

RIO RANCHO FIRE & RESCUE

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



CITY OF RIO RANCHO, NEW MEXICO

FROM THE FIRE CHIEF'S DESK BY PAUL BEARCE



The future of Rio Rancho Fire and Rescue (RRFR) is on a bright path and as the new leader of the men and women who serve as Rio Rancho's Bravest, I am excited about our department, and am looking forward to an exciting year of change; which includes new

equipment, new faces, and continuing the delivery of our great services to our community.

As I pondered what I was going to write about for this year's annual report, I began to think about my experiences over the last few months as the newly appointed Fire Chief of RRFR. What hit me was the professionalism and dedication to serving our community that exists with each and every one of our firefighters.

When I took the reins of RRFR, I wanted to meet with each crew and hear from their perspective what they found were our challenges and how we could make our department a better place to work and a more effective resource to our community.

One of my other goals was to reconnect with what our operations personnel deal with day-in-day-out in responding to calls, so I rode along with one of the crews for the day. Each and every one of my interactions with crews has been positive, uplifting, and our discussions about the future have given me great hope for the years to come. However, what elicited the most pride in RRFR was seeing how the men and women who serve treated members of my own family.

In 2017 I was able to talk my elderly parents into moving to Rio Rancho where I could help take care of them and assist with the challenges that face their generation. My mother is a healthy and independent 92-year-old, and my dad has several medical problems, including a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. They were living in Utah and all my siblings had moved away to other parts of the country. The difficulties became more apparent and the issues more urgent, so we came to the decision to have them move to New Mexico.

Everything was going along well until my dad started to have issues with falling and other challenges related to his medical and physical health. I have had to call on crews out of Station 2 to respond to my parent's home several times for him, and most recently for an acute illness experienced by my mother. As you

"PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY"



Station 3/B-shift crew received a visit from Larry "Russ" Williams who had been treated and transported by the crew. Mr. Williams was suffering from a heart attack and went into cardiac arrest. He was resuscitated and recovered.

might imagine, with my experience as a responder, I am not one to take the plunge to call 9-1-1 for resources lightly. I tend to wait and see if the problem resolves with some home care and treatment prior to summoning for assistance. My parents, being from the "greatest generation" are also reluctant to use emergency services unless there was a dire need.

The kindness shown by our crew members to my parents is beyond description. All RRFR personnel who responded to their home have demonstrated an

incredible bedside manner, provided the highest level of emergency medical care, and treated them with respect and dignity. Both of my parents continually talk about the treatment they received and how the crew was so very nice.

In addition to my very personal experience, I received a number of emails, social media notifications, and letters of appreciation from citizens, organizations, and businesses that reiterate my feelings. The men and women of RRFR are consummate professionals, deliver quality service to the public, are kind and caring, and aim to serve their community with dedication and pride.

The phrase on the side of our trucks, "Protecting Your Family," is not just a motto, it is how we do business every day. The firefighters of RRFR truly walk the walk when it comes to public service and placing the needs of others above themselves. I have witnessed it and I believe it. I would like to thank each member of RRFR for their service and ask that they work safely, promote teamwork in their daily duties, and continue to treat everyone they encounter as if they were someone's family...because they are.

Congratulations on yet another outstanding year of representing RRFRR in both calls for service and department training. Over this past year all personnel met the demands of responding to increased calls for service, which included: structure fires, smoke checks, motor vehicle crashes, Emergency Medical Service incidents, public assists and brush fires.

In addition to the surge in calls for service, RRFRR also faced its first ever increase in retirements and career changes. This created a challenging staffing issue and thankfully all of our personnel exhibited willingness to work numerous overtime shifts and manage to provide basic and intermediate staffing of rescues for the first time in years due to a decreasing number of paramedics. Because staff members were willing to meet the demand and work extra shifts, we were able to respond to all emergencies with the professionalism that the citizens of Rio Rancho have become accustomed to.

This past year RRFRR was also able to revitalize the paramedic education program by sending two people, Aric Ray and Keadrick Kingery, to Albuquerque Fire Rescue's Paramedic School, where they have represented RRFRR well and are set to graduate later this spring. Aric and Keadrick have paved the way for us to reach an agreement with both the University of New Mexico EMS Academy and Albuquerque Fire Rescue to continue to send three firefighters a year for the next three years to paramedic school.

In 2018 we were also able to complete all Continuing Education requirements for EMT renewal as well as train all members of service along with all of our brothers and sisters in the Rio Rancho Police Department in the active shooter event, specific to the National Rescue Task Force model. This program was received very well among all participants

involved and has set the foundation for future trainings with other agencies.

In addition to all the EMS training, we logged a staggering 39,000 hours of training. All members of the training cadre volunteered to help with facility drills and two back-to-back academies. The career progression plan has continued to be implemented with all personnel completing many hours of training to meet the department standard, with many of our senior firefighters having to redo certificates they previously obtained that were not certified.

The officer development program continues to lead the way in the state for how we develop our future officers and prepare them for success in the fire house. Members have been upgrading almost daily to keep trucks staffed and ease some of our staffing concerns. We have implemented an upgrade program which included a pay stipend to reward these hard-working individuals.

Last year the Governing Body, city staff, department administration, and Union leadership participated in a series of information meetings to present a Government Obligation Bond question to voters. The proposed bond aimed to provide funding for capital equipment, such as response apparatus. In March, Rio Rancho voters approved the bond, which resulted the replacement of some of our aging fleet. Some of these replacements include a (ladder truck, pumper, two rescues, brush truck, three new BC command vehicles, and an Emergency Management truck). RRFRR was also able to receive a grant for a new tender and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant which included six new positions. Some other grants received include a radio upgrade grant to replace our out-dated radio software and a grant from Homeland Security to outfit every first out rig in Rio Rancho with Ballistic body armor and CAT tourniquets to be issued to all fire and police officers.

The department demonstrated exceptional benevolence by participating in multiple fund raising events to include the St. Baldrick's Foundation event and breast cancer awareness campaign, both raising thousands of dollars for cancer research. The department also participated in the annual shift and station challenge for the MDA raising money for children who suffer from muscular dystrophy. This helped to raise money to fund the kids' attendance at a summer camp specifically designed just for them.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes and activities were highly attended, and many new volunteers were added to the program. Thank you to Theresa Greeno and Rose Martinez from our Emergency Management Division for their dedication to emergency preparedness.

Community CPR was also a huge topic this past year with our staff and volunteers teaching well over 1,000 new students how to perform this life saving technique in the event of an emergency.

Last but not least, RRFRR experienced a changing of the guard, Fire Chief Myk Meek retired after 25 years of service, and Paul Bearce was promoted to Fire Chief. The department also promoted personnel into their new ranks. Damian Mainolfa and Brian Dolan were both promoted to Captain; Colin Rice, Carlos Trujillo, and Jessica Duron-Martinez were all promoted to Lieutenant.

We also had the addition of two new engineers both long time firefighters with a passion to be a driver operators; Steven Lewis and Brandi Luce were promoted to Engineer this past year as well. With the addition of 22 recently graduated cadets and new leadership, the future is bright for Rio Rancho Fire Rescue.

Thank you all, for what you do and for keeping all of our families safe, I personally look forward to what lies ahead for Rio Ranch Fire and Rescue.

TRAINING OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

BY FIRE CHIEF PAUL BEARCE

Rio Rancho Fire and Rescue (RRFR) is a young department with our history dating back to our separation from the Police Department in 2007. However, the fire personnel who became part of the old Department of Public Safety model back then have now reached the point in their career in which they can retire. Combined with several members leaving to pursue other interests, RRFR is facing attrition levels at historic levels. In 2018 we experienced nearly 20- members leave the department. This facilitated the need to hire replacements—which is no easy task.

The hiring process is a complex and lengthy endeavor that requires multiple opportunities for applicants to take the written and physical agility test, oral boards, and background checks. Deputy Chief Richard Doty and his instructor cadre worked over many months to the fill these positions. This occurred twice in 2018 due to the need to fill two academy classes.

In addition to filling the positions, the Training Division was tasked with bringing on two new academy instructors. Under the direction of Capt. Michael Legendre, Firefighters Brad Kornrumpf and Eric Kaufman took the reins of teaching our newest members.

Lateral Academy Class #4 began last year with seven cadets who all had previous fire experience. The eight-week program helped these experienced firefighters learn how RRFR operated and

instructed them on understanding our policies and procedures.

Lateral Academy Class #4 graduated on November 8th with seven of RRFR's bravest hitting the streets for their Field Training Program (FTO) portion of their indoctrination. By year's end, these

members were responding to calls and serving our community.

However, that was not the end of the Academy staff's assigned tasks. Due to the continued attrition of fire department staffing, another academy had to start in just a few short weeks.



Seven lateral firefighters graduated in November and are now serving our community.

Academy instructors Legendre, Kornrumpf, and Kaufman hit the ground running after DC Doty presented them with 15 new hires. This academy would be a full cadet class—16-weeks long—and involve taking these cadets from zero-to-firefighter. By the time this report is published, Cadet Academy Class #13 will have just graduated, with 12 new firefighters added to our ranks.

Hiring and training firefighters is tough work; running back-to-back academies has brought new challenges to our Training Division. The Division leadership and academy instructor cadre, which includes many members from the operations and administration staff, has stepped up to those challenges.

The unprecedented attrition of fire personnel from RRFR has brought many new faces to our organization. Assuring that they are ready to provide the quality service and dedication to the community is a job that often goes unnoticed.

In 2019, RRFR is anticipating the graduation of Cadet Class #13 (noted above), as well as starting another cadet class in June. Our goal is to maintain our level of service by training Rio Rancho's Bravest.



Cadet Academy Class #13 began with 15 individuals with a common goal to become part of the RRFR family. Twelve cadets became firefighters in March of 2019.

Incident Details

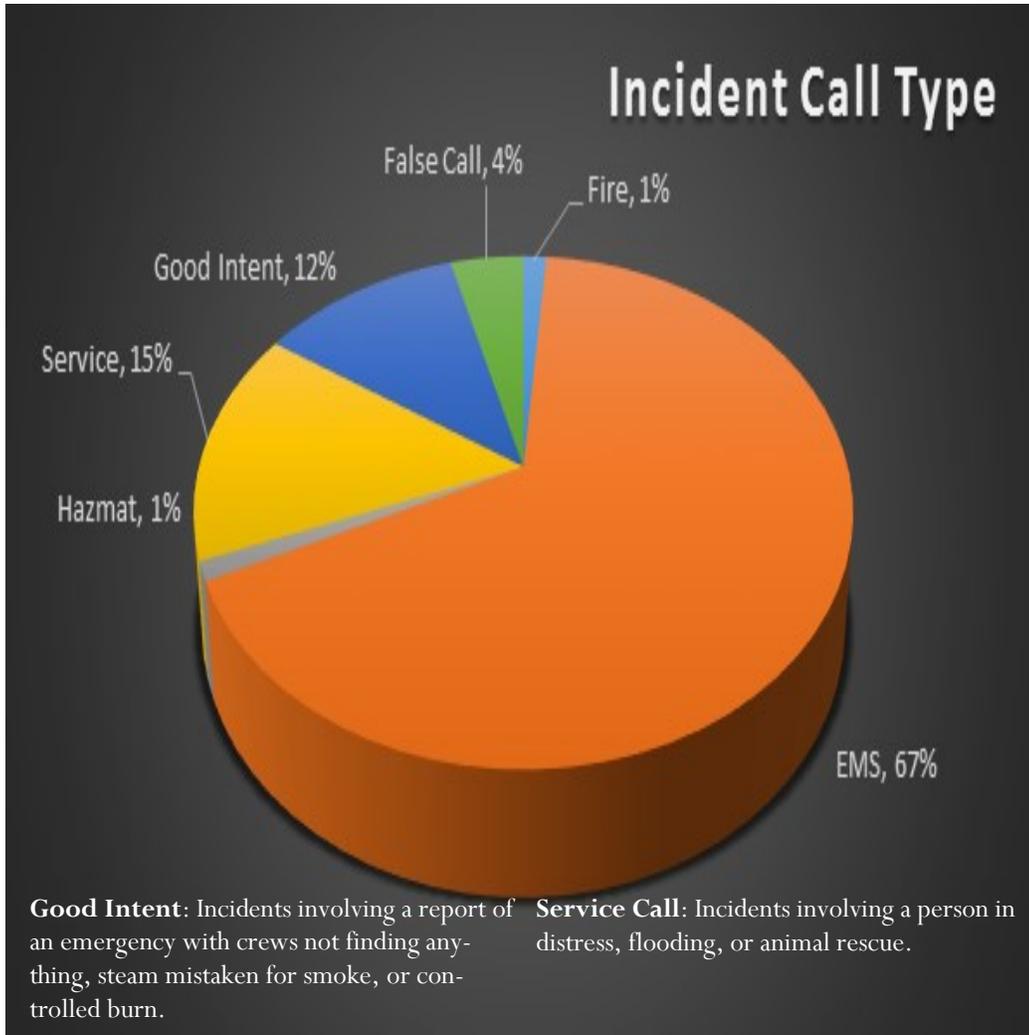
Total Calls:

Calls Per Station:

Station 1: 4,567
 Station 2: 2,168
 Station 3: 810
 Station 5: 1,139
 Station 7: 2,323

**Apparatus Total
 Emergency
 Responses:**

Engine 1: 2,494
 Engine 10: 2,612
 Rescue 1: 2,190
 Rescue 10: 2,282
 MedCom 1: 1,245
 Battalion Chief: 839
 Engine 2: 2,076
 Rescue 2: 1,852
 Engine 3: 1,085
 Rescue 3: 981
 Engine 5: 1,168
 Rescue 5: 1,088
 Engine 7: 2,291
 Rescue 7: 2,039



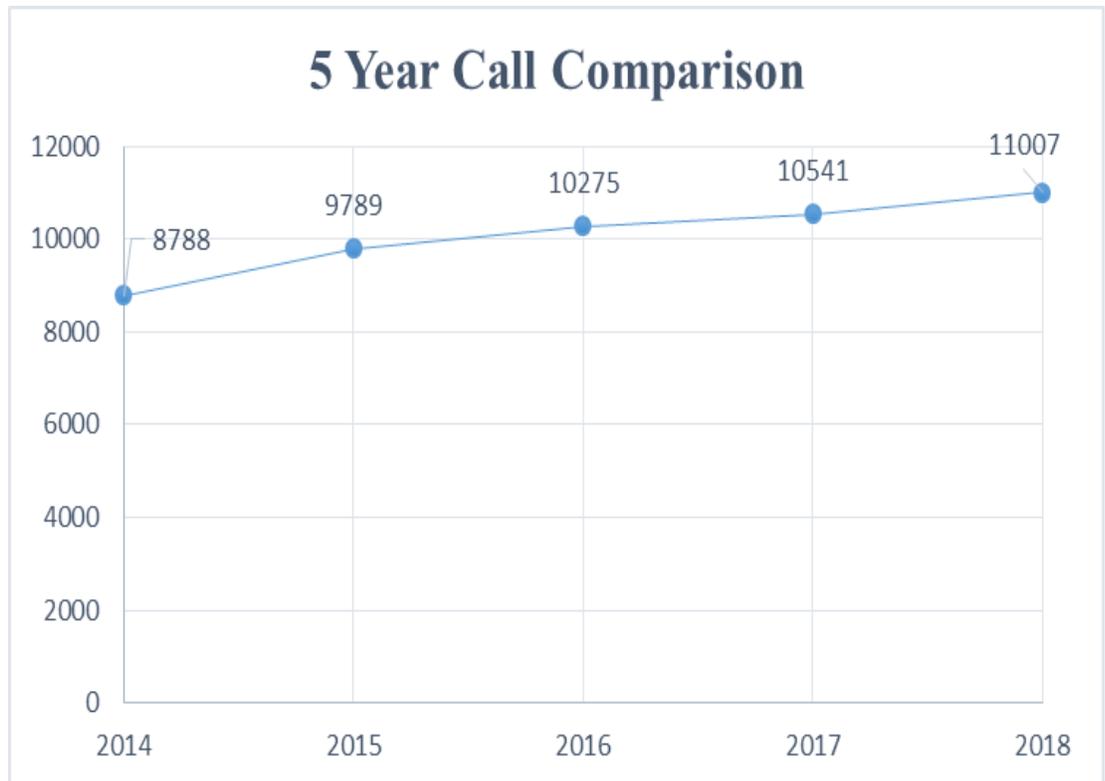
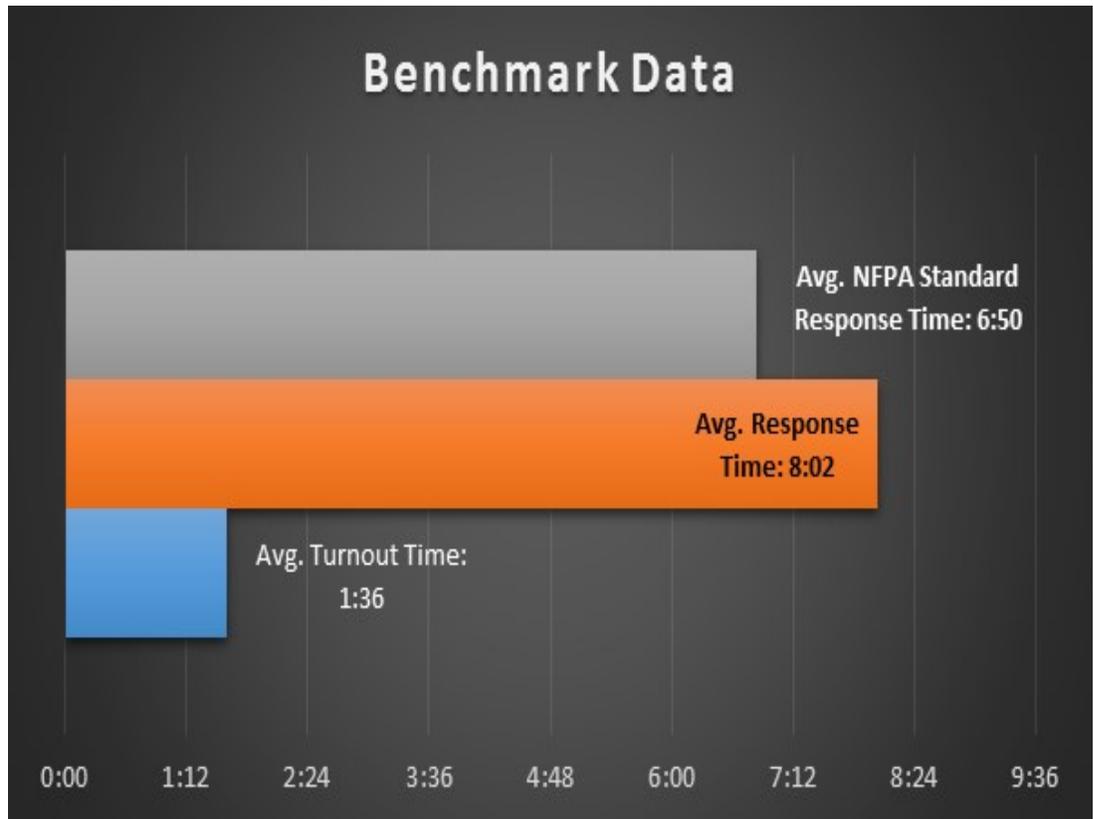
Left: Apparatus designation are as follows:

- E indicates Engine responses
- R indicates Rescue responses
- MC indicates the Med-Comm (roving paramedic supervisor)

2017 Response Statistics (cont'd)

Notable Calls for Service

- Cardiac “save” patient visits 3/B crew
- Trailer fire off of Inca Road
- Commercial fire at Del Taco
- House fire in unincorporated area of County
- House fire on Minturn Loop
- Wilderness SAR for two lost hikers
- House fire on San Busco
- Torrential flooding in July led to several rescues
- I-25 bus crash/ MCI
- Wildfire near Northern and Encino
- RRRFR assisted with bulldozer support on several wildfires
- Willow Creek Bosque fire
- House fire on Jane Circle
- Medical helicopter used for pedestrian struck by vehicle on NM528
- House fire on Spring Road
- House fire on Lisbon Road



INVOLVED IN OUR COMMUNITY

Rio Rancho Fire & Rescue not only responds to fire, medical, rescue, and service calls in our community, we also provide for special events, fund raising opportunities, and public services to the citizens. In 2018 we reached out to the community with many special events and programs offered by our firefighters. Here is a list of our efforts:

- Project Heart Start Day, and other venues—Mass public CPR education program;
- RioCares Program provides outreach for and follow up visits to our patients and victims of trauma;
- Fire Camp—Three-day hands-on summer camp for pre-teens;
- Annual Open House—Station 1 Open House and Halloween Costume Contest for kids;
- Fire Prevention Month—All young elementary students receive annual fire prevention message;
- Transported Santa to several children’s holiday events;
- 9/11 Ceremony—To honor those lost in the terrorist attacks;
- Reading to kids at various schools;
- Serving Holiday Meals to kids at the Children’s Hospital and seniors in Rio Rancho;
- Participated in several career days at local schools and recruiting fairs;
- Random Acts of Kindness provided help to residents in need;
- July 4th and Holiday parade;
- Pink T-shirt sales to benefit breast cancer research efforts;
- “Fill the Boot” campaign for the MDA
- New Mexico Firefighters event for St. Baldrick’s Foundation, raised critical funds for children’s

- cancer research;
- Fire station tours;
- Battle of the Badges blood drive—FD vs PD;
- Fire prevention education for City employees;
- And, Remember the Night for firefighter behavioral health.



The EMS Bike Team provided coverage for many special events.



Above: DC DeFillippo teaches a CPR class at the Mariposa Community Center.



Left: Kids at our annual Fire Camp

Right: FF Neal Naranjo helps a young participant at the annual Open House and Halloween Costume Contest.



TRAINING DIVISION REPORT BY TRAINING CAPTAIN MIKE LEGENDRE

For calendar year 2018, Rio Rancho Fire's 103 personnel completed a total of 38,907 hours of training. Firefighters are required to complete 228 hours of Fire Training and 40-60 hours of EMS Training per year. Depending on the level of EMS licensure, this equates to 268-288 required hours per year. Our personnel averaged 377 hours of training in 2018.

2018 Training Highlights

Lateral Academy Class 4 graduated seven cadets in the eight week academy. The Graduates were:

- David Gonzales (Top Cadet)
- Tyler Carlson
- Chris Garcia
- Sean Gerdemann
- Brandon Kaupa
- Roman Lucero
- Domineque Nunez

Academy Class 13 started on November 26 with 15 cadets. 12 cadets became firefighters in March of 2019.

Several members attended the following classes to enhance and improve their knowledge base:

- Emergency Vehicle Operations (24 hours)
- Fire Service Instructor I (40 hours)
- Fire Service Instructor II (40 hours)
- Fire Inspector I (40 hours)
- Haz-Mat Awareness and Operations (40 hours)
- Incident Command Systems – 300 (24 hours)
- Incident Command Systems – 400 (16 hours)
- Fire Officer I (40 hours)

EMS Consortium orientation was conducted for several physicians

The 228 hours of Fire Training includes six Facility drills which are – three-hour hands-on drills. The facility drills conducted this year include:

- Forcible Entry
- Firefighter Survival
- VEIS
- Pump Operations
- Hose Handling
- Rapid Intervention Team
- Several Captain's Choice Drills



Capt. Mike Legendre is carried down the ladder during rescue training.



Extrication training.



FF/PM Kirk Ricketts uses a cell phone's flashlight to illuminate the trachea of a pig being held by former PLT J.P. Martinez during airway training.

TRAINING DIVISION REPORT (CONT'D) BY TRAINING CAPTAIN MIKE LEGENDRE



Fire personnel use the Denver prop for firefighter rescue training.



Confined space training.

2018 Training Hours

- 38,907 total hours of training
- 3,979 EMS training hours
- 34,928 fire training hours
- 268-288 annual training hours each firefighter completed
- 377 average training hours per firefighter



DC DeFillippo, above, participates in Rescue Taskforce training. Eng. Brian Johnson, right, works on the forcible entry prop.



Firefighter practice their hose-handling skills during training evolutions.

The staff from the Office Emergency Management (OEM) Division experienced a year filled with training and exercises. Among some of the highlights are:

- Emergency Management received \$420,285.50 in grant money from State Homeland Security funds for Heavy Technical Rescue Team training, SWAT training, and equipment for the Police Department, Rescue Task Force training and equipment, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) training, and Emergency Management operations.
- Rio Rancho Office of Emergency Management worked with the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division and the Police Department to support the development and the execution of rescue task force training that was attended by all fire department and police department staff. The full day training was conducted four times in July and August and centered on coordinating the response of police and fire personnel during an active shooter incident.
- OEM, in coordination with the EMS Division, created and conducted Unified Command training for command staff of the police and fire department in May 2019. The training centered on a response to an active shooter incident at a local school.
- Conducted a functional exercise in May with Santa Ana Star Center that tested the response operations in the incident command post after a mass casualty incident during a large event.
- Confined space exercise with the Rio Grande Basin Heavy Technical Rescue Team (RGBHTRT), Sandoval Regional Medical Center (SRMC) and the 64th Civil Support Team on April 18, 2018. SRMC activated their command center and worked with the teams on scene during the exercise.
- Worked with Sandoval County OEM to update the countywide mitigation plan and submit the plan for approval to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) region 6.
- During 2018, there were 3 Emergency Operations



CERT volunteers set up rehabilitation services for firefighters working on a fire in the Rio Grande Bosque. CERT provides a number of support services for RRFRR.

Center (EOC) call down drills to test systems and procedures.

- The EOC had limited virtual activations during winter storms to enhance and streamline communications and requesting of resources.
- Incident Action Plans were developed for each day of Pork and Brew and the July 4th events to make the event safer and improve communication with all departments involved with the event.
- Emergency Management training continues to push toward National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance with City employees completing over 125 FEMA courses online or attending FEMA classes taught here in New Mexico. Taught two Incident Command System (ICS) 300 and ICS 400 class for Rio Rancho and surrounding departments. Captain Wenzel and EM Greeno attended Enhanced ICS training at Texas A&M to increase their knowledge and better instruct ICS courses locally.

CERT Highlights

- Three CERT classes were conducted in 2018 with 55 participants and 46 CERT graduates completed CPR/AED training during the six classes offered throughout the year.
- During 2018, CERT volunteers donated 1,400 hours to different department related trainings or events. They participated in 14 community events, like St. Baldrick's, Bataan Memorial Death March, Project Heart Start and the Halloween Open House, and 10 different trainings or exercises to support Emergency Management and the Fire Department.



The Wildland team responded to two fires in 2018. The heavy equipment part of the team responded to mutual aid fires for Albuquerque Fire Rescue and surrounding area for fires in the Rio Grande Bosque and for a tire fire in the Cuba area. While operational staffing issues plagued us this past season, the Wildland Team did pull together for a very successful annual challenge. We were able to provide fire protection for the Rio Grande Bosque during the July 4th holiday week. This helps our community during a time when the fire risk is the highest.

The Goals for the 2019 season:

- Qualify more heavy equipment operators.
- Qualify more heavy equipment Bosses.
- Stage our new tactical tender at Station 2 for response to the west side and for deployments.
- July 4th holiday week staffing starting June 20th and ending July 4th.
- Wildland Refresher March 7th at Station 5.

Big changes are going to be made for the upcoming season and should make deployment of personnel and equipment more manageable. This season will be a rebuilding season for the future.



Above—Crews patrol along the Rio Grande Bosque trail in Willow Creek on a “Severity Assignment” during the high-fire-danger season around the 4th of July.

Left—Dozer 4 works at clearing a fire line in the Rio Grande Bosque.



Above—RRFR’s bulldozer was deployed to the scene of a tire fire near the Village of Cuba. The dozer helped create a fire-break and keep the fire from spreading.

Wildland firefighters mop up hot spots at a fire in the Rio Grande Bosque.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) constitutes over two-thirds of our incident responses and the EMS Division has been working diligently to grow our service delivery and our medical guidelines to better serve our responders and our community. Some of our most notable accomplishments for 2018 are listed below.

- While on a light duty assignment, FF/PM Malary (Lardy) Norton set a strong foundation for the future Community EMS program.
- We were able to renew our Community EMS certificate with the New Mexico EMS Bureau.
- In a new and unique program, we had a medical student ride along with FF/PM Norton to get some experience in community outreach.
- We increased our community outreach with more hands-on CPR classes held.
- Our special skills applications for Tranexamic Acid (TXA) and prehospital ultrasound were approved by the state.
- Implemented the usage of Toradol for pain control.
- We sent two firefighters to complete a paramedic training program.
- We designed a new EMT-Intermediate (Advanced EMT) training program, which will be held in early 2019.
- EMS Division personnel began the process of developing a new EMS supply cache at Station 5.
- We received a new rescue from Public Safety Bond funding. A second new unit will be delivered in mid-2019.
- Due to RRFR's shortage of paramedics, we had to rely on our basic and intermediate life-support personnel to provide EMS coverage for staffing our rescues.
- Combined active shooter training with police officers was held over the summer and fall.
- We held promotional testing for the new Paramedic Lieutenants position (PLT). Two of our original PLT cadre (Lt. Moreno and Lt. Martinez) both resigned to pursue other positions or attend advanced training.
- We were able to migrate our electron patient care reporting (ePCR) system to the new to the Elite platform.

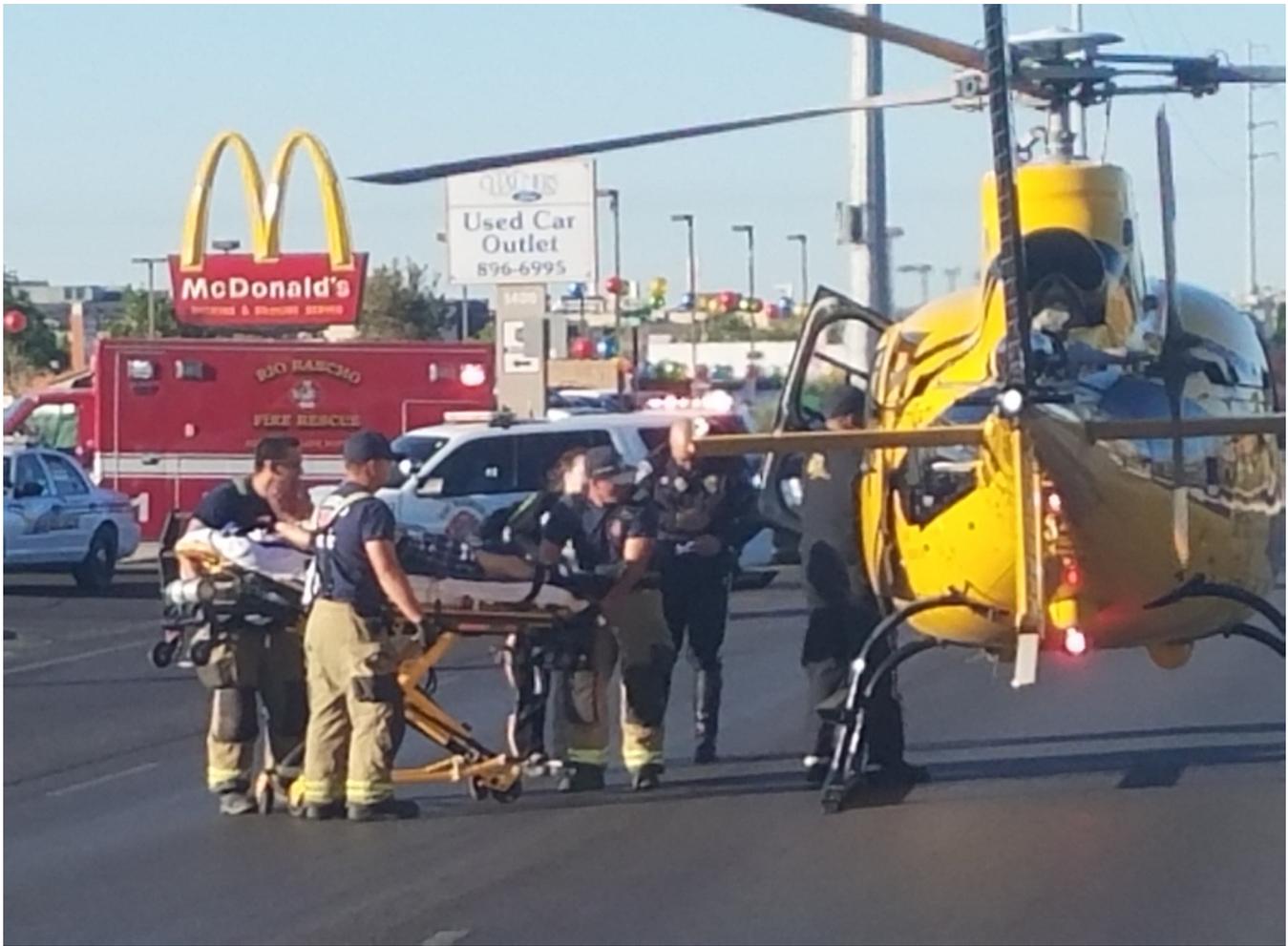
We have been working on the development and implementation of new programs and creating new partnerships with other agencies to create additional resources for our personnel to use and to benefit our community. Our hope is that 2019 will be another exciting year with many changes, new programs, and cutting-edge medical treatments.



FF/PM Chris Mandeville works with an airway mannequin during EMS training.



Crews check out the scene of a two-vehicle crash on Southern Blvd.



A trauma patient is loaded onto PHI 5-1 medical helicopter on NM528 near Southern after a vehicle vs. pedestrian crash.

MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR *BY DARREN BRAUDE, M.D. EMT-P*

I am excited that we welcomed several new firefighters in 2018 and we have two department members (Aric Ray and Keadrick Kingery) currently attending the paramedic program at Albuquerque Fire and Rescue. While we are waiting for medic reinforcements our BLS/ILS crews, backed up by the EMS Lieutenants, have really stepped up and have been doing an outstanding job.

The EMS Lieutenant "Medcom-1" program has continued to grow with more emphasis on running critical calls instead of purely administrative responsibilities. Jeremiah Moreno and JP Martinez both resigned their EMS Lieutenant positions in 2018 to move on to other opportunities but Colin Rice and Carlos Trujillo have been promoted into these full-time open-

ings and have hit the ground running. Among many benefits, this program has allowed us to pursue a special skill for cardiac ultrasound which puts us in an elite group nationally.

Our Community EMS program continues to grow and I would like to thank Paramedic Malary Norton (Lardy) who helped lay the foundation for our success while on light-duty. In 2018 we completed dozens of Blue Cross/Blue Shield visits and this program has the potential to expand and become self-supporting, and at the same time, we can help patients stay in their homes safely rather than require prolonged hospital or nursing facility admission.

One major event for the year was the bus crash on I-25 that required response from

multiple agencies including Rio Rancho Fire and Rescue. While a very unfortunate event, this was a great display of interagency cooperation between SCFD, RRRFR, AFR, AAS, Lifeguard, PHI and the EMS Consortium.

This Department, its leadership and all MOS continue to impress me with their commitment to providing the highest quality patient care to the citizens and visitors of Rio Rancho. I am looking forward to continued growth in 2019 to include full implementation of our cardiac ultrasound special skill, an update of our treatment guidelines, new personnel responding to calls for service, implementation of a dedicated interfacility transfer unit and more community EMS resources.



Batt. Chief Scott Kelley retired after his long fire service career.



Capt. Tom Parascandola retired from RRRF after 20-years of service.

Awards & Retirements



FF Marcus Sierra retired after 20-years of service



Above, Capt. Mark Baker took his ceremonial final ride home after his retirement. Left, FF/PM Jose Martinez III got a send off from his colleagues after his long career in Fire and EMS.



FF Ray Denison retired from RRRF after serving several communities during his tenure as a firefighter.



Officer of the Year—Michael Legendre; FF of the Year—Lt. Jessica Duron-Martinez; EMS Provider of the Year—Lt. Colin Rice. Capt. Legendre also received Officer of the Year from the State (bottom photo)

Fire Chief Michael Meek Retires



After seven years at the helm of the Department, Fire Chief Michael Meek retired with 25 years of service to the Department and the community. He was honored for his

career with his ceremonial last ride home. Congratulations, Chief, enjoy your next journey.

FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION BY FIRE MARSHAL J.J. GARCIA

The Fire Prevention Division had another successful year with some exciting changes. Last year we converted an inspector/investigator position into a Lieutenant's position, which has proven to be beneficial in many ways. We have taken the lead



Fire prevention personnel provide coverage at the Mayor's Sunday is Funday.

on a number of projects to increase the Division's abilities and outreach. The Fire Prevention Team concept became a reality with an aim at providing specially-trained firefighters to deliver a strong

fire prevention message to school kids, civic organizations, and other groups.

We have collectively worked on streamlining the process for businesses to obtain a city license and new construction projects to receive approval. We have provided businesses with a liaison for them to better understand the code requirements and navigate through the approval process. This addition has helped business owners avoid unexpected costs and created a positive working relationship with all entities involved.

The Fire Prevention staff completed close to 1,500 inspections in 2018. Total fire inspections were down slightly due to fewer re-inspections and a noted improvement on how businesses

addressed life safety concerns. Plan reviews and fire sprinkler plans for new commercial construction were up from last year. Residential building and subdivision planning also kept our staff busy as they worked with the City's Planning Review Committee.

As our department continues to evolve and be more proactive in community outreach and training, we will continue our goal to complete our required certifications and advanced training and learn new ways to help the community, business growth, and provide for the safety of our citizens.

Our goals for the coming year:

- Adopt the 2015 edition of the fire code
- Continue to collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions on the development of an Arson Task Force to increase our resources when catastrophic fires occur
- All Inspector/Investigators to become ICC certified

FMO at a Glance

- Fire Inspections—1,471
- Plan Reviews—221
- Fire Protection System Reviews—51
- Special Events Staffed—54

The Rio Grande Basin Heavy Technical Rescue Team (RGBHTRT) experienced a busy and productive year with our personnel compiling more than 1,200 combined hours of training in addition to a 40 hour Trench Rescue Class for new members. The regional team, which consists of 14 members from Rio Rancho Fire and Rescue (RRFR), as well as members from the Sandoval County and Corrales Fire Departments, has a core group of 30 personnel and last year completed refresher trainings in all seven disciplines of technical rescue to which we respond. In addition, the team was able to send all of our members to an updated Technical Rope Rescue Technician-class late last year to ensure we are using the newest technology to perform this common type of rescue efficiently. With the assistance of our Emergency Manager Theresa Greeno, we secured roughly \$25,000 in grant money for the class, and another \$25,000 for much-needed equipment.

Last year RGBHTR responded to 14 calls for service, ranging from our first cell phone tower rescue, search and rescue of lost hikers in Sandoval County, ATV/motorcycle accidents in the Rio Puerco, and a technical body recovery in the mountains of Jemez Springs. The Team responded four times for water related rescues in the Rio Grande. The Team was a noted participant in the highly-publicized rescue of an injured hiker from the Jemez Mountains in September.

In April, the Team participated in an evaluated multi-agency exercise with Sandoval Regional Medical Center, New Mexico 64th CST National Guard Units, and Rio Rancho Police Department. The scenario tested inter agency cooperation as well as Team capabilities regarding Hazardous



The team participated in a multi-agency exercise at Sandoval Regional Medical Ctr.



Two high-angle incidents included a cell-phone tower rescue, above, and search and rescue in the Jemez Mountains, right.



The team trained together on multiple technical rescue disciplines including wilderness search and rescue and high-angle.

Materials and Structural Collapse.

Looking forward, the Team's administration has identified Swiftwater Rescue Technician training as a priority class for new members and refresher class for veteran members. This challenging swiftwater rescue class is scheduled for two weeks in April to be conducted in Farmington and Durango. We are able to attend this course by capitalizing on grant money received to improve the team's readiness. An additional requirement for national resource typing is Flood and Swiftwater Boat Operator. We plan to send several of our members to this new boat operator class this Spring, increasing our abilities and typing, should we be called to help our neighboring states as well as our own when monsoon season hits the Southwest U.S.

The Team has added another valuable resource with the addition of a team of two rescue/cadaver dogs. These dedicated handlers, trainers and animals have been successfully deployed within and outside the state including the recent cadaver discovery on the West Mesa bringing closure to two separate families.

The team has trained and acquired some equipment in pursuit of providing a premier Rapid Extraction Module (REM) Team in support of wildland fire-fighting efforts across the state in 2019 .



The Del Taco commercial fire in December, above; and a structure fire in May, right.



Left—A structure fire in January; Center—FF Aric Ray works at a wildland fire in July; and Above—Capt. Craigen Higgins and FF Daniel Wild responded to torrential flooding to perform a rescue.



A large structure fire on Chacon, west of the City, created a large plume of smoke in January.



An apartment fire in December created some challenges for fire personnel due to the high-fire load in the residence.

Off-Duty Fun, Adventure & Charity



Capt. Sean Bergen, left, and Eng. Matt Lucero showed off their new hair styles as they prepared to shave for charity at the annual St. Baldrick's Event.



Fire Chief Michael Meek (Ret.), took his final bow as he went "off duty" with his retirement. He is shown here with a signed fire helmet used back in the RRDPS days.



Firefighters Jeremy Martinez, Sean Hannold, and Aric Ray all climbed mountains in Washington state.



RRFR personnel participated in a benefit Workout of the Day (WOD) at Crossfit Rio Rancho. From left are: Capt. Craigen Higgins, Capt. Drew Garcia, EM Theresa Greeno, Fire Chief Meek (Ret.), Deputy Chief Jimmy DeFillippo, Fire Chief Paul Bearce, and FF Aaron McDevitt.



FF Maria D'Angelo represented firefighters at a cops vs firefighter boxing event in Las Cruces (she won her bout).

Peer Support Team Provides Assistance

By Capt. Ryan Floersheim—According to a recent survey, it is estimated that one in five firefighters will suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) in their career. That is just one of the shocking results from a recent study by the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF). The anonymous survey featured response from 7,000 firefighters from across the United States. The results showed that firefighters reported that stressful or traumatic experiences on the job have impacted their mental health. Among their struggles, they reported being directly related to the job: 19 percent have had thoughts of suicide; 27 percent have struggled with substance abuse; 59 percent have experienced relationship problems; and 65 percent are haunted by memories of bad calls.

Rio Rancho Fire Rescue's (RRFR) Peer Support Team

(PST) is committed to serving as the first line of mental health defense for members of our department as we all navigate our way through our careers. The team has existed for nine years and is completely member-driven. To assure confidentiality for firefighters the team created a new confidentiality agreement. The team members are a diverse group from all ranks, and from every division of our department. To become a PST member, they completed an advanced peer support and crisis mitigation class. They all have a baseline of knowledge to help identify the types of mental health problems we are likely to experience and to help them refer others to the many resources available.

This year the PST increased our educational efforts and will be teaching classes to our cadet academies and our current Captains and Battalion Chiefs. We will also be looking at providing a refresher to the entire department this year. Our team is also

taking the successes teaching our introductory peer support classes to neighboring departments and expanding the outreach in the upcoming months.

While the team's priority is RRFR personnel, we are also part of the larger Metro Peer Support Team, which now includes almost every department from Las Cruces to Farmington. Our PST members can be called upon by other departments to help facilitate critical stress debriefings or serve as a resource for

firefighter who may want to talk to someone from outside their agency. As a result all the resources that exist within those other departments are also at the disposal of our department. A list of all the participating agencies, as well as the Public Safety Psychology Group, which now serves as our sole Employee Assistance Program provider, allowing for unlimited and confidential



Firefighter/illustrator Paul Combs has lost several colleagues and friends to suicide caused by the chronic stressors of the firefighter profession. He uses his artwork to tell the story of the struggles firefighters may have with mental health issues, work-related stress, and the balancing of career and family life.

counseling services, can be found at the team's website at metropeersupport.com.

The team is always looking for new members, so if you or someone you know would like to serve in this important capacity, please get with Lt. Rice or Captain Floersheim for more details.



This QR Code can take you to the Metro Peer Support website where there are resources available for RRFR members.



THE MEN & WOMEN OF RRRFR



Capt. Kevin Canfield, left, FF Gerard Bauer, and Eng. Sammy Villanueva.



RRFR personnel who helped at a ceremonial push of the new Eng. 1 back into the bay.



Fire Inspectors Robert Brady, left, and Brian Bratcher.



Eng. Brandi Luce, left, and FF Deidre Maurino.



Capt. Brian Dolan.



Fire Chief Paul Bearce, left, Deputy Chief Jimmy DeFillippo, and Lt. Colin Rice demonstrate the use of tourniquets and bandaging at a health fair.



Left—FF Brad Kornrumpf rescued a puppy; and, above—Firefighters Aaron McDevitt, left, and Isaiah Vaughn load up their plates at a city event in Haynes Park.

As 2018 draws to a close we would like to take a moment to look back on our achievements and future goals . Our members remain committed to Rio Rancho Fire and Rescue and to the community we serve. There have been significant changes and growth within our union during 2018. Local 4877 is proud of our members as they develop in their careers and continue to grow within our department. After much hard work and time the department implemented a new Lieutenant position. We celebrated as the city approved two of our members to continue their education and career development with paramedic school. We have also begun to experience the retirements of founding members; although we miss these members in our daily operations we encourage their continued involvement in our union events. We are excited to see changes and growth in 2019.

Local 4877 has maintained community involvement with our fundraising and generous giving through the year. Our membership has celebrated continued success in October Pink T-shirts event, St. Baldrick's and Random Acts of Kindness. We have brought new fundraising into our ranks with the Fight-for-Air climb which benefits Lung Cancer research. Our members who continually organize and put time into these events should be proud of their accomplishments. We greatly appreciate your

hard work.

Our national IAFF celebrated its centennial in 2018. Members of the board attended the centennial convention in Seattle, Washington. Sammy Villanueva attended The Political Training Academy in Baltimore, MD. We also had members attend the annual IAFF Memorial for Fallen Firefighters in Colorado Springs, CO. Working with our New Mexico State Professional Firefighters Assoc. we were able to help run and have city officials attend our Fire Operations 101, which demonstrated the stresses and rewards of a day in the life of firefighters.



It has come time for contract negotiations to begin in February of 2019. A negotiations committee has been formed and is looking forward to representing L4877 and working toward a beneficial and fair contract. We remain committed to our promise to provide unity through representation.

It is Local 4877's goal to promote a harmonious working relationship between members and the city. We do this through promoting healthy working environments, just compensation for services, reasonable working conditions and health benefits to maintain general welfare of our membership. Your continued involvement in our union is essential. Thank you for the opportunity to lead our organization.



Crews assisted in providing fire suppression coverage at the annual Cleveland High School bon fire prior to one of their football games.