

# La Crosse Fire Department

## 2019 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.



Firefighters visit Providence Academy during Fire Prevention Week.

## 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.



LCFD taking part in the City of La Crosse Street Department's "Touch-A-Truck" event.



# Table of Contents

## La Crosse Fire Department 2019 Annual Community Report

Division of Administration .....	4-9
Letter from Chief Ken Gilliam.....	4-5
Accreditation.....	6
Personnel Changes.....	7
Organizational Chart.....	8-9
Division of Training & Professional Standards.....	10-11
Division of Community Risk Management.....	12-15
Fire Prevention and Community Risk Education .....	13
Building Inspections and Code Enforcement .....	14
Fire Investigations .....	15
Division of Fire and Rescue Operations.....	16-25
Emergency Medical Services.....	18-19
Hazardous Materials.....	20
Urban Search & Rescue.....	21
Water/Ice/Dive Rescue.....	22
Tactical EMS.....	23
Facilities, Fleet, & Logistics.....	24-25
A Look at 2019.....	26-27
Honoring Firefighters.....	28
Firefighter of the Year.....	29



## Letter from Fire Chief Ken Gilliam

To the Citizens and Community Leaders of La Crosse,

I write this 2019 review during the spring of 2020, while we are all dealing with an expanding national and global health pandemic. While the future is always uncertain, my taking this opportunity to look backwards has provided me comfort in knowing that the dedicated men and women of the La Crosse Fire Department will undoubtedly continue to rise to the occasion, no matter what crisis is thrown at them as public servants.

**We began 2019** with a significant focus on the final steps of our re-accreditation process. We presented our **2019-2023 Strategic Plan** and updated **Standards of Cover** to our Common Council and the community. The Strategic Plan included our updates to the Department's **Mission and Values Statements**, and clearly outlined numerous goals in six broad initiatives that will guide us and give us organizational focus into the future.

**The accreditation process** led to a team of fire service peers arriving in May to validate our continuous quality improvement efforts. The Peer Assessment Team recommended our accreditation renewal and provided us with additional recommendations for continued improvement goals. In August, several members of our organization appeared before the **Commission on Fire Accreditation International** in Atlanta to receive a final Commission review. We were successfully and unanimously re-accredited by the Commissioners. Every member of our organization and many of our stakeholders had a hand in our collective success, and I can't thank you all enough for your continued dedication and support.

Over the course of 2019, we experienced **retirements and many promotional changes**. Our relatively young department continues to rise in the ranks to fill the voids created by the retirements of many long-time leaders. Of special note, as our members continue to **plant roots in the community**, we welcomed a significant number of new extended LCFD family members (13 new babies) in 2019. Congratulations to those families!

As outlined by this report, we continue to adjust **our organizational structure**. Throughout 2019 and moving into 2020, we completed the final steps of a two-year organizational realignment that I believe provides us with a broader capacity for more consistent management, personnel accountability, ongoing leadership development, and expansion of our **"all-hazards" response capabilities**. These divisional and positional alignments are outlined throughout this report and I appreciate the patience and support of all involved.



**A summary of other key highlights for 2019** are as follows:

- Members completed more than **30,000 total hours** of documented training time, to include new Company Officer, Driver/Operator, and Firefighter training and certification requirements.
- Responded to an **increased annual incident volume** (over 6800 incidents).
- Experienced no civilian fire casualties in 2019.
- Realized cardiac arrest survival rates that far exceed national averages.
- Expanded and strengthened our **Paramedic First Response** program.
- Created an EMS Coordinator position through assignment to existing staff.
- Expanded our **Community Risk Management Division** to include two new Code Enforcement Technician positions and a new Community Risk Educator position.
- Successfully concluded negotiations with the **Town of Medary** to secure a 30-year contract for Fire and EMS service coverage for all of Medary.
- Strengthened protection plans for existing service areas on French Island.
- Began providing continuous **ARFF firefighter staffing** at the La Crosse Airport.
- Completed transition to new self-contained breathing apparatus.
- Completed transition of inspections and occupancy data to the EnerGov system.
- Significant progress on our policy document conversion to our Knowledge Management System.
- Completed projects on **personnel crisis information** collection for all members and line-of-duty-fatality plans for the organization.
- **Strengthened Mutual-Aid relationships** and statewide Mutual-Aid Box Alarm System plans.

The accomplishments listed throughout this report are only a sampling of the many exceptional things going on at the LCFD. As anyone can see, we do more than just fight fires. **We are 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 for our people, and we train hard and work hard to make sure that everyone gets home safe.

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

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Gilliam".

Ken Gilliam



# Accreditation

## Administrative Services & Community Relations Captain Lance Tryggestad



2019 was a significant year for the La Crosse Fire Department, wherein we achieved our first re-accreditation campaign with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). **The re-accreditation process** is rigorous and began in 2014, when we achieved international accreditation with the CFAI. From that point forward, we have engaged in a continuous self-assessment process that measures our organizational outcomes comparatively with industry best practices in all divisions and programs of our department.

**We continuously analyze** multiple data sets and adjust our service delivery models to best serve our community. In addition to tracking our **incident response times** which are important, we also **track incident outcomes** which are very important to the community as a whole. Likewise, we track outcomes in the areas of **public education, internal training, fire prevention and investigations, building inspections, and code enforcement** to support our community risk reduction strategies. As all of these programs are assessed, the data supports our ongoing mission to earn the community's trust by making best-practice decisions based on facts and continuous quality assessment of our efforts.

Over the last two years, we successfully completed an in-depth **internal review** of our department. We also engaged **external community stakeholders** in focus groups to gain their feedback on what we do well, and more importantly, to identify feedback on areas where we can improve. This feedback information was compiled and included in our report to the CFAI, and was foundationally embedded in our **five-year strategic plan** that guides our actions on a daily basis.

At the end of our 2014-2019 accreditation cycle, we compiled five-years worth of program and process data and presented our assessment and future plans to the CFAI. The Commission subsequently sent a five-person **Peer Review Team** made up of members from other accredited fire departments in effort to review, verify, and validate our assessments and accomplishments.

The entire five-year process culminated with representatives of our team appearing in front of the 11-member CFAI for a final review and a unanimous validation that the La Crosse Fire Department remains as one of CFAI's 270 internationally accredited fire service organizations.

**Currently, only 11% of the U.S. population is protected by an accredited Fire Service agency, and we are proud to say we are one of them!**



Captain Tryggestad, Chief Gilliam, and Chief Murphy in Atlanta during August of 2019, proudly accepting our 2019-2024 Accreditation renewal on behalf of the entire La Crosse Fire Department.

# 2019 Personnel Changes

## Promotions and Appointments

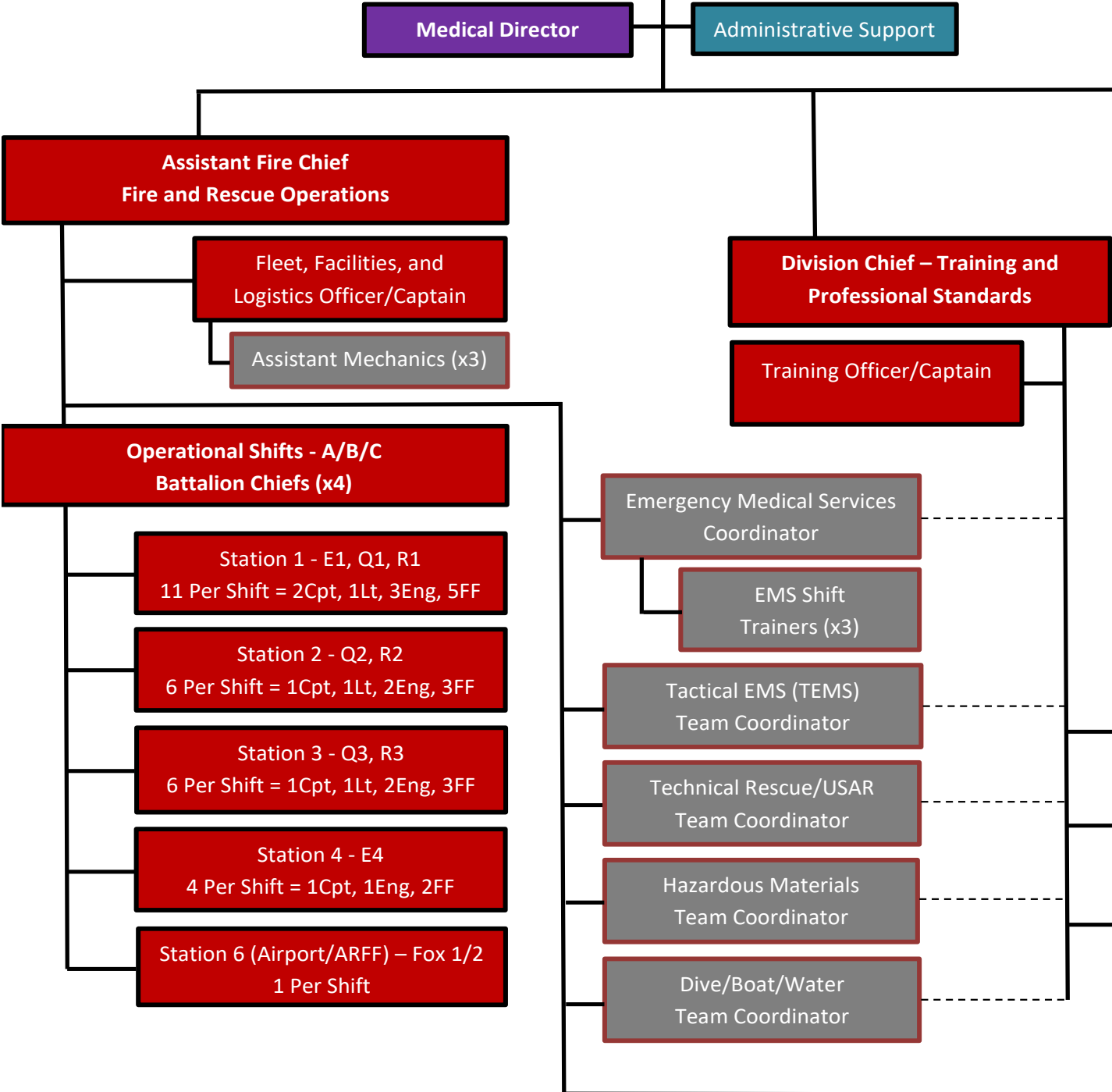
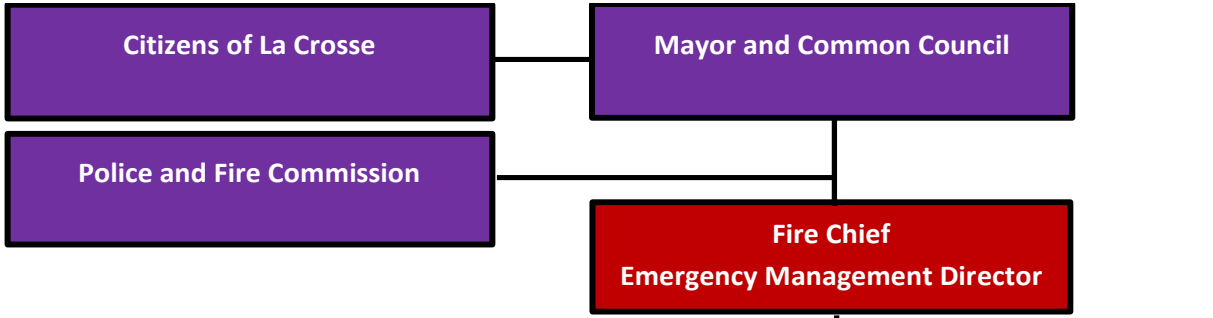
Todd Adams	Division Chief of Training and Professional Standards	July 12, 2019
Bee Xiong	Battalion Chief	December 13, 2019
Aaron Bolstad	Captain of Training	October 22, 2019
Lance Tryggestad	Captain of Admin Tech Services & Community Relations	March 21, 2019
Bill Treanor	Captain of Fleet, Facilities, and Logistics Management	March 21, 2019
Steve Cash	Captain of Inspection	February 14, 2019
Shane Trussoni	Captain	December 13, 2019
Jesse Walters	Captain	October 28, 2019
Adam Markert	Captain	March 31, 2019
Nick Meinertz	Captain	March 20, 2019
John Bayer	Captain	March 18, 2019
Brandon Scharmer	EMS Trainer	December 18, 2019
Kevin Bulman	Assistant Mechanic	December 18, 2019
Matt Miller	Lieutenant	December 16, 2019
Jordan Shackleton	Lieutenant	December 13, 2019
Jon Kochie	Lieutenant	December 15, 2019
Cody Allen	Engineer	December 16, 2019
Joel Schmit	Engineer	December 17, 2019

## New Hires

Kevin Bulman	Firefighter	March 25, 2019
Steven McCauley	Firefighter	March 25, 2019
Craig Scheel	Firefighter	March 25, 2019
Pat Corran	Community Risk Educator	August 1, 2019
Andrew Barnhardt	Firefighter	August 5, 2019
Sarah Rafajko	Code Enforcement Technician	August 20, 2019
Brian Everson	Firefighter	October 28, 2019

## Retirements

Tom Wallerich	31+ years of service	December 10, 2019
Steven Dickow	30+ years of service	February 28, 2019
Kevin Dohlby	29+ years of service	February 14, 2019
Kevin Kappauf	26+ years of service	February 19, 2019







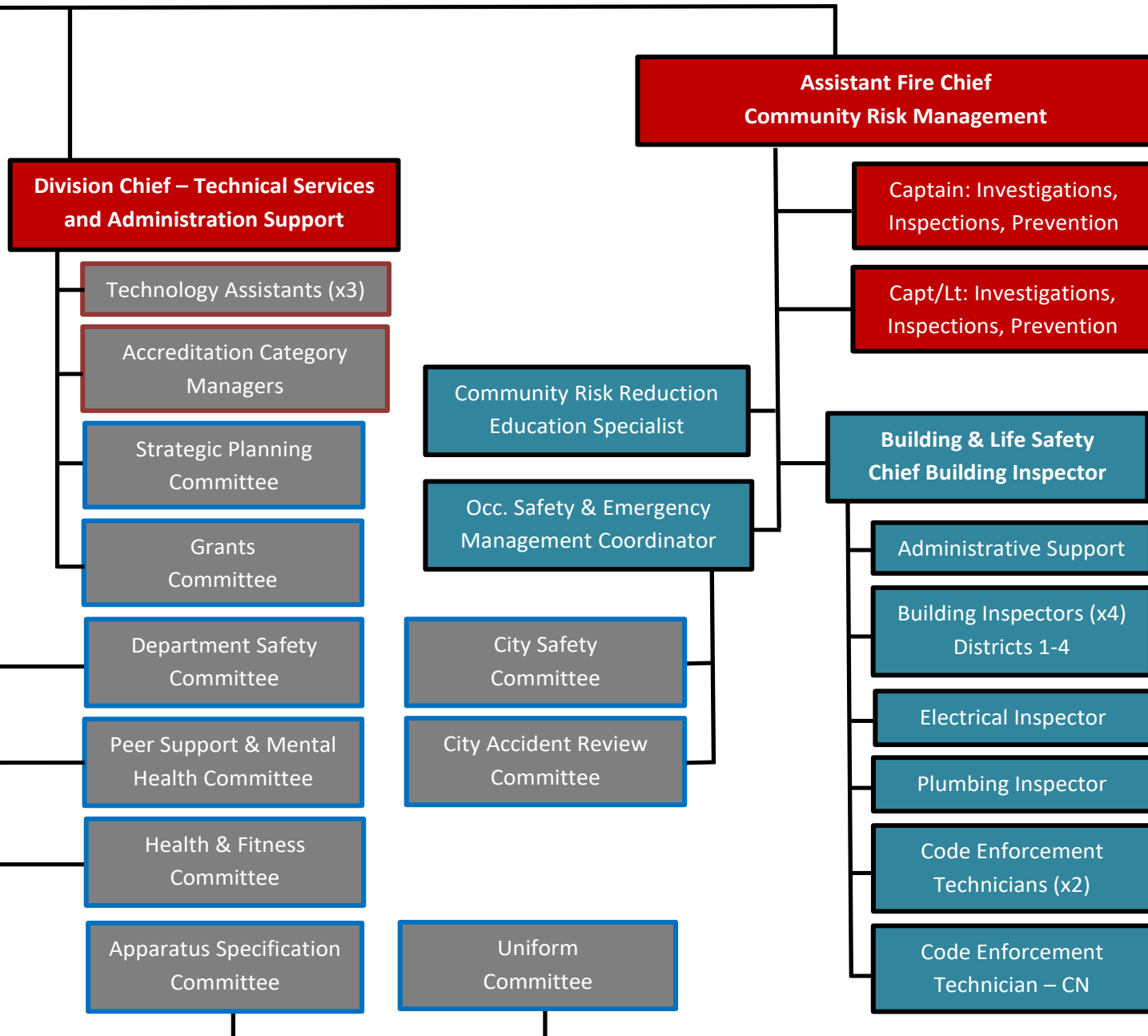
# La Crosse Fire Department Organizational Chart 2020

Color Coding

Sworn Uniformed Staff

Civilian Staff

Dual-Staffed Positions = NO FTE.



# Division of Training and Professional Standards

## Division Chief Todd Adams



The Division of Training and Professional Standards is responsible for training the men and women of the La Crosse Fire Department to be **confident, competent, and professional emergency service providers** for our community. While serving the citizens, businesses, and visitors of La Crosse and the greater La Crosse area, we strive to exceed our service delivery goals by setting high standards for our professional development training, through the actions of our personnel, and through the professionalism we display.

Training and Professional Standards will always be a focus of the La Crosse Fire Department. Our Division continuously works to plan, provide and manage training programs and opportunities for the 98 sworn members and 12 civilian members of our organization. Throughout 2019, the department completed **more than 30,000 total hours of occupationally related training**. These hours of training included topics on firefighting skills, vehicle extrication, emergency medical services, emergency rescue, mental health awareness, administrative and leadership development, fire prevention, fire inspection and community risk reduction strategies. The cumulative hours also include specialized training within in the disciplines of technical rescue, hazardous materials, water and dive rescue, and tactical emergency medicine.

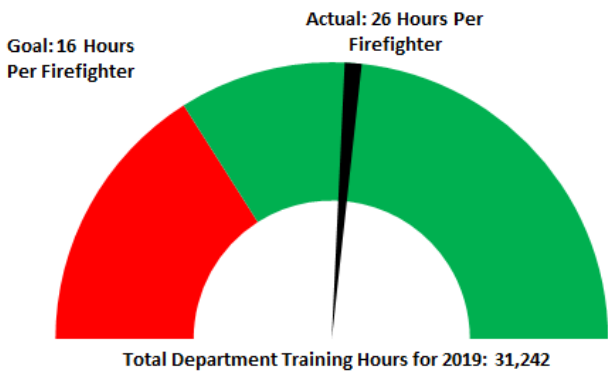
The department cannot complete more than 30,000 hours of training annually without the full participation and dedication of department personnel and our internal and external instructors. As a training team, we facilitate a **comprehensive training program** that helps us develop our professional responders. In 2019, our Division utilized 59 department personnel as internal instructors and utilized an additional 12 external instructors to exceed our goals. We also met NFPA, DSPPS, OSHA and ISO required training topics which necessitate a minimum of 20-hours of training per month, per individual. These multiple-discipline training requirements were met and exceeded in 2019, with personnel completing an average of 26-hours of training per month.

Our personnel were granted training access to many unique locations throughout the city and region. These training opportunities are invaluable for our personnel, as it allows us to create realistic training scenarios. These opportunities would not be possible if it were not for the support of other city departments and many external stakeholders. I would like to say **“thank you”** to the personnel at the city shops for helping with vehicle movement and assistance with maintaining our drill site; to all of the city departments that allow us access to their facilities; to the city Building Rehab Program; and to our external stakeholders at Gundersen, Mayo, Western Technical College, University of Wisconsin, Don’s Towing, Mathy Construction, Dairyland Power, Three Sixty Real Estate, Hess Excavating, J.F. Brennan/Brennan Marine, BNSF Railroad, Excel Energy, and all other community partners for providing us with unique training opportunities. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Last year was certainly a busy year for our Division, from transitions in personnel, to managing **ever-increasing training and certification requirements**. Our goal for 2020 is to continue to provide training and professional development that supports all of our ranks. We will continue to work with our regional partners to foster great relationships and to ensure that our personnel are well-trained, professional, and prepared to meet the mission of the organization.

# 2019 Training Highlights

## Total Training Hours Per Firefighter in 2019



- **3,799:** Total hours invested in the inspection of personal protective equipment, apparatus, and life safety equipment.
- **3,000:** Total number of classes delivered.
- **300:** Total number of training topics delivered.
- **59:** Total number of La Crosse Fire Department personnel utilized as instructors.
- **12:** Total number of external instructors utilized to teach specialty topics.



Photographs are from various training exercises throughout 2019.  
Live fire training, vehicle extrication, fire behavior flow-path, ARFF, and search and rescue.

# Division of Community Risk Management

## Assistant Fire Chief Craig Snyder

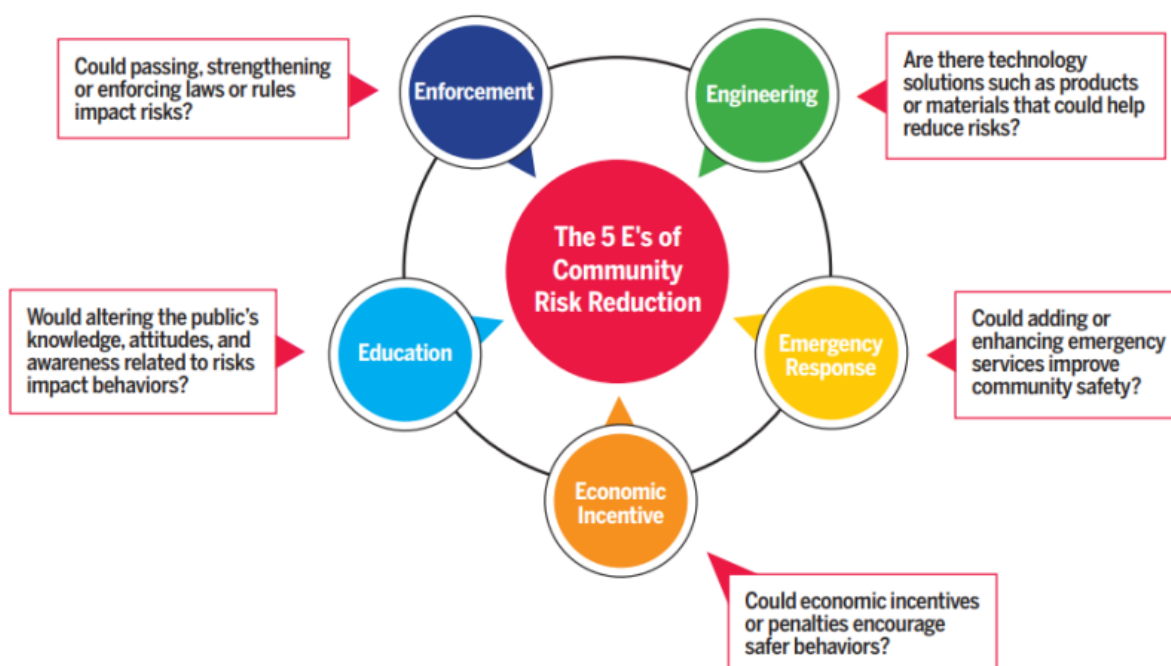


Community Risk Management is the process of identifying and prioritizing local risks, followed by the integrated and strategic investment of resources to reduce their occurrence and impact. In other words, it is a process to help communities determine what their risks are and then to develop a plan to reduce the risks viewed as high priorities.

Some of the responsibilities of the Division of Community Risk Management include fire and building inspections, fire prevention and suppression inspections, life safety code inspections, code enforcement, plan reviews, public education, and fire investigations. The department has started a **comprehensive Community Risk Reduction Assessment** in the fall of 2019, with the anticipated completion of the assessment in the fall of 2020 as outlined in the department's Strategic Plan. 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 among community stakeholders, study and assess risks and implement strategies to reduce risks on a strategically prioritized basis, and to ensure that all citizens, property owners, projects, and developments are risk informed.

The department added a **new "Community Risk Reduction Educator"** position to our division's roster in August of 2019. We welcomed Pat Corran to the La Crosse Fire Department where he will be engaging and working directly with the citizens and stakeholders of the La Crosse community regarding community risk reduction strategies.

This Educator position will also be strategically involved in the department's public education and outreach efforts, risk education programming, and fire prevention and life safety programming as both a project manager and an educator.



# Division of Community Risk Management

## Community Risk Educator Pat Corran

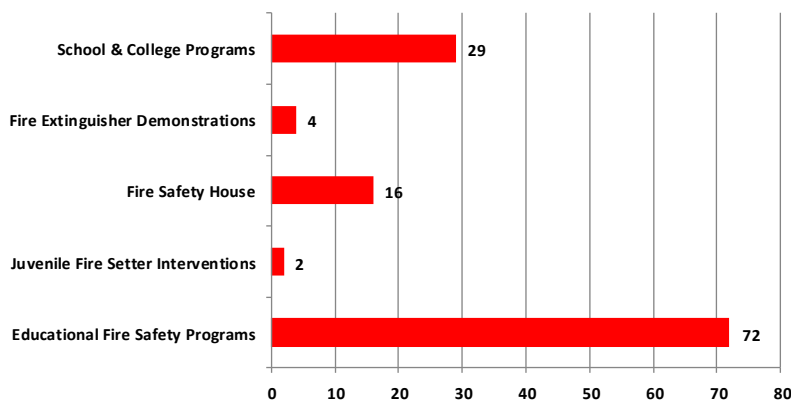


Throughout September and October, the Division of Community Risk Management collaborated with Division of Fire and Rescue Operations personnel to present our “Fire Prevention Week” **educational programs for all public and parochial elementary schools in the La Crosse School District**. Our 2019 program theme was **“Not every hero wears a cape. Plan and practice your escape!”**. This campaign recognizes the everyday people who motivate their households to develop and practice a home fire escape plan. These seemingly basic behaviors can have a life-saving impact. Our educational campaign focuses on what a home escape plan entails and stresses the value of practicing the plan with every member of the home.

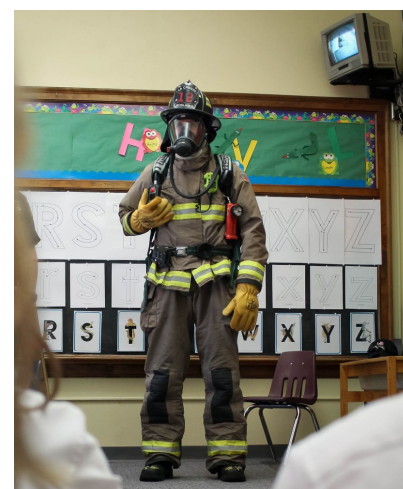
A home escape plan includes having **working smoke alarms** on every level of the home, in every bedroom, and near all sleeping areas. It also includes planning for **two ways out** of every room, usually a clear path to a door and a window, and the need for an **outside meeting place** that’s a safe distance from the home (like a tree, light pole, or mailbox).

Home escape plans should be practiced twice-per-year by all members of the household. **Annually, the La Crosse Fire Department educates over 8,000 children and adults** in La Crosse and our surrounding communities through multiple safety programs. We present a focused and passionate strategy of consistent information and educational programs, that support fire prevention, life safety, and community risk reduction strategies.

### 2019 Fire Safety & Education Programs



Pictures are from various schools during “Fire Prevention Week” in September and October of 2019.



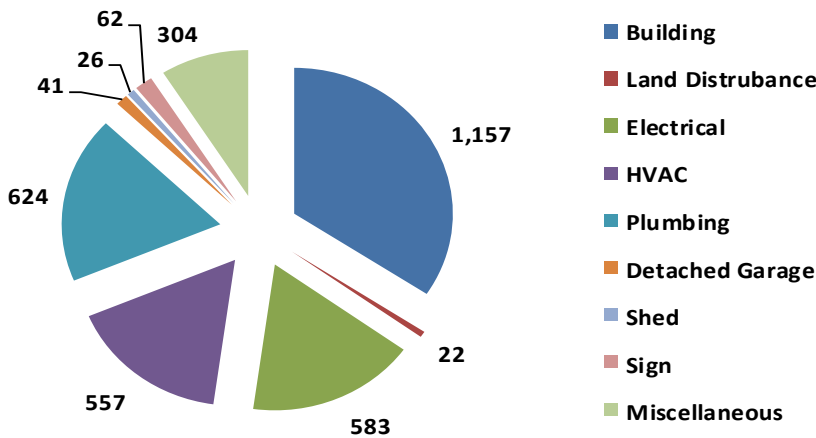
# Division of Community Risk Management

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; residential rental inspection operations; 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.

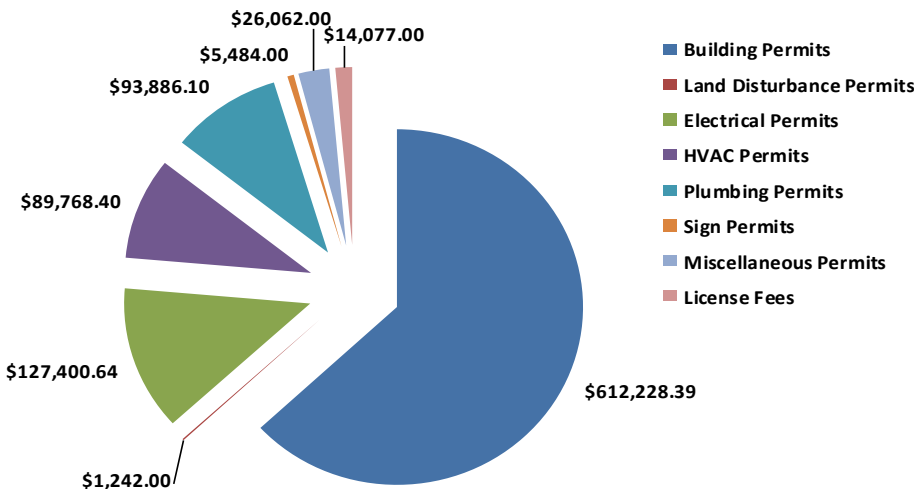
## 2019 Permit Summary



## In 2019, the Division's Building Inspectors and Code Enforcement Techs managed:

- **38** registered vacant buildings
- Maintenance enforcement activities increasing from 3,558 incidents in 2018 to **5,432** in 2019
- Above-average compliance rate decreasing from 94.49% in 2018 to **93.63%** in 2019
- **39** construction additions to single-family dwellings
- **66** construction alterations to commercial buildings
- **54** decks constructed
- **47** garage/utility buildings razed
- **10** commercial structures razed
- **31** residential buildings razed

## 2019 Annual Fee Summary

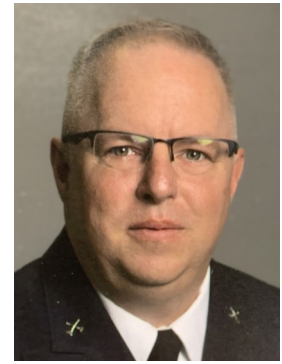




# Division of Community Risk Management

## Fire Investigation

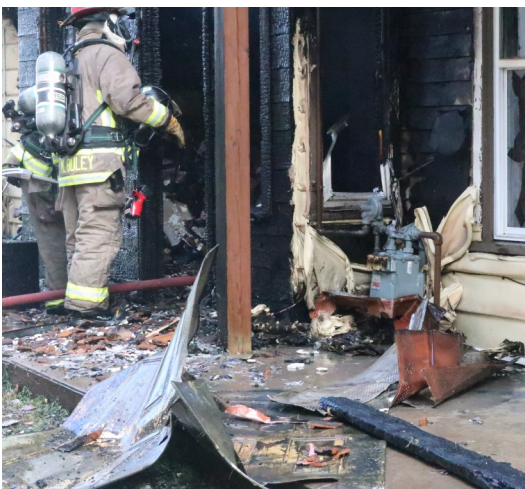
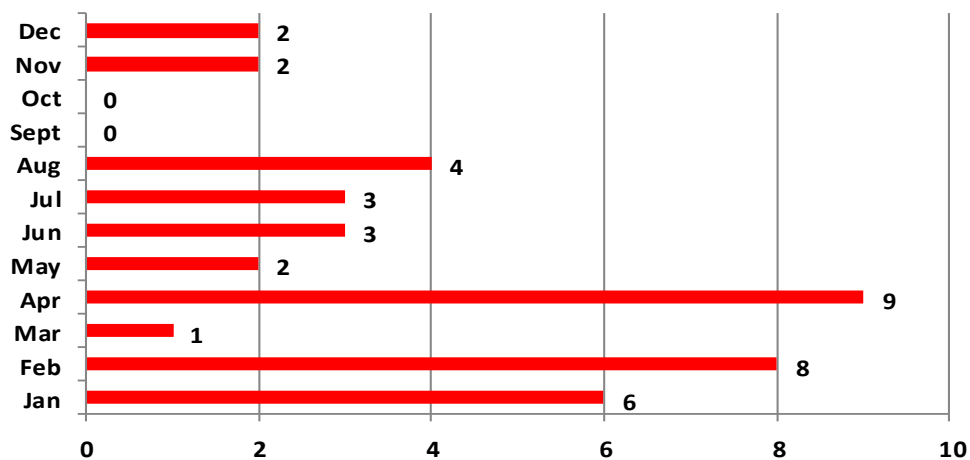
Captains Steve Cash & Kyle Soden



The Division of Community Risk Management’s Fire Investigators were challenged with investigating **40 fire scenes in 2019**. 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).

The designation of “Certified Fire Investigator” takes approximately five years of training, testing, and experience to obtain. Two of our department’s three investigators have reached this certification, and the third is expected to be similarly certified in 2020. This **certification process validates significant training and experience**, and these fire investigators are a valuable asset to our community. They work to determine fire cause and origin, and investigate suspicious fires and arson cases. The division will be working with the Division of Training and Professional Standards in 2020 to develop a training plan for future and additional fire investigators.

### 2019 Fires Investigated by Month



Actual fire investigation photos from an incident that occurred in 2019.

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

## Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Murphy



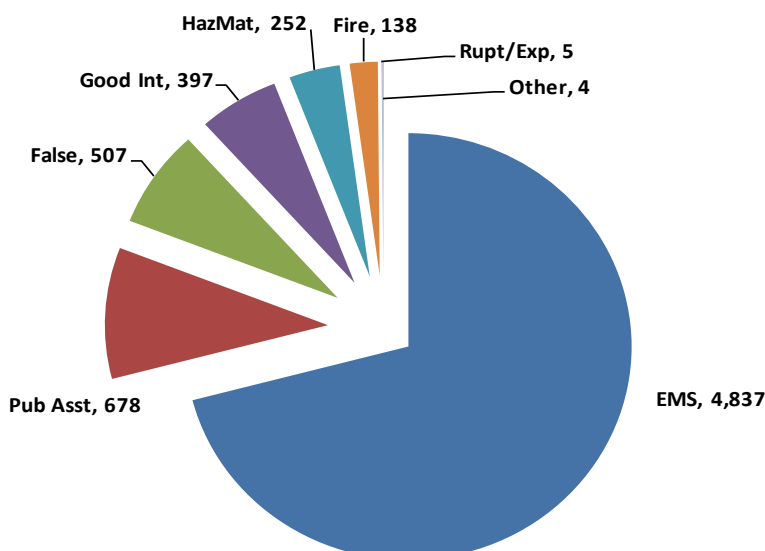
The department began 2019 with an above-average number of structure fires, which kept our crews very busy throughout the coldest days of the winter. Temperatures dropped below -20°F (plus the windchill factor) and made fire suppression efforts difficult. This extended period of **extremely cold temperatures** caused numerous equipment failures to include significant damage to the department’s Mobile Air Trailer. By the end of February, we had fought 23 significant structure fires. By the end of 2019, we responded to a total of 138 fire incidents and 507 false alarm/good intent incidents.

When they are not responding to emergency incidents, **Operations Division personnel are focused** on training, building inspections, station and equipment maintenance, public education, and other required duties. Five new probationary firefighters were hired in 2019 to replace long-term employees who retired, and a significant amount of additional on-the-job training occurred in order to get our newest firefighters up to speed during their first year on the job.

In 2019, we started staffing the **La Crosse Airport Fire Station** with a Firefighter/EMT on-duty 24/7/365. This relationship with Airport Emergency Services Operations should provide Airport stakeholders peace of mind in knowing that a professionally trained Firefighter/EMT is on duty in the event of an fire, rescue, or medical emergency on Airport property.

**New Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus** (SCBA) arrived early in the year. This new protective equipment allows firefighters to work longer on a single bottle of air, and some of the new SCBAs have integrated thermal imaging camera technology built into the SCBA itself. These new SCBAs are safer, and safety is part of our mission as a department.

The department’s Apparatus Committee also focused on safety when they completed specifications for a **new Fire Engine** purchased in 2019. This Engine will arrive in 2020, replacing and combining a 23-year-old Engine and a 35-year-old Water Tender. Our organization is constantly adapting to changes in building construction and identifying new hazards in our community. We are fortunate to work in a community that supports the Fire Department by providing the resources we need to meet our **“All-Hazards Response” strategies and mission.**



2019 YTD Response By Incident Type	
Incident Type	Incident Responses
EMS	4,837
Good Int	397
False	507
Fire	138
Pub Asst	678
HazMat	252
Other	4
Rupt/Exp	5
<b>YTD Total</b>	<b>6,818</b>





Above: Incident photographs from January 2019

Right: Captain Elsen providing training on new SCBA in spring 2019

Below: Assistant Chief Murphy presenting an award to Battalion Chief Tom Wallerich at Tom's retirement ceremony in December 2019



# Emergency Medical Services

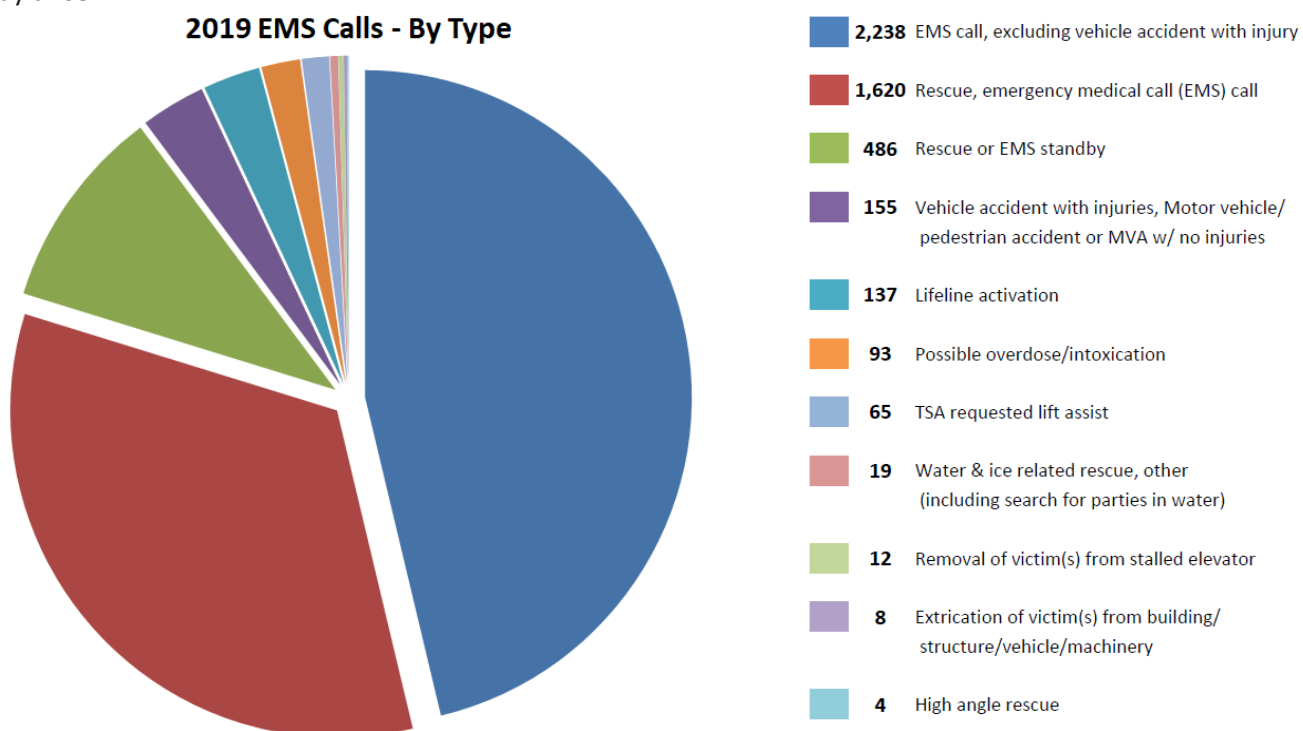
## Captain/EMS Coordinator Jim Hillcoat



The La Crosse Fire Department (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 and most up to date pre-hospital medical care possible. We continue to see increased demand for emergency medical services. In 2019, the LCFD responded to 4,837 emergency medical and medical assistance calls. The department has eight front-line apparatus and three in reserve. All apparatus are equipped at minimum with basic life support equipment.

2019 was the **first full year of Providing Paramedic-level services** to the community and service area. The department upgraded from the EMT level service to Paramedic level service in September of 2018. The **LCFD Paramedic First Response** program managed in partnership with Gundersen Tri-State Ambulance (TSA) and Gundersen Health has been nothing short of successful. In a time where there is a national Paramedic shortage, we have bolstered our EMS system’s ability to meet high demand and have dramatically improved the working relationship between Gundersen TSA and the La Crosse Fire Department with this successful collaboration. LCFD Paramedics provided invasive advanced life support interventions to critical patients 417 times in 2019 in an effort to save lives in the community.

**Quality training and a robust quality assurance program** ensures that the LCFD is providing the best emergency medical service possible. Department EMTs and Paramedics complete on-duty “skills training” every month as provided by the EMS Coordinator and the department’s EMS Trainers. To support the partnership, LCFD Paramedics also work 24-hours of Paramedic ambulance duty each month within the Gundersen TSA system for increased skills opportunity and as a requirement of their LCFD “Paramedic status” while working within the LCFD. We have made significant progress to align training and service with Gundersen TSA. A joint quality assurance committee with members from both Gundersen TSA and the LCFD meet monthly with our Medical Director, Dr. Chris Eberlein, to review EMS calls and address any issues that may arise.





La Crosse Fire Department responded to a shooting incident along with Tri-State Ambulance and the City of La Crosse Police Department. (*La Crosse Tribune*)

**Expanding advanced life support Paramedic services** capability within the LCFD is a goal within our strategic plan. In 2019, we made great progress towards that goal. The department started 2019 with six credentialed Paramedics and one apparatus equipped to provide Paramedic service. Thanks to capital equipment funding and a grant award, the department was able to purchase two more cardiac monitor/auto external defibrillators (AEDs) in 2019, and to date, the department has twelve credentialed Paramedics and three apparatus equipped to provide Paramedic-level service. This additional life-saving equipment and the increased numbers of our personnel certified as Paramedics significantly advances us towards our strategic goals of consistent Paramedic-level service and staffing at all four City of La Crosse fire stations.

The EMS program continues to yield **cardiac arrest survival rates** well above the national average. This is in large part due to adequate staffing, training, and equipment. In 2019, the department responded to 54 victims of cardiac arrest. Of those 54 incidents, 60% of the cardiac arrest victims who had witnessed arrests and who were shocked with an AED were discharged from the hospital with no deficits.

The **opioid epidemic continues** to challenge our EMS system. The department responded to 82 overdose incidents in 2019 and there was a very low mortality rate due to the response of our EMS system. We continue to partner with the regional Alliance to Heal coalition and our community risk reduction strategies continue to support efforts to manage this crisis.



Pictured left: Zoll cardiac monitor, we now have one at each station



Pictured right: Annual Heroes & Survivors Celebration hosted by Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association, Seven Rivers Chapter (WI)

**We look forward to another successful year in 2020, as we continue to focus on EMS continuous quality improvement, personnel training and certifications, quality emergency medical services, and ongoing expansion of our Paramedic First Response program.**

# 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 WI Emergency Management (WEM) in July 2000. The department has been designated by WEM as a National Incident Management System (NIMS) “Type 2” asset for the state, and we have achieved “Type 1” capabilities for our local area responses. 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 Radiological and HazMat teams. The funding includes worker’s compensation and reimbursement for costs incurred during responses with no responsible party.

In 2019, our team responded to 19 calls for service and we participated in numerous training opportunities. In addition to monthly internal training, the team continues to **develop relationships** with private industry and outside response agencies. Team members provided technician-level training for City Brewery and operations-level refresher training to Onalaska and Holmen Fire Departments. Training and exercises involved the Flammable Liquid Tank Truck and Foam School, the Advanced HazMat IQ Course, and the HazMat IQ Air Monitoring Course. Our team was also able to fund a number of the training opportunities through an HMEP Grant.

### 2019 Response Highlights outside the City limits:

- 5/31 Gas leak in Town of Medary
- 10/15 Chemical delivery truck accident/chemical spill, Town of Alma
- 12/6 Semi-trailer accident with diesel spill in the Town of the Bangor

### 2019 Response Highlights with the City of La Crosse:

- 3/2 Ammonia leak & mitigation control
- 3/26 Investigation of suspicious package
- 3/26 Gas leak/flaring operations of underground liquid propane tanks
- 4/22 Air monitoring and analysis/field sample & identification
- 4/22 Toxic chemical release/air monitoring & analysis
- 7/3 Air monitoring/identify unknown hazardous material
- 7/6 Large commercial oxygen tank leak
- 7/9 Natural gas line break/gas clamp operation
- 7/23 Natural gas line break/gas clamp operation
- 7/26 Clandestine lab investigation/air monitoring & analysis
- 7/30 Natural gas line break/gas clamp operation
- 8/5 Natural gas line break/gas clamp operation
- 8/9 Natural gas line break/gas clamp operation
- 8/18 Air monitoring & analysis/field sample & identification
- 9/23 Natural gas line break/gas clamp operation
- 11/1 Sulfuric acid release



# Urban Search and Rescue

## Captain John Bayer



The department's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team is an 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 wide-area searches, high-angle rope rescue, confined space rescue, trench rescue, structural collapse, extrication and patient disentanglement, and flood and swift water rescue.

Of our 23 team personnel, 14 are also members of the **Wisconsin Task Force 1 (WI-TF1) Urban Search and Rescue Team**, working under the direction of WEM. Our members work in partnership with over 200 other similarly-qualified firefighters from departments across the state, to deliver a highly trained and heavily equipped state USAR response team. The WI-TF1 team responds to Wisconsin communities who are overwhelmed by large-scale disasters or incidents that exceed local response capacity. The team is also part of a state-to-state emergency network that supports national disaster management. This team is logistically capable of being completely self-sufficient with food, fuel, and shelter for a minimum of 72-hours. All costs related to the WI-TF1 are covered by the state.

The LCFD USAR Team continues its **partnership** with Dairyland Power and serves as their dedicated rescue resource for their Genoa facility. This contractual agreement provides our team with unique training opportunities within their facilities. This includes confined space training inside large furnaces and rope rescue training on the 500-foot-tall smoke stack.

Along with the training and responding to emergency technical rescue incidents, our team provides personnel on stand-by at **special events** like the EPIC Bike Race and the Hixon 25k and 50k. These types of events are becoming more popular, with hundreds of people competing while biking and running through the Hixon Forest and the Human Powered Trails. Participants often become injured in remote parts of the trails that requires our USAR Team members to use specialized equipment and skills to locate, treat, and transport the injured racers.

Our abilities and resources continue to be **challenged with the growth** of the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, Human Powered Trails, and the addition of the Town of Medary response district. The team is working with the Parks and Recreation Department and nonprofit groups to develop an Emergency Location Marker system to help aid our response using GPS location. We continue to push ourselves to adapt to an **ever-expanding technical rescue mission**, and we appreciate the community's support of our team and the services that we provide to keep our residents and visitors safe.

### 2019 Response Highlights:

01/08	701 Sumner Street	Body recovery
03/06	619 Copeland Avenue	Vehicle struck building
03/23	Grandad Bluff	Slope evacuation
04/19	Face of Grandad Bluff	Hiker in distress
05/14	171 29 <sup>th</sup> Street South	Slope evacuation
05/26	Hixon Forest-Vista Trail	Slope evacuation
06/10	Base of Grandad Bluff	Slope evacuation



# 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 20-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. Select members of the team are trained in sonar use, boat operations, underwater camera work, ice rescue, and water based EMS.

Across the nation, we are seeing an **increase in the number of water-related calls for service** and the severity of these incidents appears to be increasing as well. The La Crosse region is trending the same, and water-related emergency incidents increased 89% in 2019 as compared to 2018. The Mississippi River was above flood stage (12 feet) for 42 days last spring and the other rivers in the area were also at dangerously high levels. In 2019, ten kayakers were rescued off the La Crosse River, including one incident where six kayakers were saved from a very dangerous situation.

Swiftwater and flooding situations are becoming more prevalent and are opportunities where we plan to increase our department's training and levels of preparedness. In 2019, the department completed **1,984 training hours** in the disciplines of water and ice rescue, boat and sonar operations, and dive rescue to include cross-training non-team members of the department. This cross-training allows for a rapid response to safely rescue and render aid to victims involved in water-related emergencies. One department-wide training area of focus this year was spillway response. The team also conducts full team trainings on a monthly basis. In 2019, our divers conducted **149 dives**, and have recorded 742 total dives since September of 2015.

The team continues to make **great advances in both training and response**. This is possible thanks to the commitment of our team members, LCFD Management, Brennan Marine, AmericInn, Logan High School, UW-L, and the YMCA. We thank them all for their continued support. Our success as a team is directly related, and the community can take pride in knowing that we have a highly successful, well-trained team capable of mitigating water-related emergencies.



- In 2019, the department responded to **17 water-related calls for assistance**, to include these highlights:
- Dispatched for a **person in the water** at the Onalaska spillway. We found a dog caught in the spillway hydraulics and the person out of the water. The deceased dog was recovered, but on this incident we had a "near miss" with one of our firefighters. We identified a training need and developed a training program for all department personnel.
- An **unoccupied, runaway boat** was circling at full throttle and we were able to safely bring the boat under control.
- Effective **swiftwater rescue of six kayakers** in distress on the La Crosse River, after a storm created adverse conditions on an already high and dangerous river.
- Two kayakers were successfully rescued when their **boats capsized** in the La Crosse River and they were found clinging to a downed tree. Engine 4 personnel were assisted by an off-duty La Crosse Police Sergeant who used his personal boat to assist LCFD personnel with the rescue. After the rescue, we recovered their belongings and kayaks.

# 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. We participated in a significant year of training in tactics, maintaining our various medical skills and certifications, and responded to high-threat situations in partnership with the La Crosse Police Department Emergency Response Team (ERT).

In 2019, we had a total of **19 incident callouts**, and participated in more than **50-hours of training per member**. Training hours included a class that specializes in Police K-9 Care. With two dog handler teams on the La Crosse Police Department's ERT and several other K-9 Officers on the Police Department in general, we believe the K-9 emergency medical training to be an important addition to our skills. It also affords the opportunity for our Tactical Medics to provide care for other animals, while serving in both our tactical team roles and our normal Fire/EMS roles. Additionally, some of the other training topics covered this year were:

- **Specialized Rescue Operations**
- **Tactical Combat Casualty Care**
- **Team Movement & Concepts**
- **Injured/Downed Officer Situations**
- **Self-Aid/Buddy Aid for ERT Officers**



*Pictured Above: Active Shooter Training at Logan High School*

*Pictured Left: Active Shooter Training at Gundersen Lutheran*

In 2019, we also achieved the **addition of two new TEMS members**, bringing our team's total back to six members. This better positions our team to meet Police Department callout needs and ensures that we have the necessary TEMS coverage for whatever emergency may arise for the ERT. It also expands the level of knowledge and expertise for our department when we respond to "active threat" situations and creates the opportunity to have more Tactical Medics on duty at any given time.

Thank you for the continued support of all involved with the TEMS Team. We look forward to another year of training progress, advancing our tactical skills, and serving the emergency response needs of the City of La Crosse.

# KNOW YOUR STATION LOCATION

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

**STATION 4:**  
906 GILLETTE ST

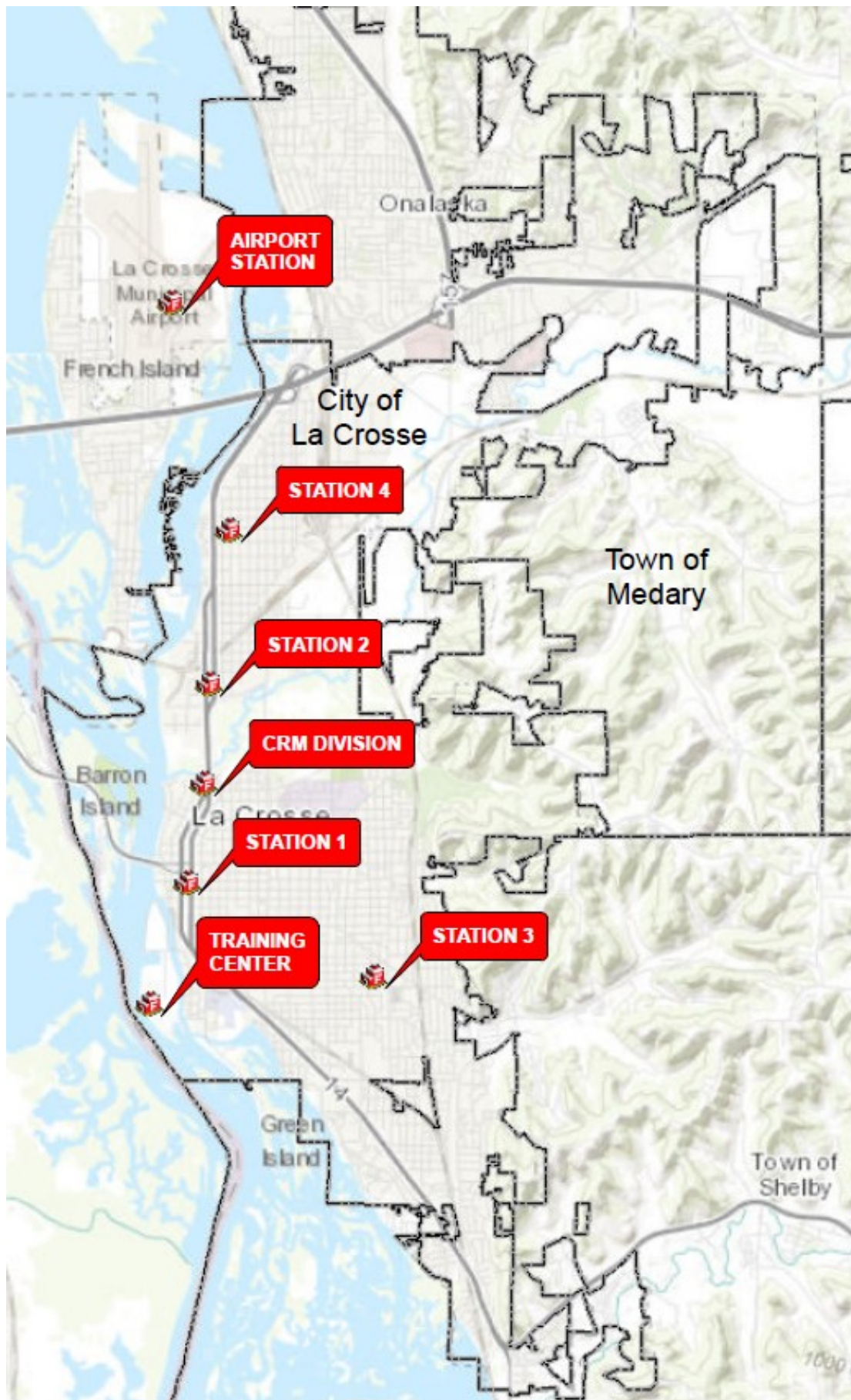
**STATION 2:**  
626 MONITOR ST

**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



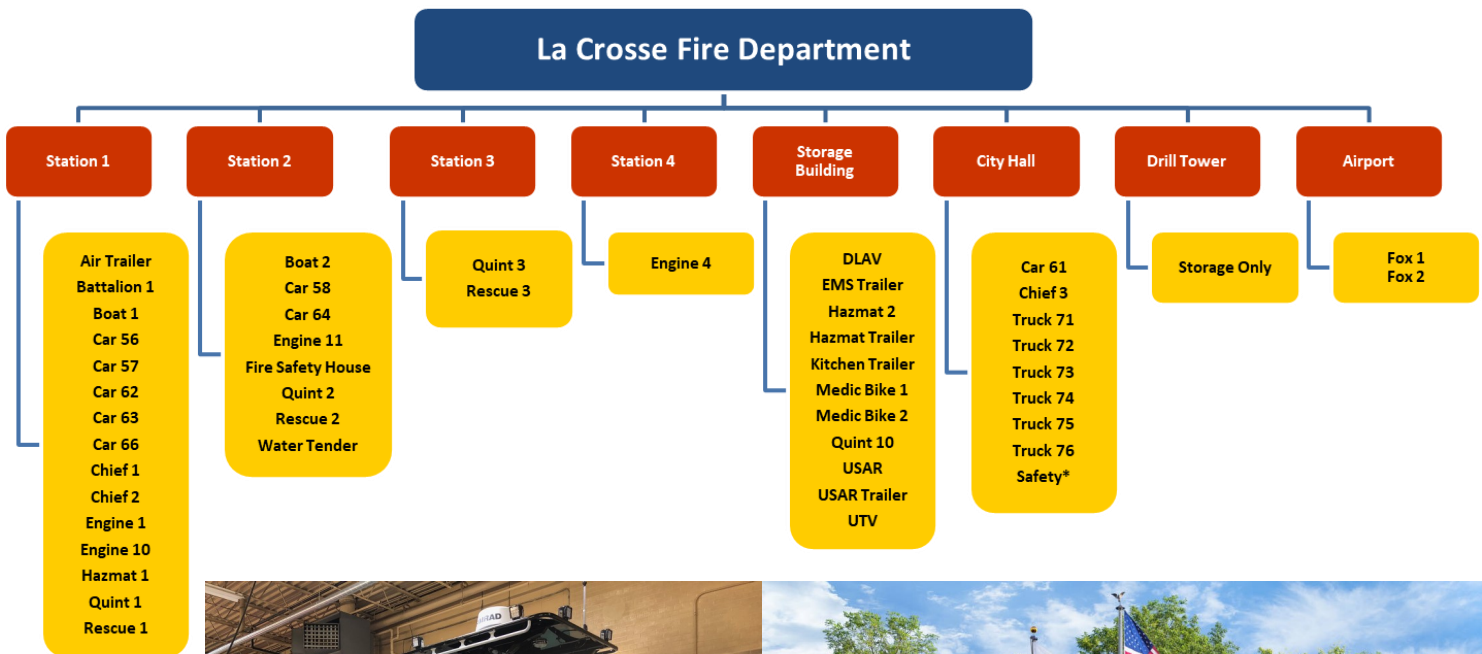


# Fleet, Facilities, and Logistics Officer Captain Bill Treanor



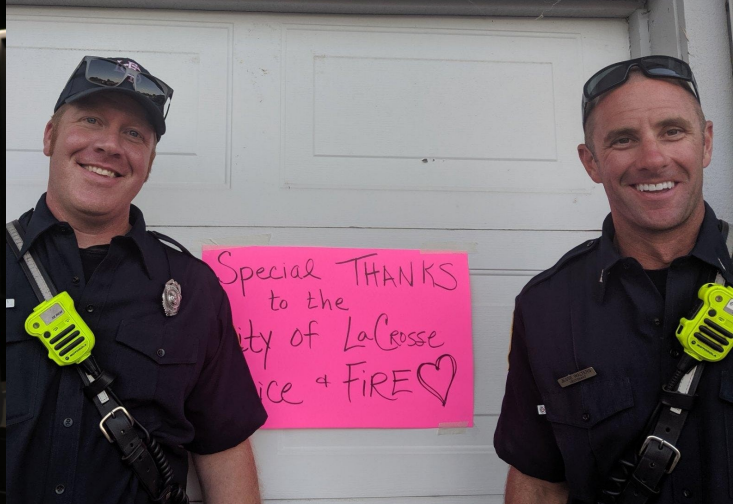
Operating under the department's Division of Operations, the department's Fleet, Facilities, and Logistics (FFL) Officer's responsibilities include coordination of repair and maintenance of fire apparatus and support vehicles, and all of the department facilities. This includes annual maintenance and 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.

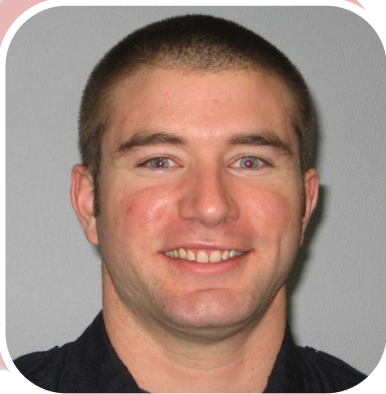
Additionally, the department provides apparatus and equipment maintenance support for vehicles and equipment at other area fire departments. These services are provided on a cost-recovery contractual basis and supports our regional partners with cost-effective maintenance and testing services. We believe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



Captain Bill Treanor - [treanorb@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:treanorb@cityoflacrosse.org)







**Ryan Rushton**

MN National Guard  
C Co 2-211  
Flight Medic



**Andrew Servais**

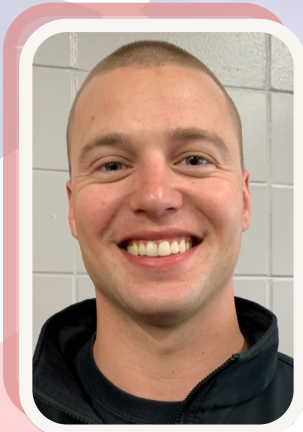
WI Air National Guard  
115th Fighter Wing

# 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**



A shield-shaped logo with a gold border and a red Maltese cross in the center. Below the cross, the word "FIREFIGHTER" is written in large, bold, red letters with a gold outline. Underneath that, "OF THE YEAR" is written in smaller, red letters with a gold outline.

# FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR



# Frank Garritano

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 2019, the organization was pleased to present **Frank Garritano** with this distinguished and well-deserved award.

Firefighter Garritano has been with the La Crosse Fire Department since 2008. He is an EMS Trainer and leader of the department’s Tactical EMS Team. He is also a founding member of the La Crosse Area Professional Firefighter's Pipe & Drum band.

*“I try my hardest on and off duty to reflect the values and morals of the department. I’ve been very fortunate to have great guidance and leadership within the agency itself and my peers.” -Frank Garritano*





City of  
La Crosse Fire  
Department



@laxfd



@lacrossefire



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