

Norfolk Fire Division Annual Report 2021



NORFOLK FIRE DIVISION

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NORFOLK FIRE DIVISION (2021)

The Fire Division ended 2021 healthy and without serious injury to our staff. Serving the citizens of Norfolk and our Rural Fire Protection was delivered at a record level with assistance from all of our mutual aid partners. The following list includes notable activities and accomplishments from this past year.

- 2021 resulted in the highest calls for service in the history of our department dating back to 1884. While COVID-19 calls continued to play a role this is part of a trend being felt across the country in Fire and EMS. The 2,992 calls surpassed the previous record year of 2,647 in 2020.
- During the past year, we had one full time staff member depart from Norfolk Fire Division (NFD) and one added. Fire Chief Scott Cordes was promoted as the City of Norfolk's Public Safety Director/Assistant City Administrator. Chief Cordes served as fire chief for 10 years and did great things for the organization. He continues to play an active role in the success of the City of Norfolk's Public Safety Department in his new role. This position was previously held by former Fire Chief Shane Weidner.
- Following Cordes's departure Norfolk Fire saw the following promotions: Tim Wragge was promoted from assistant chief to fire chief, Trever O'Brien moved from lieutenant of B Shift to assistant chief and Firefighter/Paramedic Brock Soderberg was promoted to B Shift Lieutenant. Chris Kneifl was hired full time status and serves on B Shift.
- Two reserves left the program: Firefighter/Paramedic Netahlya Munn and Firefighter Joe Greenough. The program added Preston Bussey, Michael Cavillo, Sarah Perrigan, Yovani Sanchez, Jonatha Tighe and Shane Weidner.
- Firefighter/Paramedic Bryce Hinrichs returned following a one-year military deployment and resumed his duties on A-Shift.
- After being nominated by FF/Paramedic Bryce Hinrichs, Norfolk Fire and Rescue was the recipient of the Pro Patria Award. This award is presented annually by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) committee to one public sector employer in the state.
- We continue to have members competing in Firefighter Combat Challenges across the country. These individuals have received the highest of awards amongst their peers.
- Fire Marshal Terry Zwiebel and Health Official John Kouba continue to be very active in our community making it safer by the day. In addition, our Administrative Assistant Faythe Petersen has been working above and beyond to handle additional work tasks required to track items pertaining to Covid-19 calls for service.
- Region 11 Emergency Manager Bobbi Risor saw another busy year as stated in her annual report for 2021.
- C-Shift Lieutenant Bob Nelson was chosen as the 2021 Firefighter of the Year. The Norfolk Morning and Noon Optimist Club present this award annually.
- Norfolk Fire and Rescue's Ambulance Committee, with the permission of Norfolk's elected officials, awarded a bid for a new 2022 ambulance that should be completed sometime this coming spring of 2023. This will replace a 2006 unit as planned in our Capital Improvement Program.

The efforts put forth by staff at NFD over the past year have been truly remarkable. The rising call volume has taken a toll on our responders but they just keep bringing the effort and willingness to serve at the highest of levels. This would not be possible without the support of both the Norfolk Mayor and City Council and Norfolk Rural Fire Board. Most importantly, the support of our families keeps us all putting our best foot forward.

Chief Wragge



2021

OPERATIONS

Our operations staff continue to be highly motivated to provide service and protection to the citizens of Norfolk. It was another busy year responding to calls and handling day-to-day operations at Norfolk Fire and Rescue. This is the second year in a row we have had an increase in calls marking the highest call volume in history of the department. Increased call volume and COVID-19 Pandemic continued to bring unique challenges for our responders. Our staff continued to rise to the occasion to find success despite the challenge.

In addition to daily shift training, we are able to incorporate multi-shift trainings throughout the year. Many of these trainings were attended by mutual aid partners. We hosted our second Swift Water Technician Course in Norfolk. This (3) day course was held in May teaching shore support and in water techniques as they both have value in swift water rescue situations. Skills included in the course were evaluation of swift water, throw rope deployment, in-water body maneuvers and utilization of a boat in swift water. As a result, we were able to add fifteen more personnel to our swift water rescue team. We plan to host another course in 2022 and include mutual aid partners.



In August, we hosted an 80-hour Hazmat Technician Certification Course at our training facility. This is an annual course for our personnel, as we serve as the regional Hazmat Team for northeast Nebraska. Four of our division hazmat team attended this training taught by the Nebraska State Fire Marshall Office Training Division. In addition, the on duty shifts assisted and participated each day in training and gained up to 40 hours of refresher training.

In September, we were able to host a training house burn with the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division. This burn took place south of Norfolk. Area departments were able to send members to this burn, which included interior and exterior fire training evolutions. Prior to burning the structure firefighters performed search and rescue training to increase their skills in finding lost or trapped victims in a fire. Structures with unfamiliar layouts create great training opportunities for our firefighters.

Paramedics attended the three day annual refresher training session, at Northeast Community College. Two sessions were held; one in October and one in November. This allows flexibility to the students to attend the twenty four hours of training. We currently have forty Nationally Registered Paramedics and eight EMTs. This is the first time in the history of Norfolk Fire and Rescue that all full time operations staff of three shifts and department chiefs are licensed and registered Paramedics.

As we look back on 2021, it brought its challenges, successes, and made documented cases that will forever be part of the history of this department. From record calls to full operations staff of paramedics, a new fire chief and shift in the ranks. Our responders rose to the challenge and managed to keep themselves safe while providing a high quality of care to the citizens of the City of Norfolk and its surrounding communities when needed.

Assistant Chief Trevor O'Brien

Norfolk Fire Division Annual Hazmat Report for 2021



Photo above from a dry fertilizer truck on fire. Picture shows Norfolk Fire Mutual Aiding Piller Fire on this call

The Norfolk Fire Division responded to seven gas spills, twelve gas leaks, twenty two carbon monoxide detector activations, one fertilizer fire, and thirty two odor investigations. Norfolk Fire Division hosted our annual 40/80-hour Hazmat class in August at the training tower in Norfolk. This is in addition to all the hazmat training done while on duty.

We purchased an Echo View Host that works with our gas monitors. The Echo View Host is pictured below and hooks to our current gas monitors. It shows live readings from the monitors on its display so someone not near the hot zone can monitor activities. Using hazmat grant funds we were able to purchase radios and accessories to use on hazmat calls.



Captain Lannce Grothe

NORFOLK FIRE RESERVES

Norfolk Fire Reserves are a diverse group with different skills that come together for a common purpose to help serve and protect the citizens of Norfolk when called upon. They are compensated based on attendance at training and responses. This year's group has members that are college students, law enforcement officers, custodians, repair technicians, childcare workers, managers, utility workers, mechanics and inspectors. They have a wide range of experience from less than 1 year to over 35 years of service.

The reserves continue to be an extremely vital component of the functionality of the Operations Bureau. Their commitment to training and response is of great value to the citizens of Norfolk. Their support aids in continuing to meet increasing demands for services while maintaining operational costs. This team proved to be a very important component of Norfolk Fire and Rescue during the year of 2021. We leaned on our reserve staff in many situations to help cover a wide variety of situations. Fires, hazmat, back-to-back emergency calls, public relations events or labor-intensive technical rescues may require assistance from our reserve staff.

Five reserves were added in 2021 bringing our current staff to 35. These 5 reserves are working through various tasks including, donning and doffing personal protective equipment, live fire training and other fire ground drills. Upon completion of all requirements, these individuals will be sworn in as Norfolk Fire Reserves.

The reserves train at least twice a month for three hours each session. Due to the Pandemic restrictions in 2020, training was held via video conference. As 2021 progressed COVID 19 restrictions allowed us to start reincorporating traditional in-person trainings. Hands on training is the most beneficial in training fire and rescue responders. The reserve staff adapted to this and took great pride in getting back on the fire training ground motivated.



In addition to monthly trainings, our fire reserves attended annual Tornado Spotter training in March and in May twelve members attend the 84th annual Nebraska State Fire School in Grand Island, Nebraska. Reserve staff participated in introduction to firefighting, forcible entry techniques, agricultural emergencies, live fire training, pump operations, fire investigations and other courses. We also offered a two month Fire Fighter I course, which nine reserves participated in. This course allowed reserve staff to work through a Nebraska State Fire Marshal training course with full time staff and other firefighters improving their firefighting knowledge and skills. Reserve training nights also present great opportunities to work with our surrounding rural fire departments and train together. During the year, we were able to train with Hadar Fire and Rescue improving our Mutual Aid partnership training on rural pump operations.

Though 2021 presented its own challenges here at Norfolk Fire Division, it has been a great year for progress and rewarding in many ways. We have been able to reincorporate many of the training methods we are accustomed to while maintaining the safety of our staff. It is truly amazing to see our full time and part time staff come together and work through all kinds of adverse circumstances throughout the year. This team takes care of each other and everyone that they serve at all costs. We are excited and look forward to what 2022 will bring.

Assistant Chief Trever O'Brien

FIRE INSPECTIONS AND PREVENTION

The Fire Marshal's office continued with another busy year catching up with pandemic created issues. The inspections conducted are closer to being in line with past years. The amount of new construction continues to keep this office busy. We had an increase of nearly 100 more inspections than last year which with the issues we are dealing with in the pandemic, this is a near normal year.

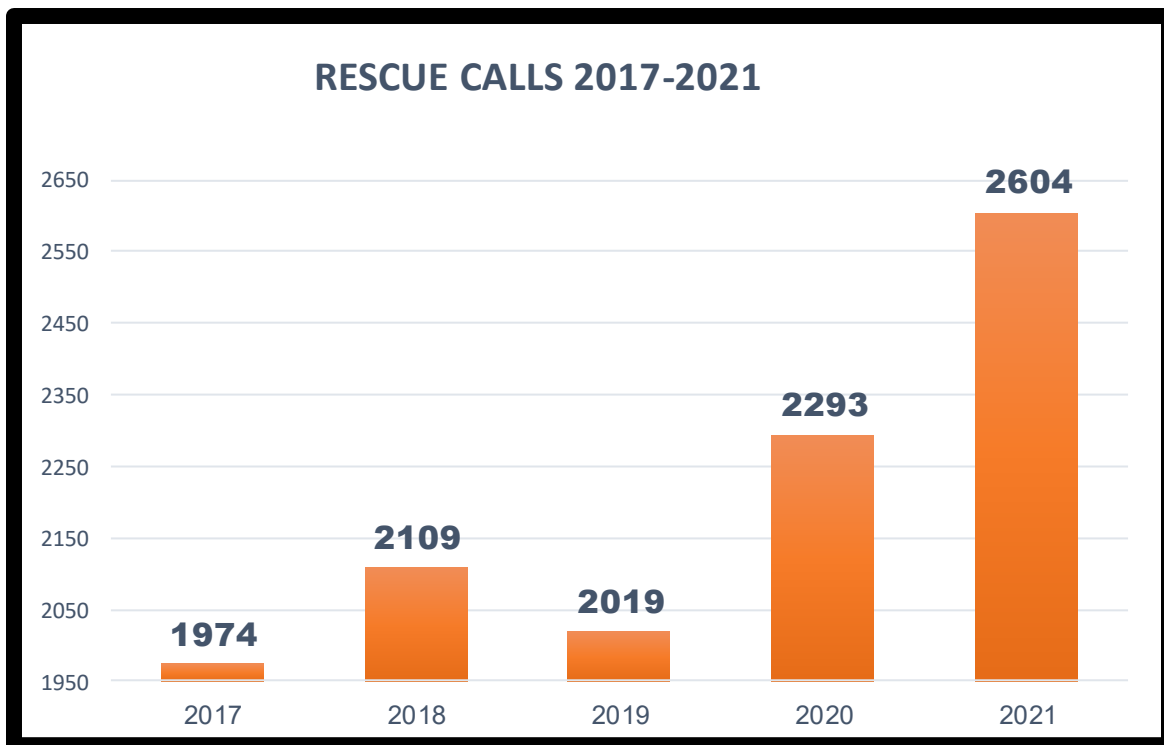
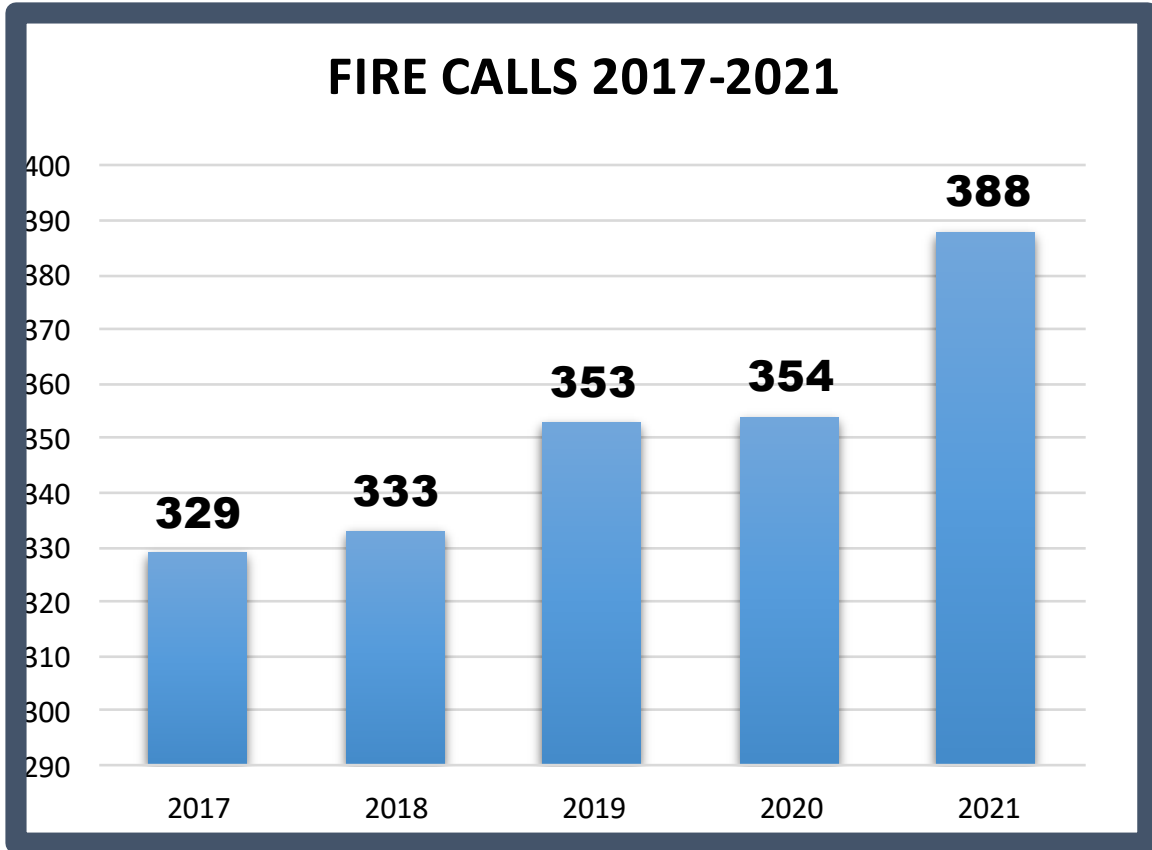
The permanent relocation of the Firefighter/Inspectors to Fire Station #2 is a big boost to this program. The inspectors are getting a good number of preplans done with the fire crews and also observations of the new construction. The Inspectors are able see firsthand how a structure will react to fire conditions.

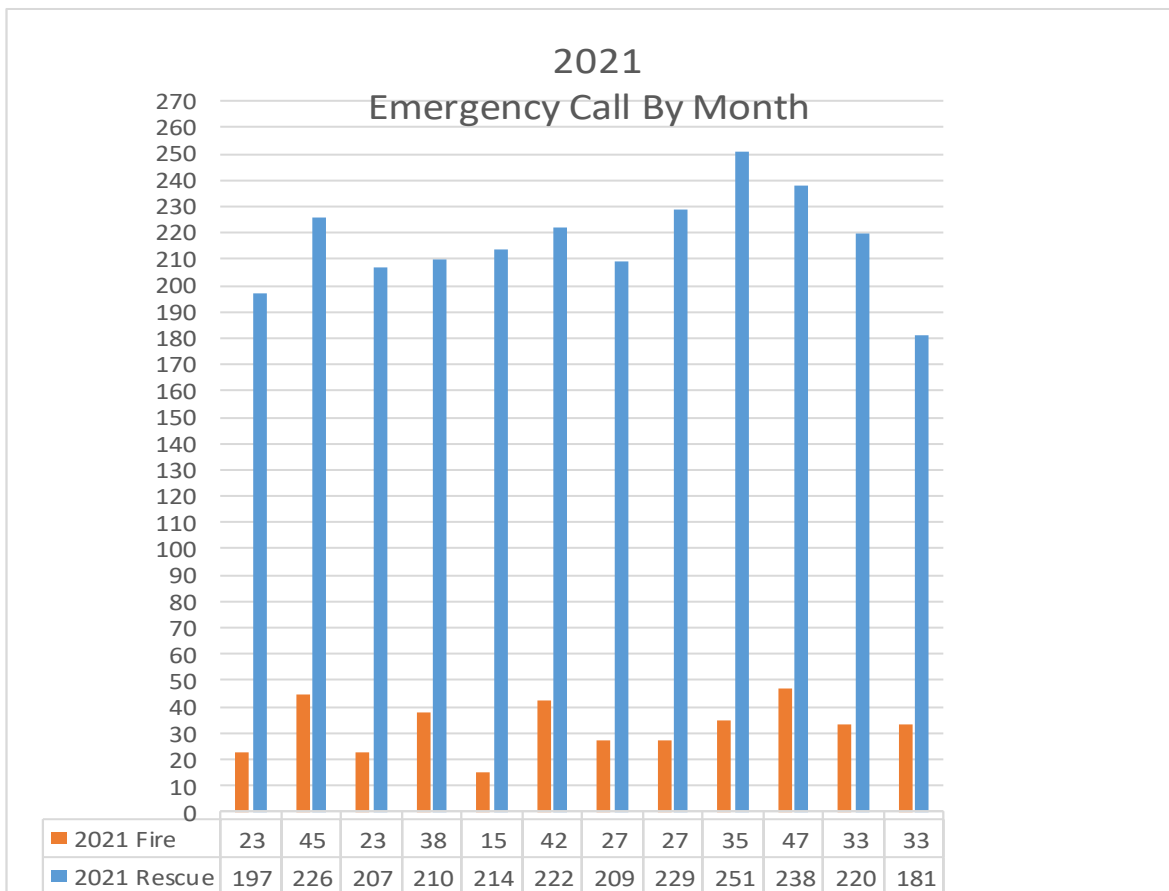
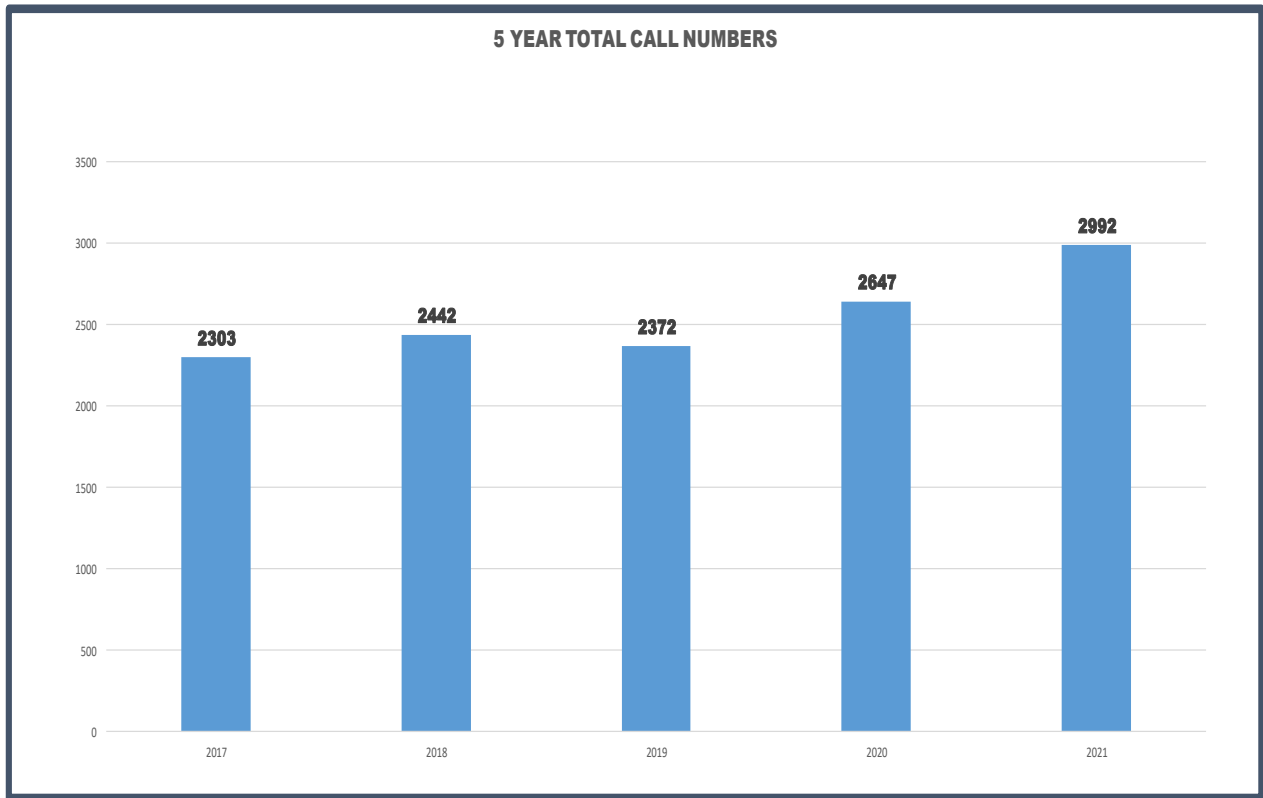
We completed 534 inspections of new construction, annual inspections for the delegated authority status of the Fire Division, and Firefighter/Inspector inspections and pre plans of high risk occupancies in and around the city. Due to pandemic restrictions, the number of fire station tours was reduced considerably. We had a total of 351 persons tour with 271 children and 80 were adults who accompanied most of those groups. Our contacts with the general public were much lower than in previous years as we only were able to contact 2416 people through public education, fire extinguisher training and a presence at public events throughout the year. It is our hope that this year will see the fire division out in the community more. The coming year we will be trying to partner with the Chamber of Commerce to attend some of their events such as coffee calls. We have had someone at 2 events so far and hope for many more. This will introduce the fire division in the community in a non-emergency situations which will shed new light on our staff.

Fire losses increased from last year, from \$257,920.00 to \$579,900.00 which was mostly due to fires in high value properties. The value of the properties that we had fire calls to that did involve actual fire damage went from \$9,053,677.00 in 2020 to \$19,855,570.00 in 2021. The contents dollar losses were up as well from \$206,705.00 in 2020 to \$699,950.00 in 2021. Considering the value of the property where we had fires compared to the actual loss is quite remarkable. Fire sprinklers were instrumental in containing a fire and limiting damage in one of the communities busier companies.

This will be my final as I will be retiring in July of 2022. It has been a good 25 years and I hope that this office has made Norfolk a safer place to live, work and relax in by the work the firefighter/inspectors and I have done.

5 YEAR BREAKDOWN OF FIRE AND RESCUE CALLS





REGION 11 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic continued its influence on Region 11 Emergency Management. Work continued collaborating with FEMA and NEMA on reimbursement projects from the 2019 Flood and also with projects for the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic reimbursement process. Norfolk Fire Division hosted a coronavirus/COVID-19 First Responder Booster Vaccination Clinic for personnel throughout Region 11.

The emergency management director attended many trainings and exercises, a lot of which were virtual, as this venue tried to offer classes within the boundaries of directed health measures.

Multiple hazardous materials incidences were reported in Pierce County and Madison County to emergency management and passed on to NEMA (Nebraska Emergency Management Agency) and NDEE (Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy).

The high-wind, rain and hail storm of July 9-10 caused damage and debris throughout the Region 11 area (Antelope, Madison & Pierce Counties). This prompted NEMA (Nebraska Emergency Management Agency) to come to the Madison County Courthouse to discuss reimbursement. This storm, along with the National Weather Service changing their guidelines, prompted the City of Norfolk to review and change their outdoor warning siren activation policy criteria.

The unusually warmer temperatures during the end of 2021, brought along thunderstorms, high-winds and tornado warnings on December 15, 2021. During this event, Region 11 Emergency Management worked alongside the City of Norfolk and Norfolk Fire Division at the Emergency Operations Center to ensure that all the citizens were being protected via IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert & Warning System), press releases and outdoor warning siren activations. Unfortunately, there was still some damage to southern Madison County as a result of these storms.

Region 11 Emergency Manager Bobbi Risor



	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2122 Estimated
Demand:			
City Population	24,210	26,000	26,000
Rural District Population	4,950	3950	4000
Total Geographical Area Served	111	111	111
City Area	12	16	16
Rural Area	99	95	95
Mutual Aid Area	1,345	1,345	1,345
Workload:			
Total # of Responses	2,647	2992	3,100
Emergency Medical Calls	2,293	2604	2800
# of Patients Encountered	2,436	2755	3000
Fire Calls	354	388	350
Structure Fires	13	19	15
% Contained to Room of Origin	85	40	80
% Contained to Structure of Origin	100	100	100
Hazardous Material Calls	51 (includes CO and gas line calls)	60	55
# of Level 1 Call Backs	34	46	45
# of Level 2 Call Backs	161	197	225
# of Citizens Who Toured the Fire Station or attended classes	503 Total 64 Adults 439 Youth	351 Total 80 Adult 271 Youth	400

	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Estimated
Public Contacted	4550	2416	3000
Productivity:			
Total Training Hours	6611	7145	7200
Average Training Hours per Fire Fighter	120	130	130
Feet of Hose Main- tained	26,350	23,000	23,000
# of Pumps Tested & Maintained	6	6	6
# of Warning Sirens Tested & Maintained	10	10	13
# of Preemption Devic- es Maintained	80	80	80
# of SCBA Tested and Maintained	61	61	61
# of Emergency Vehi- cles Maintained	22	22	23
# of Defibrillators Maintained	8	10	10
Effectiveness:			
Average Response Time per Call	4.15	4:10	4:10
% of Incidents with 1st Arriving Units within 5 minutes (in city)	79.96	83.03	85
Valuation of Struc- tures involved in Fire	\$9,053,677	\$19,855,570	\$15,000,000
Structural Dollar Amount Loss Due to Fire	\$257,920	\$579,900	\$400,000
Contents Dollar amount of loss due to fire	\$206,705	\$699,950	\$350,000
Average Years of Ser- vice of Employees	12	13.5	13

