

Norfolk Fire & Rescue

2023 Annual Report





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Message from the Chief

Norfolk Fire and Rescue ended 2023 healthy and without serious injury to our staff. Serving the citizens of Norfolk and our Norfolk Rural Fire Protection District took place at a high level with support from our mutual aid partners. The following list includes call totals and notable staffing changes at Norfolk Fire and Rescue:

The year 2023 again resulted in the highest calls for service in the history of our department dating back to 1884. Even though we did not see as large of an increase in call totals, it is still noticed amongst the responders each day. Crews are working diligently to keep up with the pace each year. This year's 3,217 calls surpassed the previous record year (2022) of 3,190.

During the past year and since our last report, we had three full-time staff depart from Norfolk Fire and hired three. Among those that left was Bob Nelson who retired at the rank of lieutenant after serving 35 years at Norfolk Fire and Rescue. Bob has since joined our reserve force and continues to be an asset to Norfolk Fire. In addition, Max Hesman and Ryan Goodman departed as members in good standing. Ryan Goodman also chose to remain with the division in a fire reserve capacity. Those hired as full-time firefighters were Adam Smith who had been serving as Code Compliance Official, Austin Kroeger and Cati Witzel. FF/Paramedic Casey Caskey was then named Code Compliance Official but returned to shift as a firefighter/Paramedic following the retirement of Bob Nelson. At the conclusion of 2023, we remained fully staffed at 31 full-time shift personnel.

Our fire reserve program saw the departures of Patrick Popken, Sarah Perrigan, Jesse Lowe, and Nick Bentz all as members in good standing. Fire Reserves added include Terry Zwiebel and Zach Steiner in addition to previously mentioned Ryan Goodman and Bob Nelson. Also worth noting is reserve firefighter Doug Holmberg was recognized for 40 years of service to NFD. The fire reserve roster now stands at 32 members.

Here are few additional updates and notable happenings that took place over the past year:

- Norfolk Fire and Rescue hosted the Nebraska Serious Injury and Line of Duty Death (NSILODD) Team annual meeting. Training included how to handle serious injuries and both line of duty and non-line of duty deaths in the fire service. Members of Norfolk Fire and Rescue continue to be active in helping our region when loved ones are lost.
- Region 11 Emergency Manager Bobbi Risor saw another busy year as stated in her annual report for 2023. Both Bobbi and Faythe Petersen (Administrative Assistant) put in many hours sorting through grant documents and budgets for the region. Risor also helped plan and coordinate many exercises throughout the three-county region she serves.
- A lieutenant promotion process took place to prepare for the retirement of Bob Nelson. The result was Sam Funk being promoted to C-Shift Lieutenant. Sam was sworn in during the month of August with family, friends, and coworkers in attendance.



Tim Wragge
Fire Chief

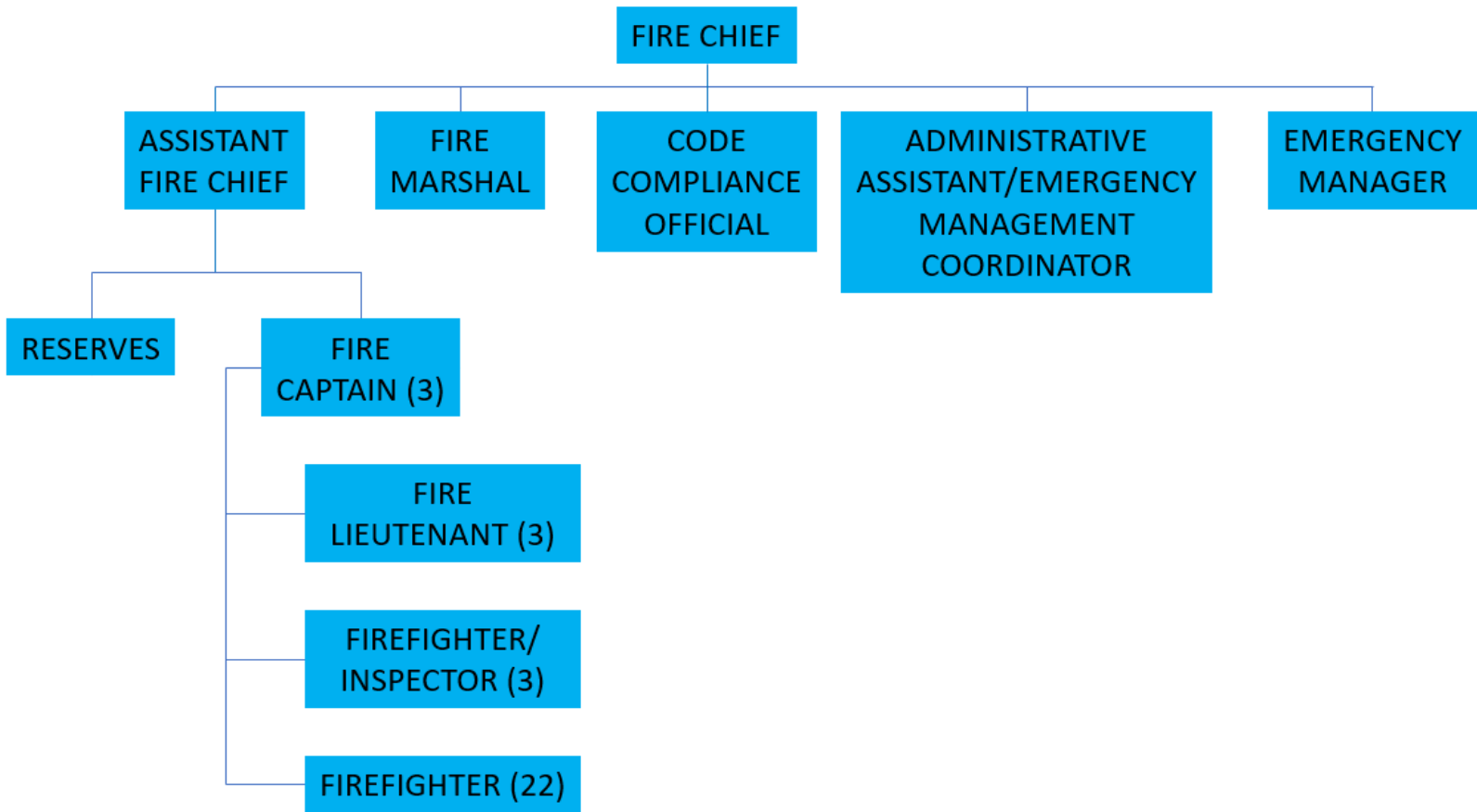
Message from the Chief

- Full time and reserve staff hosted a 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb for first responders and their families at the regional public safety training facility in Norfolk.
- Firefighter/Paramedic Chris Kneifl received the 2023 Norfolk Noon Optimist Firefighter of the Year Award. The Norfolk Noon Optimist Club presents this award annually.
- Retired Fire Lieutenant Bob Nelson received the 2023 American Legion Firefighter of the Year Award.
- Staff attended an event at Northeast Community College Lifelong Learning Center where long time Norfolk Fire and Rescue EMS Medical Director Dr. G.T. (Tom) Surber had a room dedicated in his honor. Doc and his wife Susan have been long-time supporters of NECC. Family and friends joined in the celebration.
- Fire division staff took part in the filming of a documentary done by the PBS focusing on the challenges fire and EMS services across the state are facing, specifically volunteerism. The documentary has aired, and it is titled Working Fires.

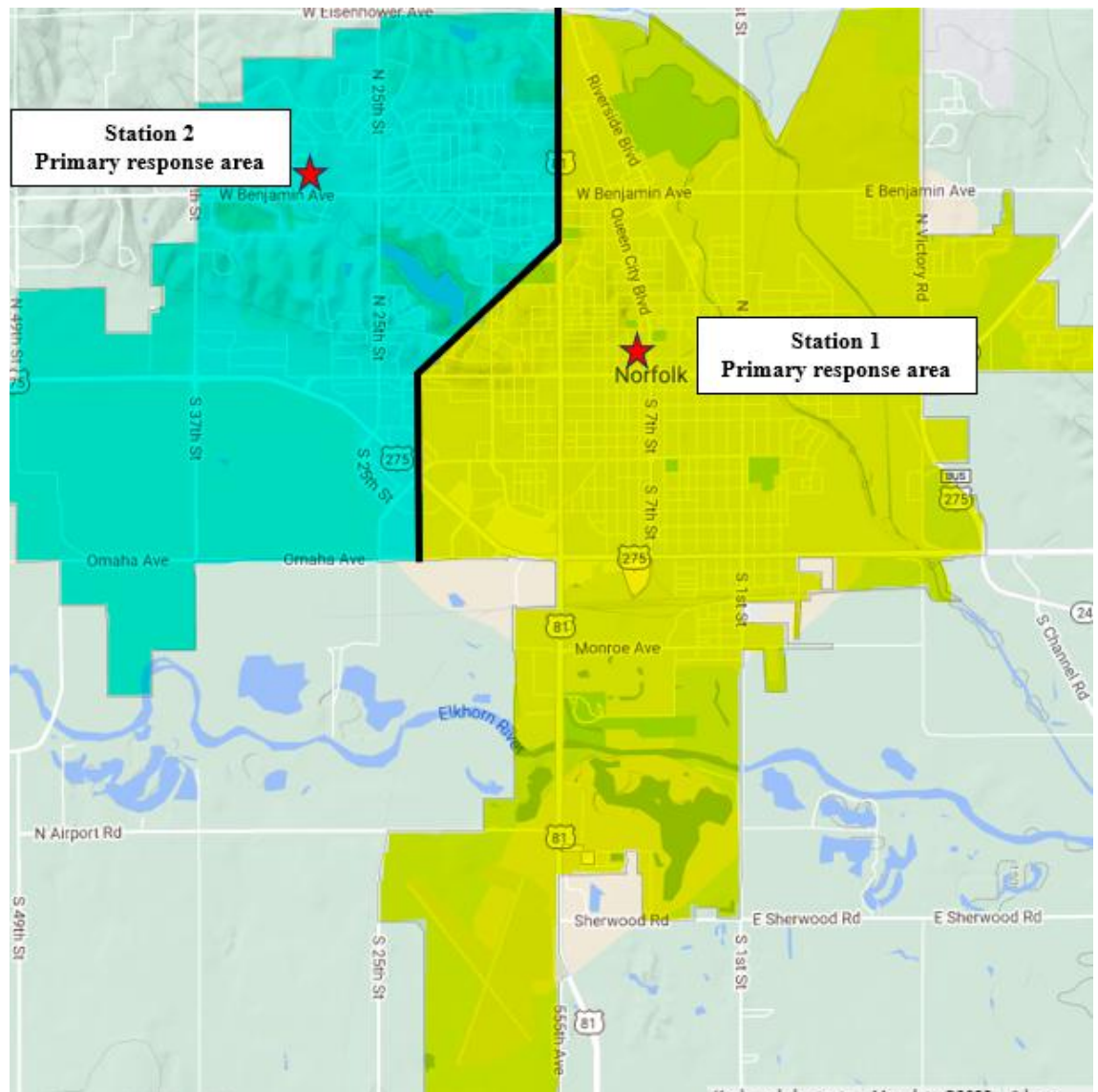
I continue to be in awe of the commitment to excellence that our responders and support staff have. Things get busier and busier each day, but the team always comes together to overcome obstacles when it counts. This would not be possible without the support of the Norfolk Mayor, City Administration, City Council and Norfolk Rural Fire Board. Most importantly, our families and loved ones staying by our side continues to make all the difference in the world.

Chief Wragge

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Fire Stations



2 Stations

over **30,000** population served

111 square miles protected

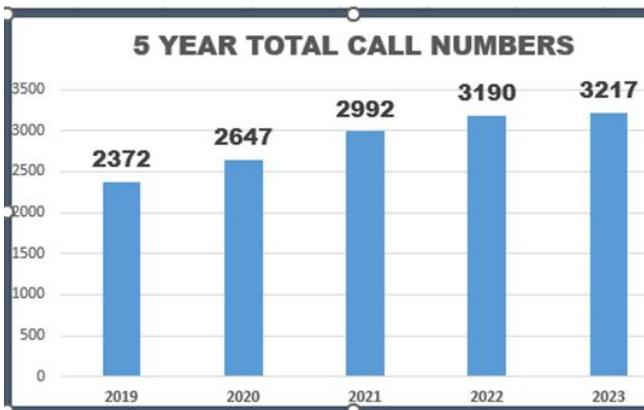
over **\$2** billion assessed property value protected

Significant Events



February - Assistant City Administrator / Public Safety Director and former Fire Chief Scott Cordes appointed as State Fire Marshal

April 9th - Norfolk Regional Hazmat responds to incident involving fuel tanker



December 29th - Broke all-time call volume record

January 20th - Large storage shed/garage fire requires multi-department response



May 3rd - House fire

July 25th - large residential fire requires multi-department response



November- \$20,000 grant awarded to purchase M30T Drone



Operations

It is the mission of Norfolk Fire and Rescue to provide a lasting partnership with the community to support a higher quality of life through public education, loss prevention, and service response. While an increased call volume continues to bring unique challenges for our responders we stay committed to our mission. Our staff continued to rise to the occasion to find success and train hard to provide the citizens and community with the level of care and professionalism they deserve.

Each crew train daily to stay ready for whatever they encounter. Aside from daily shift training, we attend events, incorporate division wide training, and train with our mutual aid partners throughout the year. Below are a few highlights from the year.

In January, September, and October we held recruit training academies. New firefighters go through a three-week academy focusing primarily on firefighting skills preparing them for their first day on shift. Once their academy is finished, they report to shift as a probationary firefighters and continue training in emergency medical service (EMS) skills, additional firefighting skills and hazmat operations. After six months they are tested on these skills, and with successful completion they graduate probation to become firefighters through a formal badge pinning ceremony. The probation skills and education training prepare them to attend a firefighter 1 certification process with the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division.

In March staff attended a career fair to stay ahead of the recruitment and retention curve. As in many industries the fire service is not seeing as many applicants as it once did. Our staff is proving they are dedicated to training the next generation of firefighters. In addition to career fairs, they have done career connection courses with our schools as well. Always ready to show fire trucks, discuss fire and EMS career paths and demonstrating fire and EMS skills, our staff work hard at being prepared to mentor those who are interested.

In July, we were able to conduct a house burn to incorporate live fire training with the State Fire Marshal Training Division, our mutual aid partners, and others from around the state. During this training we were able to perform fire ground operation training to include interior and exterior fire training tactics such as fire ground communication, ventilation, and fire attack. Radio communications help provide better coordination and efficiency while ventilation helps with controlling fires in a timely manner to assist in saving property. Interior and exterior fire attack skills focus on hose line positioning, moving and water application. Acquired structures create great training opportunities for our firefighters.



Trever O'Brien

Assistant Chief

Operations

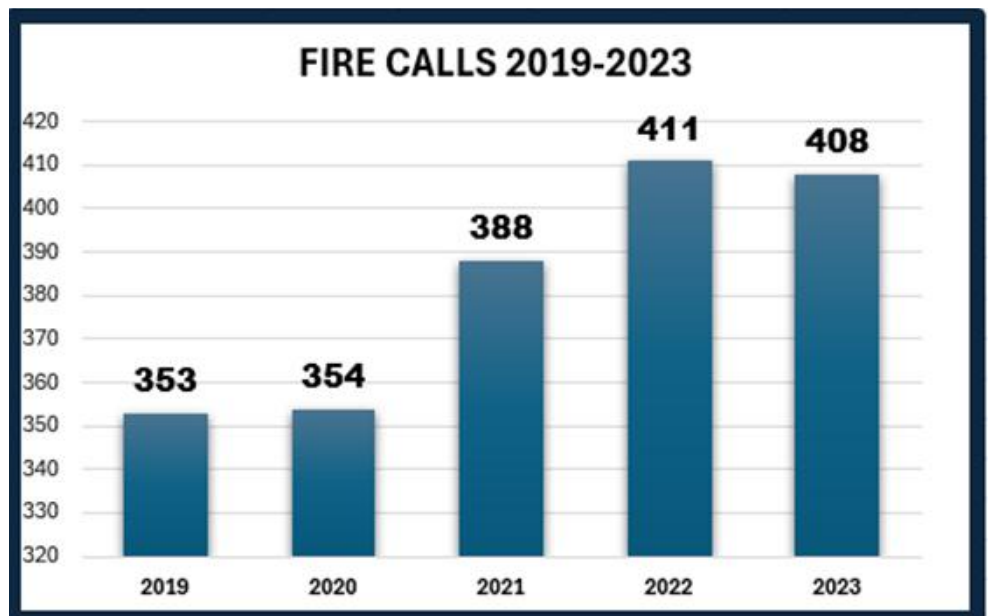
October was a busy month as we hosted our annual 80-hour Hazmat Technician Certification Course at our regional public safety training facility among other prevention programs. We serve as the regional Hazmat Team for northeast Nebraska. Four of our division hazmat team members along with several others from around the state attended this training taught by the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division. In addition, on duty staff assisted and participated each day in training and gained up to 40 hours of refresher training.

Among the above-mentioned training and activities our paramedics attended the three-day annual refresher training session at Northeast Community College. We also participated in a decontamination drill with Faith Regional Health Services and attended rope rescue training with Nucor Steel's rope rescue team.

Training requires an abundance of time, however pride in our facilities is also very important. We upgraded our training tower props replacing our old, weathered roof ventilation props with a new adjustable prop and adding a reinforced concrete trench rescue prop. We were also able to enhance Station 1's landscaping with historic fire department memorabilia, a bench for visitors and a new backlit monument.

As we look back on 2023, it was a success, it will forever be part of Norfolk Fire and Rescue history. Another year of record calls and continued training while finding time to keep our facilities up to par while building relationships are all part of what helps Norfolk Fire and Rescue succeed. 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.

Trever O'Brien
Assistant Fire Chief



Operations Pictures



Special Operations

Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team

The photo below (left) is a picture of our Zumro Decon tent purchased this year. This tent features ease of setup and portability for training and response. The picture below (middle) are Level A boots that go with our hazmat response Level A suits. We purchased more of these to replace outdated stock.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue responded to the following hazardous material related calls in 2023. Six fuel spills, 14 natural gas leaks, one propane leak, four carbon monoxide leaks, 20 faulty carbon monoxide detector activations, two carbon dioxide leaks, one glycol leak, one liquid spill, one antifreeze leak, and 27 odor investigations. Along with our normal in-house training, we hosted our annual 40/80-hour Hazmat Certification class in October at the regional training facility in Norfolk. Members from multiple agencies attended the class put on by the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division.



Drone Response Team

We continued to grow our drone response team, led by Reserve Firefighter Aaron Beckman, Ret. Lieutenant Bob Nelson and Captain Scott Bonsall. A grant was received from TC Energy that funded a M30T Thermal drone, along with other equipment.

This team is trained to respond to search and rescue, fire and other miscellaneous incidents where live video streaming ensures safety, provides valuable information and can cover large areas in a short amount of time.

Pictured below is a view from our thermal drone, showing heat signatures during fire training in our burn containers.



Technical Rescue Teams

The Norfolk Fire Division has multiple technical rescue teams, which cover structural collapse, trench, ice and swift water, rope rescues and everything in between. These teams are made up by individuals from each shift who have received technical training on these specific areas.

Teams meet regularly for training, maintain equipment and to tour facilities throughout Norfolk to give us an idea of possible hazards that we may face. Along with touring facilities, teams also spend time navigating the Elkhorn River and lakes in our area in the event of a water rescue event.

Shown in the picture below, a rope rescue team member repels to a victim that is suspended in the air to perform a rescue during a training event.



Fire Prevention



Sean Lindgren

Fire Marshal

Fire Code Enforcement

The fire marshal conducted plan reviews for new construction, additions, and renovations of buildings and new fire protection systems. Inspections were conducted for new and annual facility state licenses, new construction/renovations of buildings, flammable liquids storage tanks, and new fire protection systems in accordance with the delegated authority granted by the state fire marshal and in accordance with city ordinance. A total of 380 inspections, plan reviews, and preplans were conducted in 2023.

Shift fire inspectors led their respective crews through company preplans to ensure the shifts are familiar with new and existing facilities in case of an emergency call at that location. The preplans include walk throughs of structures and familiarization of their infrastructure. Inspectors also conducted enforcement inspections for fire code compliance in a variety of buildings and facilities.

Fire Investigations

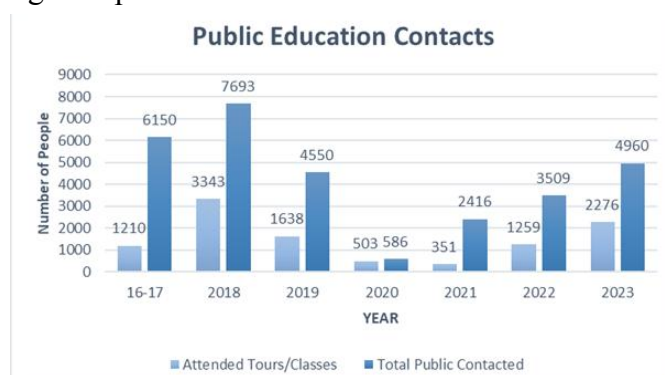
In 2023, there were a total of 408 fire calls with 21 of those being structure fires. Fire losses in 2023 totaled \$1,022,600. The value of property involved in fire situations in 2023 was \$5,860,000.

Fire incidents were investigated for cause and origin. The fire marshal and fire inspectors attended continuing education at the Nebraska IAAI Fire and Arson Conference to further knowledge and experience in fire investigations. Fire Inspector Chris Lyon had the opportunity to attend a fire investigations class at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland for further education.

Public Education

Fire and rescue staff conducted a variety of public education and outreach events through fire station tours, school visits, training classes, and special events. Through these activities, personnel were able to engage citizens in a non-emergency setting to provide fire prevention education and presentations of the services that we have available. A safety day was held with community partners during Fire Prevention Week at the fire training facility with food, activities and educational demonstrations. Another highlight for public education in 2023 was a workshop by Fire Marshal Lindgren with school administrators and maintenance personnel with the goal of establishing relationships, opening communication, and education on how codes impact school facilities.

In all, a total of 4960 people were contacted through these activities. 2276 people participated in tours/visits or attended classes with 766 adults and 1510 youth. Fire and rescue staff appreciate the opportunity to conduct this outreach and look forward to seeing the upward trend continue.



Region 11 Emergency Management

2023 Review

In 2023, Region 11 Emergency Management was involved in many different ways throughout Antelope, Madison and Pierce Counties including the City of Norfolk.

The COVID-19 pandemic “officially” ended on May 11, 2023, with reimbursement projects receiving a deadline of November 10th, 2023.

The City of Norfolk’s 2019 Flood reimbursement projects had closeout in December.

A disaster declaration was submitted for Pierce County for the tornado in May which took the roof off of one of the Plainview schools.

Other emergencies that occurred throughout Region 11 that were reported to the state were power outages, 911 system outage, possible tornado/high wind damage and multiple hazardous materials spills/leaks.



Sirens

Sirens, sirens, sirens – This was the mantra of Region 11 Emergency Management for the City of Norfolk for this year. A brand-new siren was installed at 300 S 49th Street with two replacement sirens being installed at 127 Morningside Drive and 1112 Bonita Drive. These three sirens were 90% grant funded.

A private citizen was interested in the two replaced (circa 1963) sirens. Since these sirens had only scrap value, the decision was made to donate these sirens to him. This young man has a hobby of restoring “old sirens” for pleasure.

2023 Training

Many trainings, classes and exercises were held throughout Region 11 including a City of Norfolk Administration Active Shooter Tabletop Exercise, Norfolk Public & Parochial Schools Tabletop Exercise, Battle Creek Public & Parochial Schools Tabletop Exercise and Westside Family Pet Clinic & Spa Active Shooter Tabletop Exercise.

Other exercises that were held within the Region 11 jurisdiction were a Tabletop Exercise at Community Pride Care Center in Battle Creek, a Rural Region One Medical Response System (RROMRS) Full-Scale EOC Exercise with Wayne Hospital, a Faith Regional Health Services Full-Scale Exercise with St. Joseph’s Nursing Home and Osmond Hospital Full-Scale Exercise.

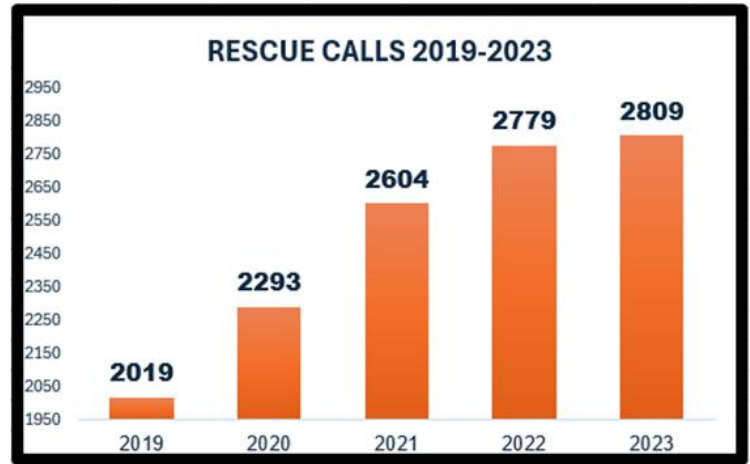


Emergency Medical Services

The Norfolk Fire Division continues to provide four Advanced Life Support (ALS) equipped ambulances and one ALS equipped fire engine, with at least one paramedic assigned to these apparatus every day. By having these capabilities, citizens of Norfolk and surrounding areas can receive the highest level of care possible, outside of a hospital. We again saw an increase in demand for EMS in 2023.

Our staff maintains and inventories over thirty medications, four cardiac monitors, 10 AED's and other equipment that is crucial to ensure a high quality of life for our citizens. With this equipment comes hours of training.

Along with attending a 24-hour Paramedic Refresher every year, our staff continuously train weekly on topics related to EMS. We attend conferences and have quarterly run reviews with Dr. Yosten, an emergency room doctor at Faith Regional Health Services. In addition, we are fortunate to have an agreement with Fountain Point Surgery Center to allow our staff to work alongside an anesthesiologist to gain more knowledge and experience intubating patients.

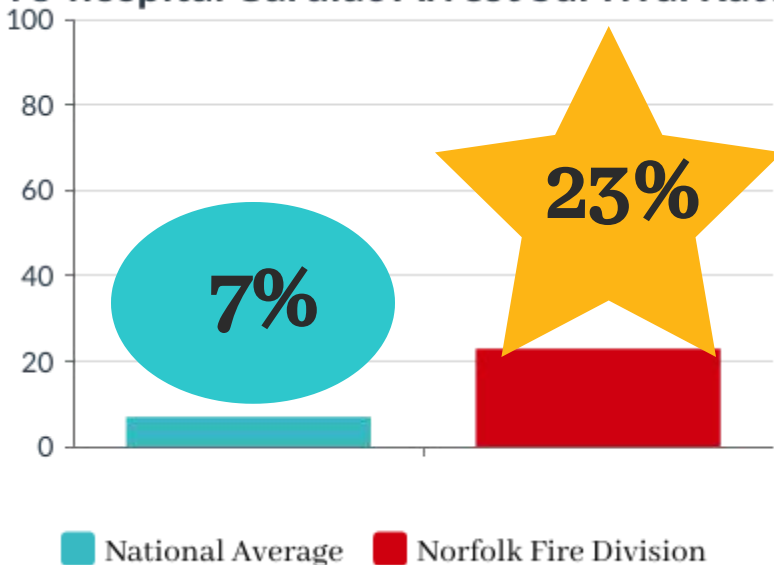


With the equipment, knowledge and experience our providers have, along with our Medical Director ensuring we are practicing the latest evidence-based practices, we are seeing phenomenal results.

Our cardiac arrest average is 23%, compared to the National average of 7%. This is a result of an investment in the phone app "PulsePoint", 9-1-1 dispatchers providing direction to by-standers and by-standers taking action when a person goes down. Without all of these components coming together and working flawlessly, we couldn't have the success stories that we do. Below is a PulsePoint QR code that can be used to get more information on how to follow us and become a responder to cardiac arrest events.

We are striving for recognition by the American Heart Association - Mission LifeLine. They evaluate out-of-hospital care for stroke and heart attack patients and have stringent criteria that we meet.

Pre-hospital Cardiac Arrest Survival Rate



Yearly Statistics

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated
Demand:			
City Population	26,000	26,000	26,200
Rural District Population	3950	3950	4000
Total Geographical Area Served	111	111	111
City Area	16	16	16
Rural Area	95	95	95
Mutual Aid Area	1,345	1,345	1,345
Workload:			
Total # of Responses	3190	3217	3317
Emergency Medical Calls	2779	2809	2880
# of Patients Encountered	2862	2735	2800
Fire Calls	411	408	405
Structure Fires	17	21	18
% Contained to Room of Origin	59	71	73
% Contained to Structure of Origin	88	95	98
Hazardous Material Calls	83	58	65
# of Level 1 Call Backs	67	62	65
# of Level 2 Call Backs	209	324	315
# of Citizens Who Toured the Fire Station or attended classes	1259 Total 493 Adult 766 Youth	2276 Total 766 Adults 1510 Youth	2500 Total 775 Adult 1725 Youth

Yearly Statistics

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated
Public Contacted	3509	4960	5200
Productivity:			
Total Training Hours	9109	11,016	12,100
Average Training Hours per Fire Fighter	152	200	220
Feet of Hose Maintained	23,000	23,000	23,000
# of Pumps Tested & Maintained	6	6	6
# of Warning Sirens Tested & Maintained	12	13	13
# of Preemption Devices Maintained	80	80	80
# of SCBA Tested and Maintained	69	69	69
# of Emergency Vehicles Maintained	24	24	24
# of Defibrillators Maintained	10	10	10
Effectiveness:			
Average Response Time per Call	4:31	3:53	3:53
% of Incidents with 1 st Arriving Units within 5 minutes (in city)	84.51%	84.5%	85%
Valuation of Structures involved in Fire	\$2,345,225	\$5,860,000	UTD
Structural Dollar Amount Loss Due to Fire	\$500,030	\$622,000	UTD
Contents Dollar amount of loss due to fire	\$295,420	\$400,500	UTD
Average Years of Service of Employees	14	11	13

Fire Reserves

It has been a busy year for Norfolk Fire and Rescue's fire reserve team as they continue to operate at a high level and keep the momentum pushing forward. They live up to Norfolk Fire and Rescue's mission to be dedicated to a lasting partnership with the community to support a higher quality of life through public education, loss prevention and service response. This year the team took part in many community events such as the downtown Christmas festival, our annual public safety day, a deaf and hard of hearing seminar, the annual bike rodeo, and National Night Out to name a few. Reserves provide fire safety materials along with firefighting games and skills stations for kids to help educate our citizens on fire safety plans and what to do in case of a fire. Time is also spent describing what it takes to be a firefighter.

Along with our full-time staff, reserves provide necessary resources for handling day-to-day operations including but not limited to calls within the city and rural fire protection district. As an integral part of our team, they support our mission by allowing us to continue a high level of service response to the citizens within our community during busy demanding times. Emergencies such as fires, hazmat calls, back-to-back emergency calls, public relations events and labor-intensive technical rescues can result in a need for assistance from our reserve staff. During 2023 we called in our reserves more than 300 times to help cover a wide variety of these situations.

In addition to daily operations and public relation events during the year, our reserves are also committed to improving their skills. Regular training sessions are held twice a month for three hours each session. Reserve training nights consist of fire training such as the use of ground ladders, firefighting hand tools, fire hose deployment and advancement among other skills. Technical rescue training is also covered such as swift water rescue, trench rescue, rope rescue and more. We continue to develop relationships with our mutual aid partners, inviting them to trainings at least quarterly.

In reflection, this year's training had a wide variety of training topics. In January, We added four fire reserves this year bringing our current reserve staff to 32. Our new reserve recruits work through a six-month training academy and a one-year probation period with various tasks required of them. Throughout the program tasks will include but are not limited to, facility and equipment familiarization, book work, firefighting skills such as how to use personal protective equipment, live fire training and other tasks. Upon completion of all requirements, these individuals are sworn in as Norfolk Fire Reserves in a formal ceremony.

In May, as done in years past we had 12 reserves attend the 86th annual Nebraska State Fire School in Grand Island, Nebraska. They were able to participate in introduction to firefighting, forcible entry techniques, live fire training, drone operations and fire investigations along with several other courses. In September we hosted trench rescue training with a couple of our mutual aid departments. We were able to discuss and practice evaluation, applications of trench rescue equipment and the necessary support work for successful operations.

2023 has been very rewarding in many ways, reserve staff stepped up when it mattered providing the response support our operations demanded. Full time and part time staff came together working through adverse circumstances and integrated trainings continuing to make our operations successful. This team takes care of each other and everyone that they serve at a high level. As always, we are excited and look forward to 2024!

Fire Reserves



Awards and Recognition



Tim Wragge

Northeast Community College recognized alumni, including Fire Chief Tim Wragge. He was recognized for his years of service to the community.

Picture credit (left): Northeast Community College

Bob Nelson

American Legion Post 16 recognized Ret. Lieutenant Bob Nelson for his decades of service to Norfolk.



Chris Kneifl

The Noon Optimist Club of Norfolk recognized Chris Kneifl for his quality of work and lifetime of service. Chris was nominated to receive this award from a peer.

Picture credit (left): Jon Humphries/Daily News



Awards and Recognition



Working as Paramedics for Norfolk Fire

Will DiLullo (left) and Nate Best (right) completed their Paramedic training requirements for us. Pictured with them is Dr. Surber, who has been with us since the start of our advanced life support services.



Lieutenant Sam Funk

A fire lieutenant promotion process took place to prepare for the retirement of Bob Nelson. The result was Sam Funk being promoted to C-Shift Lieutenant. Sam was sworn in during the month of August with family, friends, and coworkers in attendance.

New Staff



CJ Neumann
A - Shift



Micah Baumgartel
B - Shift



Ashley Dittberner
C - Shift



Adam Smith
A - Shift



Austin Kroeger
C - Shift



Cati Witzel
B - Shift



Trevor Becker
Reserve



Tyler Hulse
Reserve



Draven Roskens
Reserve



Christian Lara
Reserve



Zach Steiner
Reserve

Retirements



Scott Cordes



Bob Nelson

In Remembrance

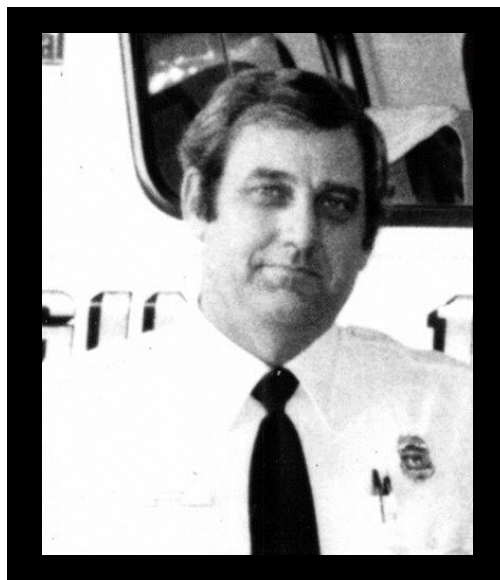


May we never forget

In Remembrance



Richard Schlecht



Bob Noelle



THANK YOU
for your continued support!

