firefighting training evolutions for all staff.

### New Equipment Purchased

The department purchased apparatus and equipment including a 100 ft. aerial platform quint, new AED's, and atmospheric testing meters.



# Facts and Figures of 2013

## Fire Loss in Numbers

**Estimated Value of Building and Content:**  
**\$23,646,500.00**

**Total Fire loss:**  
**\$508,601.00**

**Estimated property and contents saved:**  
**\$23,137,899.00**

*In 2013, 6 lives were saved due to the extraordinary response efforts of the La Crosse Firefighters.*



## La Crosse Fire Department Response Summary

National Fire Protection Association Standards (NFPA) has a standard call time of 4 minutes and under. The Department responded to all emergency calls **87%** of the time in 4 minutes or less.

Fire Station	Average Total Calls	Average Response time in minutes	Percentage of response time under 4 minutes
Station One	110	2:15	96%
Station Two	54	2:32	93%
Station Three	80	3:14	76%
Station Four	43	2:54	77%
City Wide	290	2:40	87%

Note: Call totals include all responses for fires and emergency medical calls. Response times reported according to National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710, Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments.





In December of 2012, The Fire Department along with the La Crosse County Aging Department were awarded scholarships to participate in a training conference dedicated to *Remembering When™: A Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults*, developed by the National Fire Protection Association, NFPA.

The conference was held December 2-4, 2012, in Boston, Massachusetts. NFPA selected Division Chief Jeff Murphy and Larry White with La Crosse County Aging. Adults 65 years and older are more than twice as likely to be killed in a home fire compared to the population at large, and falls are the leading cause of death from injuries in this group. This training offers strategies that participants can bring back to share with their communities to help prevent fires and falls among older adults that live there.

The *Remembering When* program focuses on 16 key fire and fall prevention messages. Some of the messages include the following:

- To prevent fires, space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet (1 meter) from anything that can burn and unplugged when no one's home or at bedtime.
- While cooking, older adults should wear tight fitting clothing or short sleeves so clothes don't ignite from the stove.

People should never leave cooking unattended or cook if drowsy from medicine or alcohol.

To prevent falls, older adults should exercise to improve balance and build strength. To prevent falls in the home, it's important to clear stairs and hallways of electrical cords, shoes, books, magazines, clothing and any other things that can be tripped over.

The La Crosse Team shared the training with care givers throughout the community and spoke to over 200 older adults in 2013 throughout the La Crosse area about falls & fire prevention.

The La Crosse Fire Department and NFPA is committed to helping communities reduce fire and fall injuries and deaths among older adults.



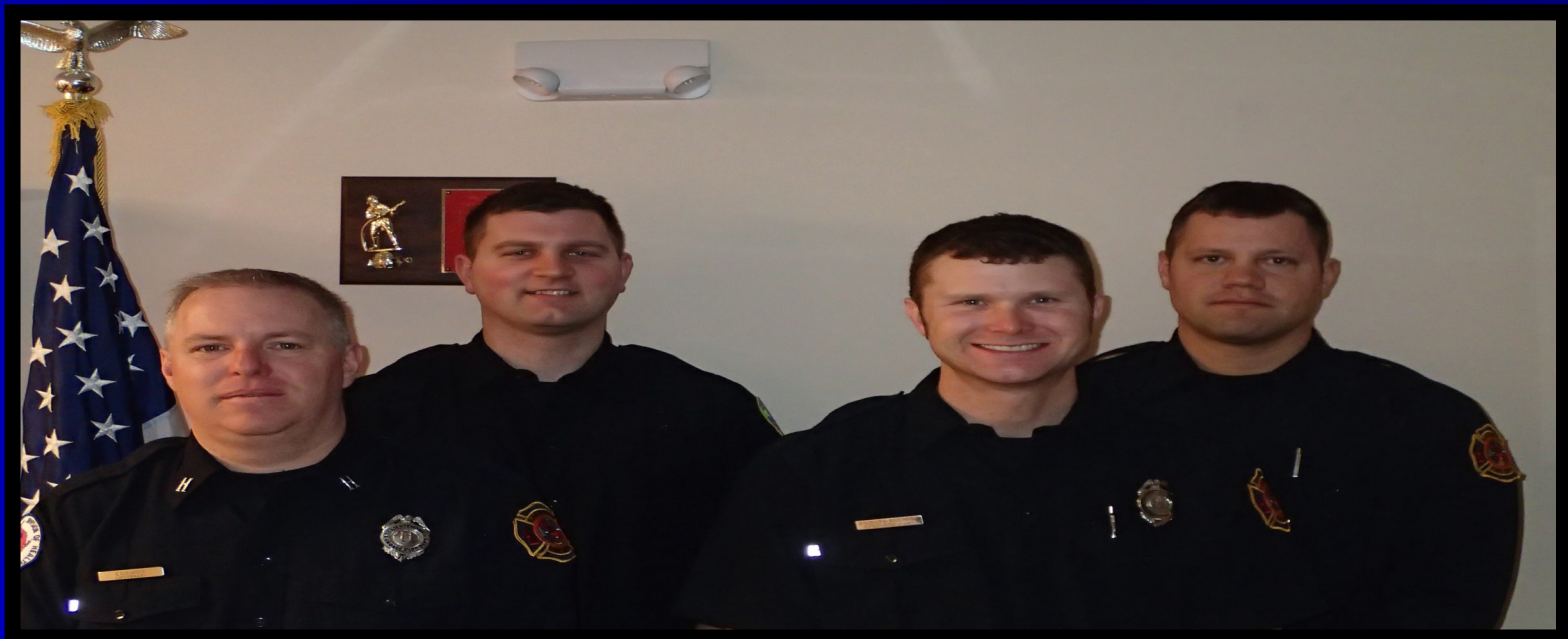
# Serving Our Country and Community



We honor the following firefighters for protecting our nation and our local community:

In order from left to right:

1. Kyle Soden- US Army Reserve, 397<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Headquarters
2. Tyrel Middlestaedt- Wisconsin Air National Guard, 128<sup>th</sup> Refueling Wing
3. Brad Alexander- Marine Air Wing Support Squadron, Unit 471
4. Richard Brunoni- US Navy Reserve, Amphibious Construction Battalion 2





# La Crosse Fire Depart-





# and its Community

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**Division Chief of Training**

**Greg Temp**

[tempg@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:tempg@cityoflacrosse.org)

# Training

The La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau would like to present a review of the training accomplished by fire department members in 2013. As always, the success of the training year will be determined by our success at emergency scenes.

I would like to take a moment to thank all personnel who helped present training to staff throughout 2013 and to all personnel who attended our training sessions in 2013. Your hard work, dedication, and commitment are the reasons that we are successful as a fire department.

Training will continue to be a focus for the La Crosse Fire Department in 2014. It builds the confidence and the competence that our firefighters need to operate at any emergency scene.

## TRAINING HOURS COMPLETED IN 2013

The La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau works to provide a variety of training for its staff. Various instructors help deliver this training throughout the year. The Training Bureau counts on La Crosse Fire Department staff as well as outside instructors to help provide specialized training to our firefighters on many different subjects.

In 2013 the total hours of training completed by La Crosse Fire Department members totaled **26,510** hours. These hours of training include fire suppression, rescue, emergency medical services, administrative, prevention, and inspection. It also includes other specialized training such as hazardous materials, water rescue, technical rescue, auto extrication, tactical emergency medicine and others.

When the total hours are averaged by the number of La Crosse Fire Department staff attending classes in 2013 it averages out to **279** hours of training provided to each member for the year. The Training Bureau has a benchmark of providing **20** hours of training each month per staff member. This average was met in 2013 with each personnel averaging over **23** hours of training per month. The Training Bureau as well as La Crosse Fire Department staff believes training is vital to help protect the residents and visitors to the City of La Crosse and strives to schedule and deliver the training needed to La Crosse Fire Department staff.

The La Crosse Fire Department responded to **5,016** calls in 2013. This statistic alone shows the need for La Crosse Fire Department staff to be trained on a variety of subjects so they can be relied upon in the field to assist and help on any emergency that arises. An array of classes and trainings are taught by a number of instructors. This helps La Crosse Fire Department staff maintain a high degree of professionalism when responding.

## **Listed below are some of the 2013 data on the classes presented.**

- **334**-The total number of specific training/classes delivered in 2013 can be broken down by categories.
- **2,498** - This is the overall number of trainings/classes presented in 2013. These classes ranged from 1 to 30 students per class.
- **10,997** - This is the total number of students that participated in the classes/trainings delivered in 2013.
- **87** - The total number of La Crosse Fire Department instructors used in 2013
- **7** - The total number of outside instructors utilized by the Training Bureau in 2013.
- **4,645** - This figure represents the total number of instructor hours generated in 2013 by La Crosse Fire Department staff and outside instructors while involved in presenting training.
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## TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS OF 2013

**High-Rise Firefighting** – In 2013 training on high-rise firefighting operations was presented to LCFD staff by members of the Denver Fire Department. A high rise presents unique challenges to firefighters in the event of a fire. Tactics for high rise incidents were presented and the students were given a chance to demonstrate these tactics at buildings operated by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse Housing Authority, and the City of La Crosse.

**Airport Disaster Drill** - A-shift personnel participated in the semi-annual airport disaster drill with La Crosse Airport Fire personnel. This was an excellent drill for a low frequency/high risk event.

**Probationary Firefighter Program** - The La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau developed and implemented a Probationary Firefighter Program. The program teaches the skills necessary to be a La Crosse firefighter and evaluates firefighter competence in each skill.

**Company Officer** - The La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau delivered training developed specifically for Company Officers. Training focused on using smoke conditions as an indicator of future fire behavior.

**Minimum Company Standards** - The La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau developed and delivered Minimum Company Standard training. The training is used to evaluate the effectiveness of individual companies.

**Vehicle Operations** - Safe and effective operation of our vehicles is a high priority for the La Crosse Fire Department. Training was conducted on pump operations, aerial operations, and driving in 2013. Training was also conducted specific to Quint 2. Quint 2 is a 100 foot aerial platform that was purchased in the summer of 2013.

**EMT Refresher** - The La Crosse Fire Department completed its required semi-annual EMT refresher.

**Tactical Emergency Medicine** - The La Crosse Fire Department partnered with the La Crosse Police Department to form a Tactical Emergency Medical Team. The Tactical Emergency Medical Team provides medical support to the Police Department's Emergency Response Team. Initial training was conducted in the fall of 2013. The team is now operational.

**CPR-Health Care Provider** - All staff participated and completed required CPR recertification in 2013. This class covered Adult, Child and Infant CPR as well as AED usage.

**Fire Ground Operations** - La Crosse Fire Department staff participated in numerous training sessions on fire ground operations in acquired structures. Live fire training was included in these training sessions. Thank you to Dahl Ford, Western Technical College and Pointe West Investments for providing buildings for training. 2013 was a successful year for the La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau. The Training Bureau works to ensure each member of the La Crosse Fire Department receives the necessary training to be a professional, successful firefighter that can be relied on at a moment notice to rescue, protect or treat the citizens and visitors of the City of La Crosse.

### Other Training Given

- Fire Department Instructor's Conference
- Officer Leadership
- State Arson Conference
- State Inspection Conference
- EMS Leadership
- Bloodborne Pathogen
- HIPAA
- Active Shooter
- Health Risk Assessments
- Spirometry
- Risk Assessment
- Annual Hearing examinations
- WI Hazardous Materials Conference
- WI TEMS Conference





# LCFD Inspection and Arson Bureau

The Fire Inspection/Arson Bureau and Fire Suppression Division performed the required number of fire inspections per Wisconsin Administrative Code. These inspections were done on a quarterly or semi-annually basis and fulfilled the requirement for the 2% dues reimbursement to the city.

**Division Chief of Inspection Craig Snyder**  
*snyderc@cityoflacrosse.org*

The Inspection/Arson Bureau, along with the Fire Suppression Division, started our Fire Prevention Programs for all public and parochial elementary schools in the La Crosse School District on September 23, 2013 and concluded on

October 18, 2013. Over 4700 children were shown that they could make a difference by preventing fires and thus save lives.

As in the past, four firefighters from each platoon were selected to teach a specific grade level program on fire safety. These 12 educators were trained on what fire safety measures to speak on and also on how to get the messages out so that the younger children would better understand them. Barb Glomstad, Administrative Assistant, assisted with teaching responsibilities at the schools.

With over 4,700 students in public and parochial elementary schools, it is an impossible task for our division to present all of the Fire Prevention Programs to the schools by ourselves. The cooperation of the shift Fire Fighters and their respective Division Chiefs have made this task manageable. We would like to thank them for their professionalism and enthusiasm for the La Crosse school children and the community. A special thank you goes to the following fire fighters/educators who stepped forward to assist us with this most worthwhile project: Captain Dan Skiles, Captain Dave Schneider, Captain Jeff Schott, Engineer Todd Koch, and Firefighter's Nick Meinertz, Jim Hillcoat, Jesse Walters, Aubrey Wesley, Shane Trussoni, Adam Foley, David Duchrow, Jon Kochie and Administrative Assistant Barb Glomstad.

On October 5, 2013 the Fire Department held its 29<sup>th</sup> annual Open House at Fire Station #3. Over 700 people visited the Fire Station. Tours of the Station were conducted and many questions were answered about the Fire Department and Fire Safety. The Fire Safety House along with the Kitchen Fire Safety Trailer was on display for fire safety demonstrations.

The Open House was a success. We would like to thank the people who helped us make this possible: Festival Foods for donating the donuts, Pepsi-Cola Co. for donating their products, Kwik Trip for the donuts and milk, Subway for donating a 6' sub to the Station, Batteries Plus, and Wisconsin Safe Kids for donating their time and materials.

Along with our annual Fire Prevention activities in 2013, the La Crosse Fire Prevention Bureau added a new Kitchen Fire Safety Trailer to our program. This trailer was made possible through grants from The Franke Foundation and the La Crosse Community Foundation.

The purpose of the trailer is to provide viewers a "live" look at the dangers of a kitchen fire involving grease and water. Kitchen fires again topped the national list of all residential fires in 2013 and our new trailer is an invaluable tool to teach both residents and visitors to La Crosse the dangers of leaving a stove unattended. The La Crosse Fire Department would like to thank the Franke Foundation and the La Crosse Community Foundation for their generous donation.

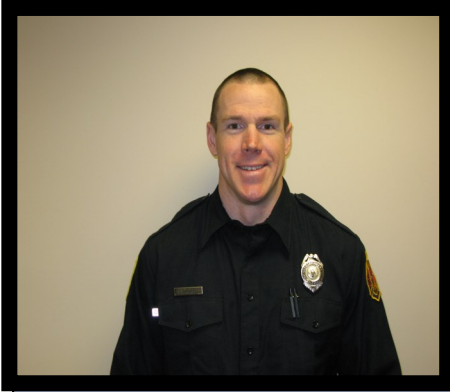
### Total number of inspections

Inspections.....	5955
Violations.....	2636
Corrections.....	1915
Referrals.....	42
Complaints.....	28
Citations.....	0



# EMS: 2013 AT A GLANCE

The La Crosse Fire Department has been providing emergency medical services (EMS) to the City of La Crosse since 1975. The department is currently licensed with the State of Wisconsin as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Non-Transport emergency medical service. The department has 8 front-line apparatus and 2 reserve apparatus, all of which are fully equipped and capable of responding to all medical emergencies 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.



**EMS Trainer Jim Hillcoat**

[hillcoatj@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:hillcoatj@cityoflacrosse.org)

In 2013, the department completed a transitional emergency medical technician refresher course. Completion of the transitional refresher means that the department's EMTs are now aligned with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians standard of care. 2013 was a year in which our department's EMS service has seen more improvements and progression than any other year in the history of our EMS delivery. The following are the highlights and some statistics from 2013.

- Completion of transitional EMT refresher required for license renewal for the 2014-2016 licensing period. LCFD EMTs are now aligned with the National Registry Standard of Care.
- 8 of the department's automated external defibrillators were replaced through capital improvement funds.
- New and upgraded patient care protocols were adopted by the department in cooperation with our new medical director, Dr. Chris Eberlein of Gundersen Health. The new protocols provide our EMTs the ability to provide all treatments and procedures in the State of Wisconsin EMT scope of practice. Training and skills competencies were completed, resulting in the addition of two new medications and two new procedures to LCFD EMS capability.
- The department was accepted into the State of Wisconsin Department of Health's pilot program which will allow EMTs to carry and administer Narcan, which is a drug vital to reversing effects of narcotic overdoses. The drug will be available to LCFD EMTs by February 1st of 2014 following the completion of training and skills verification required by the state EMS office.
- 6 of the department's EMTs and Paramedics completed a 40 hour tactical EMS course (TEMS). The department will begin providing TEMS to the La Crosse Police Department ERT (Emergency Response Team) following the completion of training with LCPD in 2014. This program will provide LCPD with immediate medical care and first aid in dangerous situations ERT encounters such as active shooter incidents, stand-offs, etc. This La Crosse TEMS unit will operate up to Advanced Life Support Protocol
- The City of La Crosse emergency medical system continues to prove it's one of the best in regard to cardiac arrest survival rates. In 2013, the department responded to 28 cardiac arrest victims defined as viable patients. 19% of these patients survived with no deficits. This is more than triple the national average of an approximately 6% survival rate. This is a direct result of adequate staffing, rapid response time, training, and having proper equipment.
- In 2013, the department responded to 3,773 emergency medical calls and arrived within 4 minutes 87% of the time.
- 3,321 training hours specifically in emergency medical services.





# LCFD REGIONAL HAZ-MAT TEAM

## Specialized Training in 2013

- Participated in table top training exercise with Monroe County Hazmat Team
- Presentation on response to ammonia emergencies, held at Kwik Trip Industries
- CAMEO Training sponsored by Wisconsin Emergency Management
- Meeting with La Crosse Water Department regarding well house chlorine safety
- Explosives Training and Identification with LAX ERT at the former Guest House Motel
- Wisconsin Association of Hazmat Responders Conference in Wisconsin Dells
- Ethanol emergency response training in Wisconsin Rapids
- Specialized explosives recognition and response training in New Mexico
- Hazardous Materials Technician 40 hour class for new team member
- Regional Team training for unknown chemical identification and tactical chemistry
- Radiation Field Team Training in Manitowoc and Onalaska 12 team members
- Shift competency training for meter operation and hazard classification
- Central High School chemistry lab explosion drill with multiple agency participation
- Hazmat IQ training held at Black River Beach for Core Team and guests
- Delivered hazmat refresher for all shift personnel in October
- Mock meth lab response and identification of unknowns
- Radiation refresher training for core team members provided by Wisconsin Radiological Protection Section



The La Crosse Regional Hazardous Materials Team is a twenty five 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 of 2000. The La Crosse Fire Department has been designated by WEM to become a NIMS Type 2 asset sometime in 2014. The changes will hopefully strengthen the State's response to Hazmat incidents by building a diversified tiered approach. The Team currently provides hazardous materials response for all or parts of nine counties in West Central Wisconsin.

Within this area the team covers 90 miles of the Mississippi River, 287 miles of railroad track, and 121 miles of interstate highway. Employing specialized training and the latest technologies, the team will deploy and perform a systematic risk based assessment regardless of incident scale. Each team member

has at least 72 hours of core team drill per year with standard competency based exercises designed to maintain readiness.

The La Crosse Regional Hazardous Materials Team also operates one of two Radiological Field Teams for the Wisconsin Department of Health. The team responds to radiological/nuclear incidents to perform rescue, reconnaissance, mitigation, and sampling operations. The State of Wisconsin provides 100% of the funding for both Radiological and Hazmat Teams. The funding includes worker's compensation and reimbursement for costs incurred during a response when there is no responsible party.



**Capt. Jeff Schott, Team Leader**  
schottj@cityoflacrosse.org

## HAZ-MAT Responses in 2013

- Air monitoring after chemical fires
- Unknown odor will illness
- Chemical odor in apartment building
- Liquid nitrogen cylinder leak
- Stand by for explosive flash powder
- Unknown odor with meth lab
- Unknown substance on envelope
- Sulfuric acid spill
- Recovered dentation cord
- Tug boat in roller gate
- Diversion and clean up anti-freeze and oil
- Meth lab standby with air monitoring
- Use of PID at arson investigation
- Leaking industrial liquid nitrogen tank
- Abandon meth lab with exposure
- Leaking LPG cylinder
- Meth lab explosion victim in ER
- Muriatic acid release
- Sodium hyper chlorite leak in pool room



# LCFD URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM



**Lt. Frank Devine, Team Leader**  
[devinef@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:devinef@cityoflacrosse.org)

The US&R Team of the La Crosse Fire Department is made up of 18 core team members and 7 additional department members who are trained above and beyond ordinary firefighting skills, to respond to emergencies related to rescues of a technical nature. The Team is capable of responding locally and regionally to structural collapse, major extrication, confined space, trench, and high and low angle rescue incidents for Urban Search and Rescue purposes. Of the 25 trained members, 16 are also members of Wisconsin Task Force 1 (WI-TF1) Urban Search & Rescue Team, working under Wisconsin Emergency Management. These members, along with other full time firefighters from throughout the state, are highly trained to respond and support overwhelmed communities after, or during large scale disasters. This team is logistically capable of being completely self-sufficient for a minimum of 72 hours, including food, fuel, and lodging. All costs related to WI-TF1 are covered by WEM through Homeland Security Grants.

Over the past 9 years, the LCFD US&R Team has secured over 1 million dollars in specialized equipment and related training from Homeland Security funding and other Federal grant sources. This equipment and training has proven extremely beneficial to the Citizens and Fire Fighters of La Crosse and for surrounding areas requesting Mutual Aid related to Technical / Urban Search and Rescue emergencies.

The La Crosse Fire Department US&R Team is a dedicated group of professionals that strive to be better trained so that when called upon for an emergency of a technical nature they will be prepared, and so that they can continue to be a valuable asset to the

department, and to the citizens of La Crosse and surrounding region.

## 2013 Training included

- Structural Collapse Rescue Specialist
- Confined Space Rescue Technician
- High and Low Angle Rope Rescue Technician
- Trench Rescue Operations
- Bridge worker rescue with WI-DOT
- Rope Rescue Level 1 and 2
- Rope skills evaluation testing
- Other related topics including: US&R Leadership, Safety, Logistics, Planning, Wide Area Search, and a 72-hour WI-TF1 deployment exercise in conjunction with the military

## 2013 Responses

- Structural collapse assessment, train vs. building
- Patient evacuation with stokes litter, injured runner on marsh trail
- Injured person on high rise roof, stand by for rope rescue
- High angle rope rescue on Grandad Bluff, pick off
- Night search and evacuation of lost hikers in Hixon Forest
- Low angle rope rescue of injured person on Grandad Bluff
- Low angle rope rescue of injured person from Miller Bluff
- High angle rescue on Cliffwood Bluff, pick off
- Low angle rescue set up and standby, I-90



# Water Rescue Team

The La Crosse Fire Department serves their community and the surrounding area with an 18 person unit that specializes in different techniques of water and ice rescue.

The waters that flow through the Coulee Region has dynamic features that produce dangerous situations. Some of these situations are swift water, flooding, and thin ice. The Water Rescue Team participated in over 400 hours training in 2013 to better serve our community.

The Water Rescue Team also assists with the training of other members of the La Crosse Fire Department. This cross training allows for rapid response to safely rescue and render aid to victims involved in water related emergencies.

**2013 produced 19 water related calls; of these calls, 4 calls were search for a body or body recovery.** Other calls included an overturned commercial vessel and private pleasure crafts having operational difficulty.

The Water Rescue Team continues to advance in both training and response. This would not be possible without the support of management and the cooperation of all fire department personnel.



**Capt. Travis George, Team Leader**  
[georget@cityofflacrosse.org](mailto:georget@cityofflacrosse.org)

## Advanced training for 2013:

- Ice Rescue/ Open Water Rescue/ Swift Water Rescue
- Medical care for victims in water
- Tug/barge familiarity and safety
- Underwater Search and Recovery (underwater camera)
- Dry Land Access Vehicle operations
- River familiarization and navigation
- Tug and Barge response with Brennan Industries
- Rapid Deployment Craft-Rescues and operations
- Advanced Boat operations

