

# ASHLAND FIRE & RESCUE



## 2021 Annual Report

# Ashland Fire & Rescue



**PROUDLY SERVING ASHLAND AND  
THE ROGUE VALLEY  
SINCE 1887**

**Cover Photograph:  
Ashland Fire and Rescue Station 1**

# Ashland Fire & Rescue

## Mission Statement

Ashland Fire & Rescue is dedicated to protecting lives, property, and the environment. By delivering fire suppression, emergency medical, disaster management, fire prevention and public education services by professionally trained, dedicated personnel, we strive to achieve the highest quality of public service to our customers.

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## Values and Expectations

### PROFESSIONALISM

Dependability - *Reliability to duty and responsibility to others*  
Excellence - *Continually improving job skills and knowledge base*  
Presentation - *Displaying a high level of fitness and positive attitude*

### COMPASSION

Empathy - *Understands and values how others feel*  
Service to Others - *Giving of one's time and energy to meet the needs of others*

### INTEGRITY

Honesty - *Being truthful and straightforward*  
Accountable - *Responsible for one's own actions*  
Ethical - *Doing the right thing even when no one else is watching*

### TEAMWORK

Respect - *Shows high regard for others*  
Cooperation - *Contributes to the team*  
Loyalty - *Shows devotion to the improvement of the department*

### COMMUNITY

Involvement - *Participates in department and community events*  
Family - *Supports coworkers, their families, and the community*



# Ashland Fire & Rescue 2021 Annual Report

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## Message from the Fire Chief

Ashland Fire & Rescue is committed to uphold the mission, vision and expectations of the department through professional interaction of all of its members with that of our community and stakeholders. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve and lead this department of professional members who display high ethical standards, empathy, and a commitment to the community they serve.

As I reflect on my first six months as your fire chief, I am truly inspired by the commitment of this staff to our community, I recognize and want to thank the continued and overwhelming community support for Ashland Fire & Rescue and the many programs it represents to this community.

As we continue to move through the rigors of the pandemic and the restrictions it has brought to our communities, I am grateful for a staff that adapts and overcomes to continual changes.

I am proud to present Ashland Fire & Rescues annual report for 2021. This report is an overview of the highlights and accomplishments of Ashland Fire & Rescue for calendar year 2021.

Ashland Fire & Rescue strives to maintain a high level of service to the community and surrounding area. We are continually challenged by an increasing response volume and insufficient staffing to meet this demand. Our philosophy is to not only provide response services, but be invested in the community's education, training, and preparedness. We look forward to the end of the pandemic so that we can once again participate in these necessary community programs.

Ashland truly is a magical place with many things to offer its citizens. Its majestic mountains and tree lined steep roads bring true beauty to this community yet provide the knowledge that a fire threat is continually around us. While we continue to prepare for the protection of our community I ask that all community members take the time to prepare for our wildfire season, as well as the Cascadia event

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Fire Chief and for your interest in Ashland Fire & Rescue, If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

*Ralph Sartain, Fire Chief*

## Department History and Information

### General

Ashland Fire & Rescue provides fire suppression, fire prevention, emergency medical, rescue, and forest management services to the 21,056 citizens and 6.52 square miles of Ashland. Ashland Fire & Rescue also provides advanced life support medical transportation for Jackson County Ambulance Service Area #3 making up 650 square miles from the California border to Phoenix. Ashland Fire & Rescue also provides the following services to our community:

Firewise USA

Wildfire Risk Reduction Programs

City Emergency Management

Emergency Preparedness

CERT Program

Fire Prevention Inspections

Fire Investigations

Public Safety Education

Nixle Community Alerting

Fire Alarm and Sprinkler Plan Reviews

Evacuation Planning and Outreach

Management of Ashland's Forest Lands

Weed Abatement

Citizen Complaint Response

### Fire Department History

Like many towns across America, Ashland has literally been shaped by fire. On March 11, 1879, a devastating fire that began in a blacksmith's shop destroyed many of the businesses on the west side of the plaza. Many of the masonry structures that replaced the wooden buildings are still standing today.

On August 3, 1885, the new city council approved City Ordinance No. 14. Section 1 created a fire committee of between three to five persons and defined its duties and powers. Section 2 outlined the committee's responsibilities—recommending fire prevention methods to the city council, examining all buildings within the city limits, and prosecution of violators. The committee was also to direct the movements of all city fire companies. Section 3 granted police powers to the committee, allowing members to require that all bystanders assist in subduing fires and to arrest anyone who hindered the work of the firefighters.

Ashland City Ordinance No. 17, passed in August, 1985, established the city's fire limits, prohibited construction of wooden buildings in the fire district, and required fire-proof chimneys. It also forbade building additions on wooden structures and stipulated that wooden buildings in the fire limits could not be rebuilt if they were damaged at least fifty percent in any way. City Ordinance No. 27 prohibited blacksmith shops within the fire limits as well as open fireplaces in any wooden building.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Atwood, K. (1997) *Ashland Fire Department: A History*



Elks Lodge Fire July 17, 1968

## History and Information (continued)

### Staffing

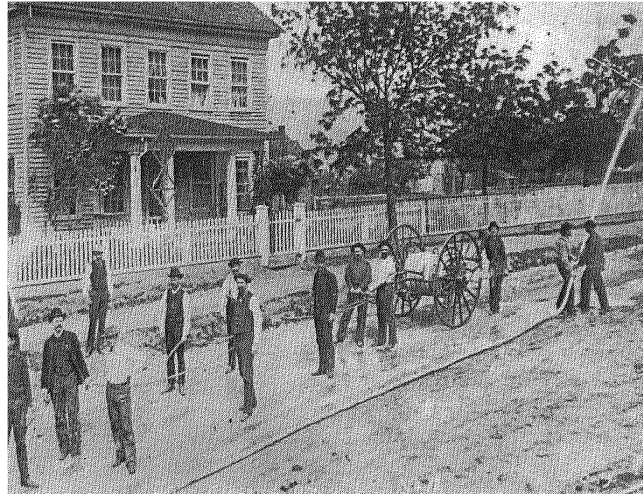
Ashland Fire & Rescue has four divisions currently assigned to it. Administration, Operations, Fire and Life Safety and Wildfire. Administration currently has 3 FTE's, the Fire Chief, The Operations Chief and the Administrative Analyst. Operations currently has 31 line personnel, 28 paramedics, 3 EMT-Basics and a total staffing level of 31.0 FTE's (with 1 Council Authorized yet unfunded FTE)

The daily staffing level for line personnel is a minimum of eight and maximum of ten. Line personnel work a schedule of

48 hours on-duty then 96 hours off-duty yielding a 56 hour work week. Additional personnel may be called in during extreme fire weather, large emergencies, winter weather and for special events. The Fire and Life Safety Division has the Fire Marshal (Currently Unfunded) The CERT Coordinator at .5FTE and the Weed Abatement Coordinator at a .4 (Unfunded FTE). The Wildfire Division has the Division Chief, Community Preparedness Coordinator, Wildfire Risk Reduction Specialist and a.5 FTE Community Engagement Coordinator.

The departments Fire Chief is also the City's Emergency Manager and current Fire Marshal. There is one Deputy Chief who also serves as the department's Operations, and is the back up Emergency Manager. There are supposed to be two Division Chiefs, one overseeing fire and life safety matters, and one who oversees all watershed and forest lands/wildfire protection issues.

Line personnel are broken down into three platoons, A, B, and C shifts. Each platoon has a commander known as a Battalion Chief who oversees all activities of that shift. Each shift also has two Captains, one assigned at each station. Each shift has two Engineers who are trained to operate the fire engines, one assigned to each station. The remainder of each shift is made up of Firefighter/Paramedics and Firefighter EMT's who are assigned either to the ambulance or engine depending on the nature



Ashland Hose Company No. 1 1887



## History and Information (continued)

of the response. Shift members may also qualify to fill a position above their current rank if a vacancy exists. All shift personnel are certified to perform fire safety inspections in low hazard occupancies such as retail shops, apartment buildings and student housing.

### GOVERNANCE AND BUDGET

The City of Ashland will now operate under a City Manager form of government, replacing the strong Mayor-Council form of government. Ashland Fire & Rescue operates under Oregon Revised Statutes 476 and Article XIII of the City Charter. Ashland Fire & Rescue enforces numerous codes relating to building construction, fire and life safety, wildfire hazard zones, wildfire fuels management and weed abatement.

The budget process, organized under Oregon budget law, utilizes five citizens as lay members of the city budget committee, who are joined by the Mayor and Council. The Budget Committee approves the budget, which is the annual spending plan for the City. The City Council adopts the budget following a public hearing. The biennium 2021/2023 budget for Ashland Fire & Rescue is \$10,467,121 and \$10,103,144. Ashland Fire & Rescue charges for services such as ambulance response and transportation of patients, plan reviews, fire safety inspections, and certain hazardous materials spills, motor vehicle accidents, and remote area rescues.





## Response Information

### TYPES OF RESPONSES FOR 2021

The following charts show the number of calls for each hour of the day as well as the general types of incidents and their percentage of overall responses.

#### 2021 Fire Department Response Information

**4,785....Incidents Responded in 2021**

**6,521....Number of Individual Vehicle Responses in 2021**

**2,554....Number of Patients Transported in 2021**

**3,170....Number of Patients Contacted in 2021**

**292...Number of Fire and Life Safety Inspections/Plan Reviews.**

**3,044....Calls for service from Station 1**

**1,741....Calls for Service from Station 2**

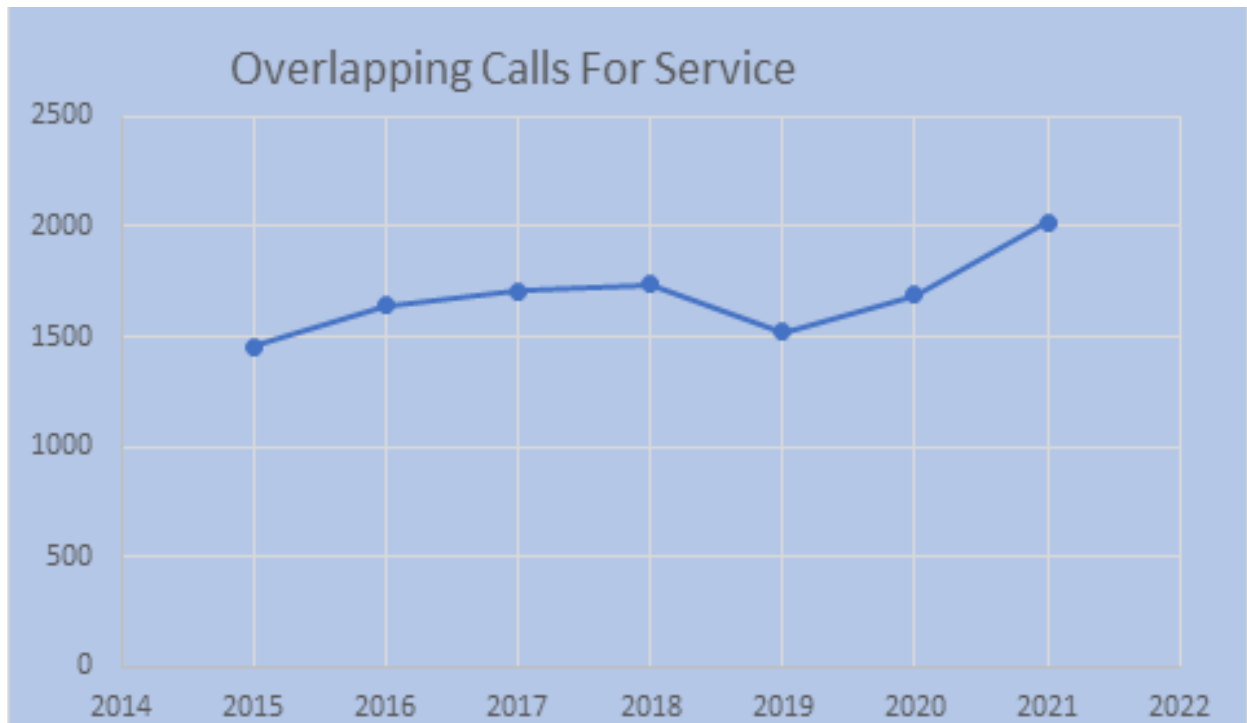
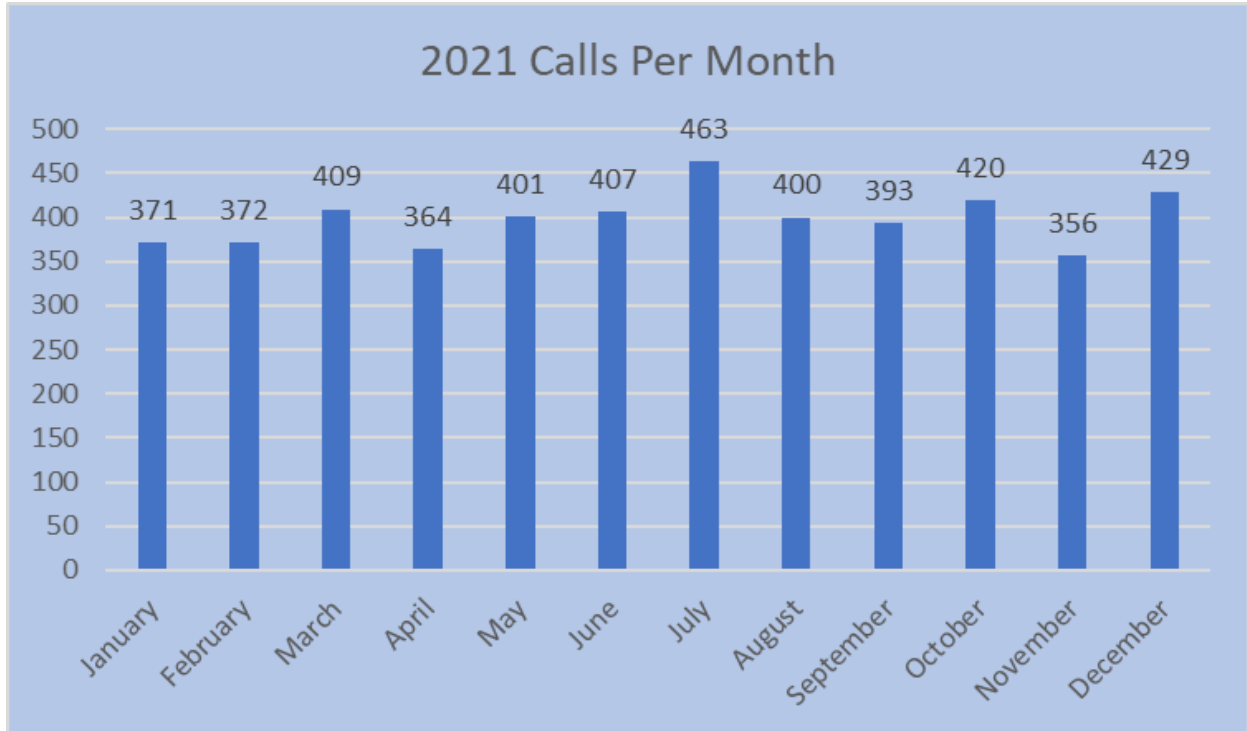
**6.1%....Increase in calls for service over 2020's 4510 total calls.**

**2,079..... Number of Overlapping Calls for service or 43.45% of calls occur simultaneously leaving one or no personnel available for additional calls for service.**

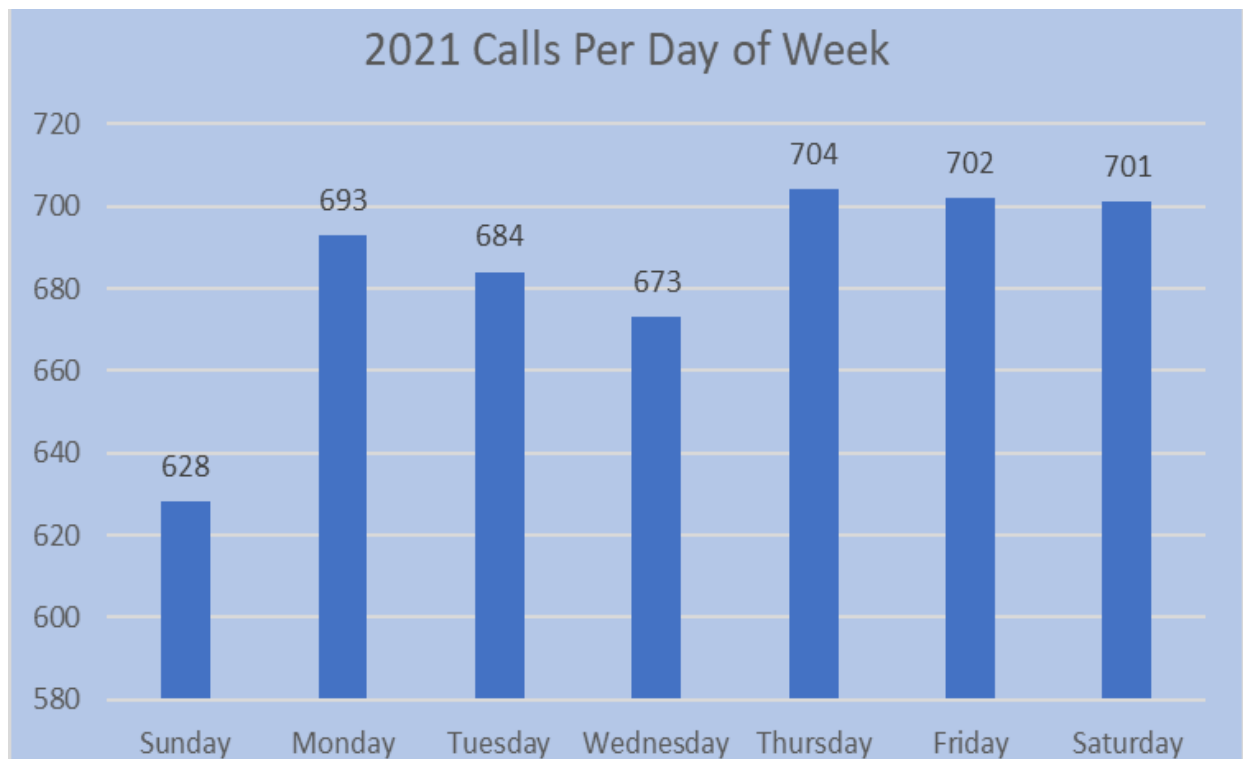
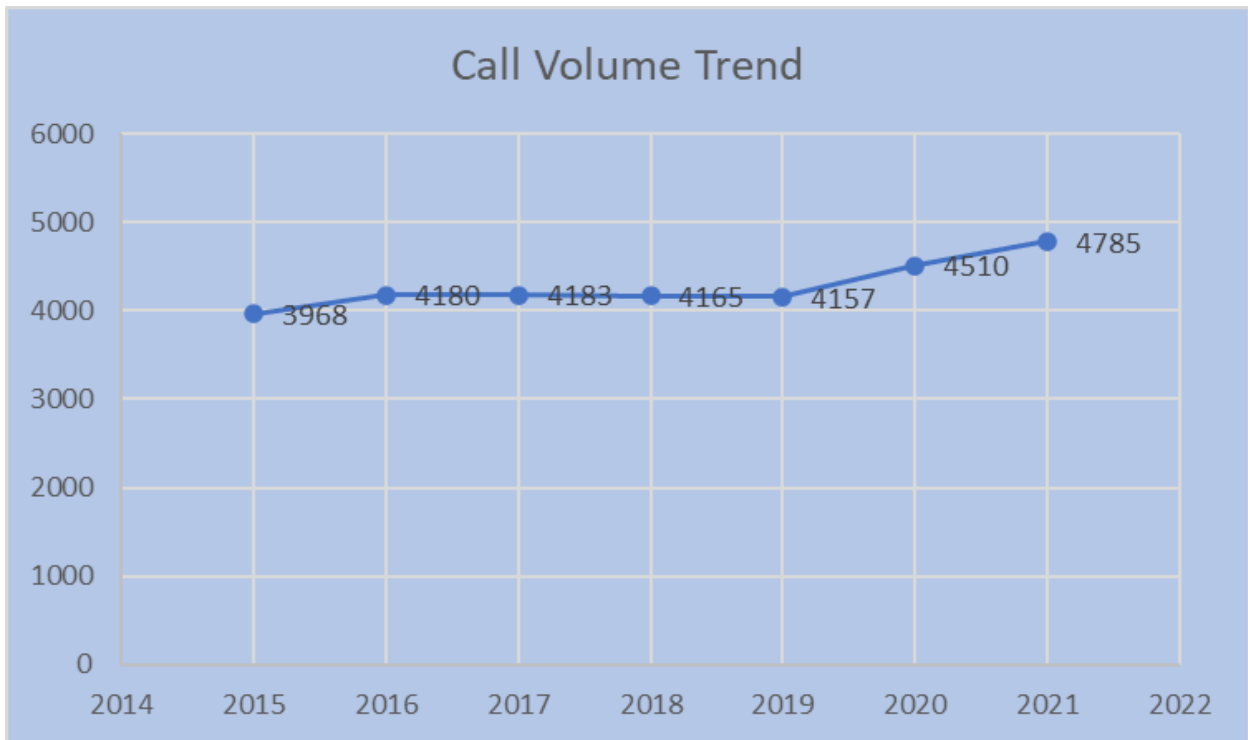
**1,325....Of the 4785 calls were for Ambulance Service, assistance to Fire District 5, and Unincorporated/Unprotected Fire Areas outside of City Limits.**



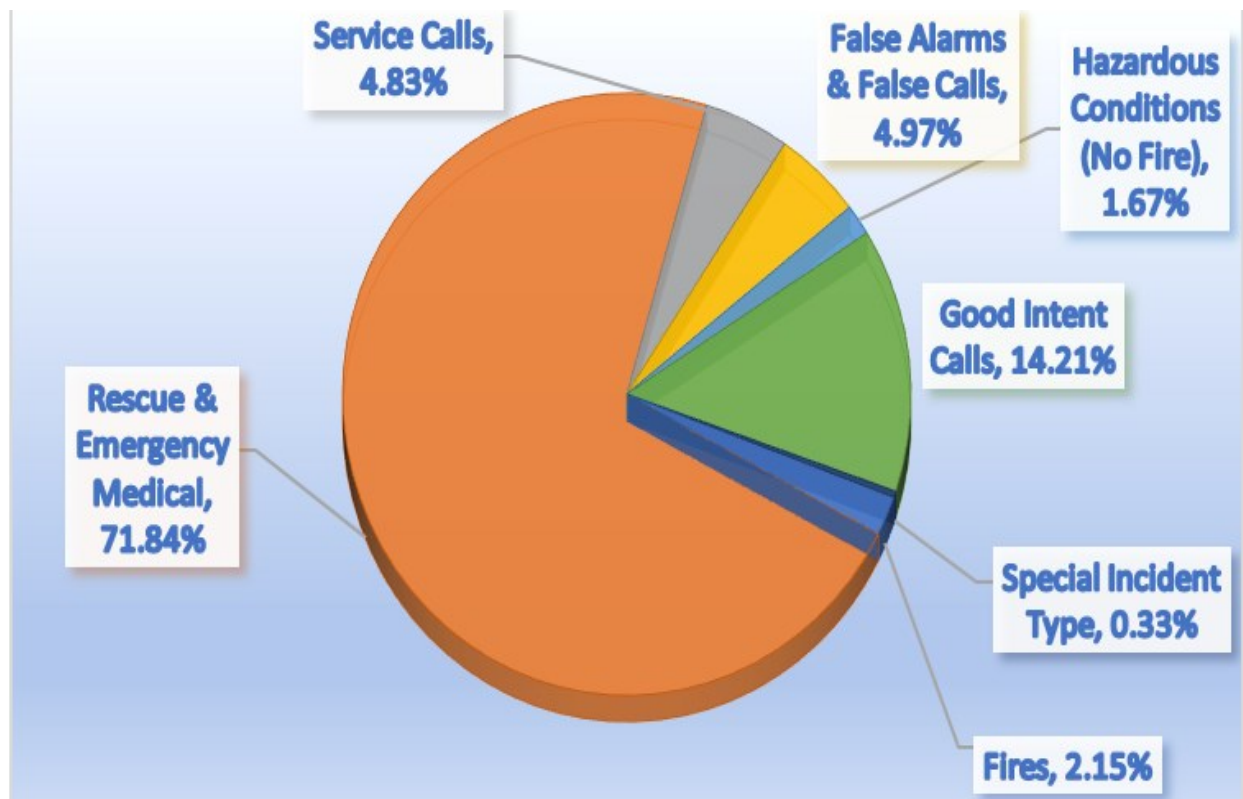
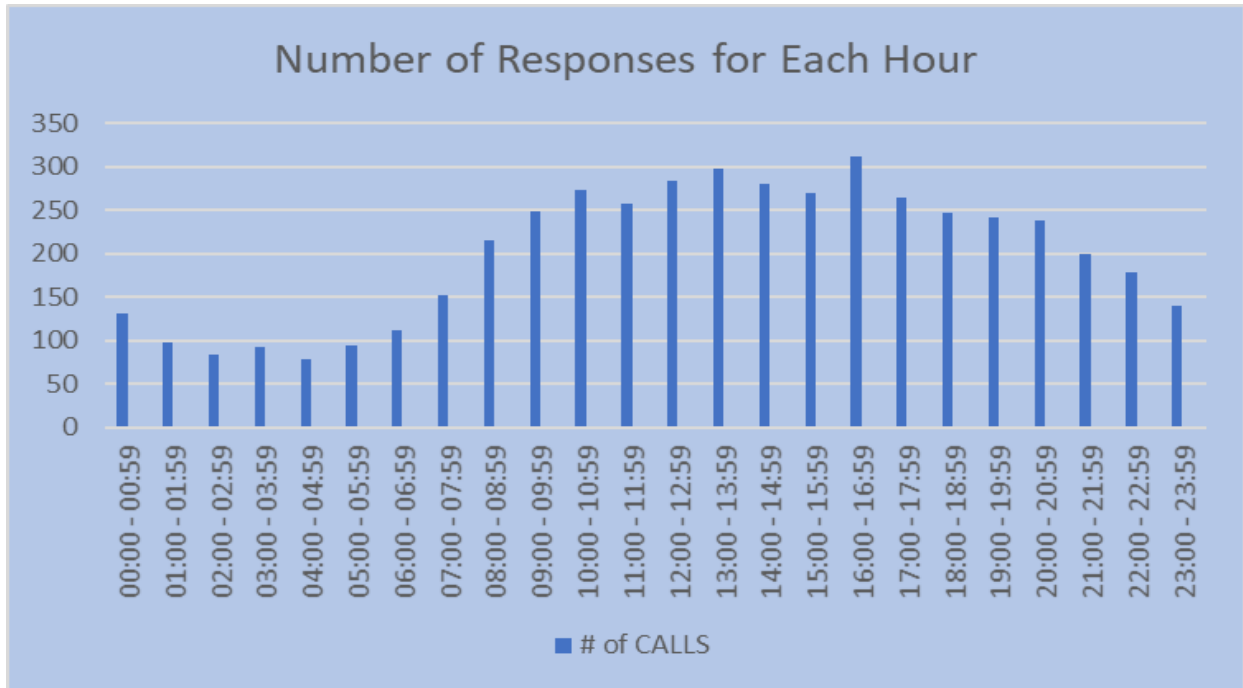
## Response Information



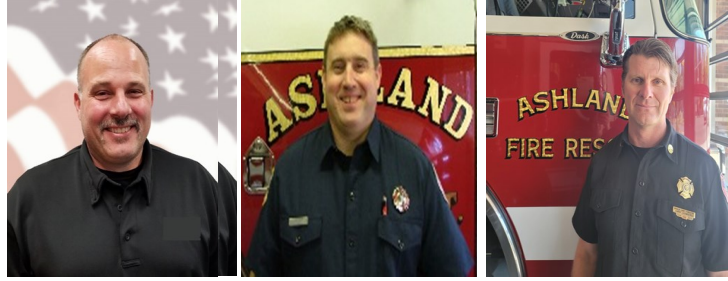
## Response Information



# Response Information



## Staff Photos



**Fire Chief  
Ralph Sartain**

**Deputy Fire Chief  
Marshall Rasor**

**Wildfire Division Chief  
Chris Chambers**



**Administrative Analyst  
Emily Matlock**

**FAC Coordinator  
Brian Hendrix**

**Comm. Engagement  
Coordinator  
Sara Jones**

**Wildfire Risk Reduction  
Luke Wimmer**



**Battalion Chief  
Steven Boyersmith**

**Battalion Chief  
Lance Menold**

**Battalion Chief  
Kelly Burns**



**Captain  
Todd Stubbs**

**Captain  
Todd Beck**

**Captain  
Ashley Manning**

**Captain  
Nick Palmesano**



**Captain  
Shannon Turner**

**Captain  
Justin Foss**

## Staff Photos (Continued)



**Engineer  
Daniel Caples**

**Engineer  
David Roselip**

**Engineer  
Robert Trask**

**Engineer  
Andrew Burns**

**Engineer  
Mike Mekkers**

**Engineer  
Rod LaCoste**



**Firefighter  
Jim Thomason**

**Firefighter  
Matthew Stewart**

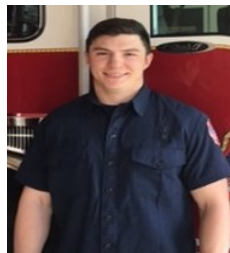
**Firefighter  
Ron Garfas-**

**Firefighter  
Tim Hegdahl**

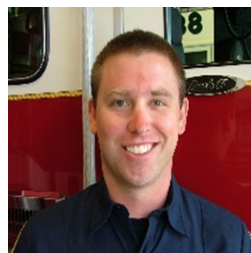
**Firefighter  
Alfredo Echaide**



**Firefighter  
Ty Haggard**



**Firefighter  
Jake Kyle**



**Firefighter  
Brandon Winwood**



**Firefighter  
Shawn Gallagher**



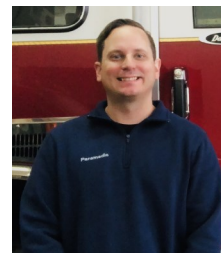
**Firefighter  
Jacob Bergren**



**Firefighter  
Luke Gregg**



**Firefighter  
Westin Martin**



**Firefighter  
Matt Brown**

# Stations and Equipment

## FIRE STATION 1 455 Siskiyou Boulevard



**2011 CHEVROLET  
COMMAND VEHICLE**



**2014 PIERCE TYPE 1 PUMPER**



**2003 PIERCE WILDLAND  
INTERFACE ENGINE**



**2017 BRAUN  
AMBULANCE**



**2011 LIFELINE  
AMBULANCE**



**2002 PIERCE TYPE 1 RESERVE  
PUMPER**



**2017 TYPE 6 BRUSH  
ENGINE**



**2006 LIFELINE  
RESERVE AMBULANCE**

## Stations and Equipment (continued)

### FIRE STATION 2 1860 Ashland Street



**2014 PIERCE TYPE 1  
PUMPER**



**2007 FORD TYPE 6 PUMPER  
BRUSH ENGINE**



**2015 HORTON  
AMBULANCE**



**2008 LIFELINE RESERVE  
AMBULANCE**



**TECHNICAL RESCUE  
TRAILER**



## Fire and Emergency Operations

**A**shland Fire & Rescue responds to a wide variety of call types within the City of Ashland. We also provide medical transportation in Ambulance Service Area Three (ASA #3). This ASA is defined by Jackson County and runs from the California border to the southern city limits of Phoenix. The department responds to and receives aid from neighboring jurisdictions under mutual and automatic aid agreements. The department also participates with other state resources through Oregon's Emergency Conflagration Act managed by the Oregon State Police/State Fire Marshal. Jackson County Fire District 5 and Ashland Fire & Rescue also have a cooperative agreement to rotate "Duty Officer" assignments so that both departments can get a second Chief Officer responding if the incident is significant.

Ashland is divided into two fire response districts. Fire Station 1, 455 Siskiyou Blvd., serves District 1 and Fire Station 2, 1860 Ashland St., serves District 2. District 1 has approximately 74% of the responses and District 2 approximately 26%. Most of the responses to the Green Springs



**Rollover Accident**

area and incidents on I-5 are handled by Station 2. The administration staff is assigned to Fire Station 1.

As with all fire departments in Jackson County, Ashland Fire & Rescue resources are dispatched by Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon (ECSO), a dispatch and PSAP (public safety answering point) center located near the Medford airport. Both Ashland Police Department and Ashland Fire & Rescue pay a fee to ECSO based on population of area served and number of responses.

Ashland Fire & Rescue maintains hazardous materials technician certifications for one line member. Hazardous materials releases are rare for the Rogue Valley but the I-5 corridor brings a strong potential for a significant hazardous materials event. The department also maintains the ability for basic radiation detection through an inventory of Geiger-Muller meters and personal dosimeters. Any technical response needed for a hazardous material release would come from Medford Fire Department as they are the region 8 response team.

Ashland Fire & Rescue maintains a number of members trained in tech-



**Wolf Creek Mutual Aid**

## Fire and Emergency Operations (continued)



**Semi Accident I-5**



**Landing Zone for Mercy 105**

nical rope rescue and confined space rescue, a highly technical discipline. The department has a trailer with its technical rescue equipment located at Fire Station 2 that can be towed to an emergency scene.

Ashland Fire & Rescue has been battling to stay above water for staffing needs. Ashland Fire assumed an ASA in 1996 and has been behind the curve of staffing for over 24 years as both fire and ambulance calls for service have steadily increased. Our last staffing increase occurred in 2015 when we went to our current staffing of 30. We have had a 122% increase in call volume since 1997 with a corresponding increase of 25% in staff from 24 to 30 members.

The department completed its much anticipated Ambulance Transporting Services Cost and Service Analysis, this year. This study was conducted by an outside agency of Public Consulting Group, formalizing what we already knew: AFR staff provides top level service to the community and the Ambulance service is an enhancement



**Rollover Accident with Stabilization**

to this community. This same study recognizes the need for additional staffing. We continually look for alternative ways to handle calls for service and reduce the non-emergency workload of our crews.

This year AF&R responded to 4,785 calls for service, a 6.1% increase over the previous year. Of these calls, staff contacted 3170 patients of which they transported 2554 patients to the area's three hospitals.

## FIRE and EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

AF&R's ambulance subscription program offers low cost ground ambulance subscription services with annual sign ups occurring every month. In addition to the regular ground ambulance membership, AF&R has entered into a partnership agreement with Mercy Flights, INC.



to provide air ambulance transports for our plus members. In 2021 the program had 1,584 memberships covering 3,034 members.

We ended the year with a hope of an end of the CORONA virus. With multiple new variants we are hoping that in 2022 we will finally see the end of CORONA. The CORONA virus has prompted health care providers around the world to ramp up their policies and procedures to deal with this not so new but significant threat. AF&R was no exception.

Following the guidelines put out by the CDC, AF&R continually develops Infectious Disease protocols to handle the continual new information provided by the CDC, and OSHA.

In June the departments 27 Paramedics received their two-year license renewal from the state of Oregon. Prior to recertification, the Paramedics had completed at least 48 hours of continuing education in addition to demonstrating skills competencies in areas such as: cardiac arrest management, splinting and bandaging, airway management and surgical cricothyroidotomy. The start of a new recertification period in July means that the Paramedics of AF&R will have to receive another 48 hours of continuing education prior to June 2023.

The department's ASA contract was due to expire at the end of 2020. We applied for and received a three year contract extension. ASA contracts are awarded by the Jackson County Board of Com-



## FIRE and EMERGENCY OPERATIONS (continued)

missioners (JCBOC) and must be renewed every five years. No other agency or organization was able to bid for ASA III extension other than Ashland Fire. In order to receive approval the department had to compile a document which covered things such as: clinical sophistication, vehicles and equipment, response time data, financial data, dispatching practices, continuing education, community service and quality assurance.

We are grateful to the County for granting the extension while we waited for the Ambulance Transporting Services Cost and Service Analysis to be completed allowing our City Council and City Manager the chance to determine the best path forward for the Citizens of Ashland.

Ashland Fire will continue to serve ASA 3's community for another two years, where we hope to be bidding for another 5-year application for assignment of Jackson County ASA #3.



On July 4, while operating at the scene of a motor vehicle collision, one of our Battalion Chiefs, Kelly Burns, a Mercy Flights Paramedic and the patient they were loading into a Mercy Flights ambulance on I-5 were struck by two vehicles entering the accident scene at a high rate of speed. Luckily, the injuries sustained were not life threatening. We ask community members to remember Ore-

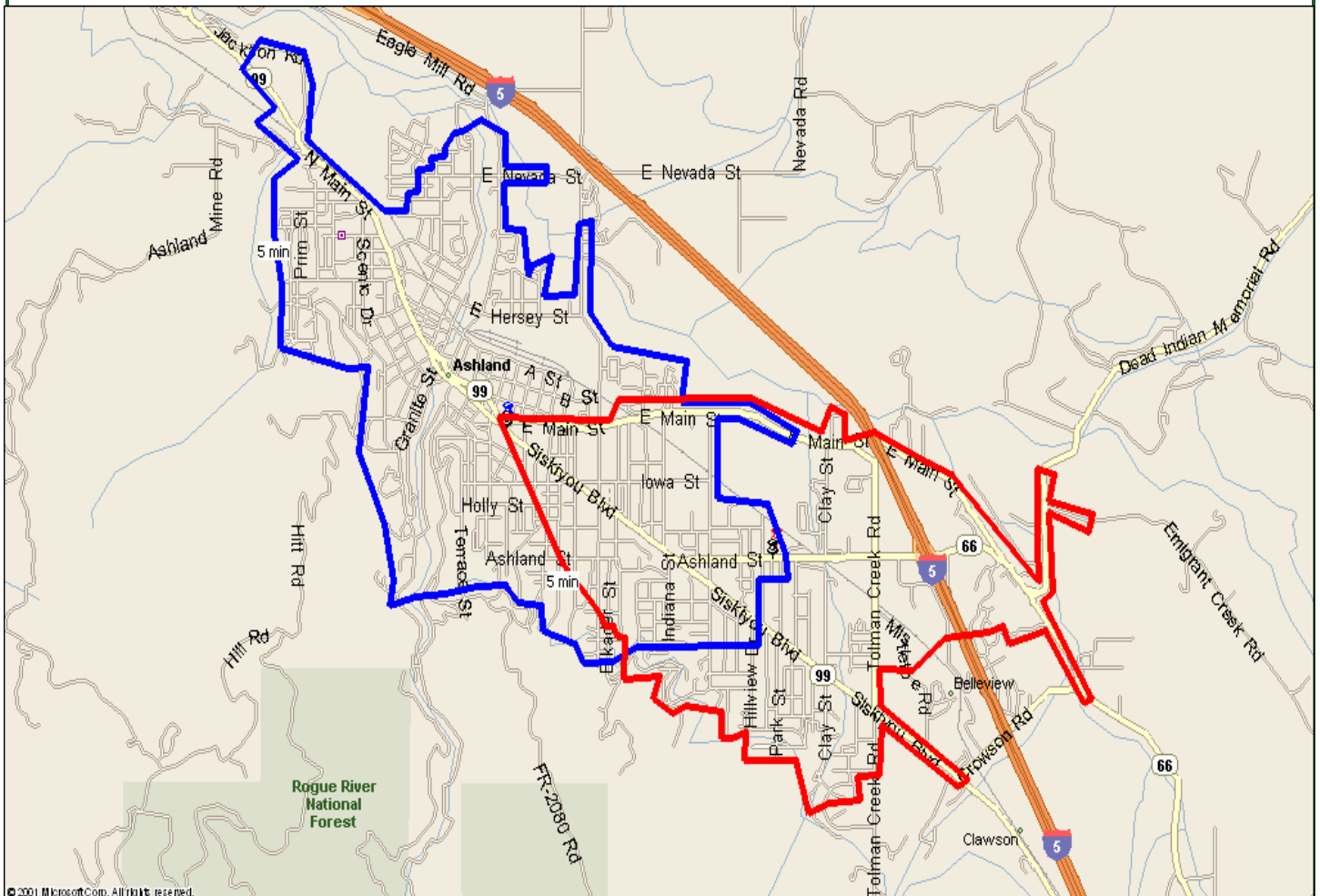
gon Law, to slow down and change lanes when approaching a emergency vehicle operating on the roadway. please give us a safe place to treat those in need and allow us to go home to our families.

We were excited when on November 1, Battalion Chief Burns walked back into our station to begin working for the protection of our community once again.



1st Day Back after I-5 Accident

## FIRE and EMERGENCY OPERATIONS (continued)



Fire Station 1's primary response is in blue, while Fire Station's 2 response area is in red. Areas outside of these lines have a travel distance in excess of 5 minutes.

## Fire and Life Safety (FLSD)

The Fire & Life Safety Division (FLSD) is primarily focused on activities that save lives and property by preventing fires. Duties of the Fire & Life Safety Division include plans review, new construction inspection, fire code enforcement, weed abatement, fire investigations, public information, public education, CERT, CPR training, and emergency management.

Prior to the Pandemic, The Fire & Life Safety Division was staffed with the Division Chief/Fire Marshal, the CERT coordinator, a part time Weed Abatement coordinator, and one firefighter who was able to conduct target hazard fire inspections on overtime.

Due to the pandemic as well as the promotion of the Fire Marshal to Fire Chief and the reduction in the CERT coordinators hours, the FLSD finished the year with vacancies in all of the positions. The Fire Chief is looking to reorganize the Fire and Life Safety Division and one of the structure changes is to combine the CERT and Weed abatement coordinators into 1 position and changing the title to Fire and Life Safety Specialist. We are working through the logistics of this and hope to have the position working in the first quarter of 2022.

The 2021 Weed Abatement season was long and challenging. It was the longest fire season on record for a total of 160 days. Fire season began on May 12, 2021 and equipment restrictions were in effect by June 4th, limiting the time to mow/cut dry vegetation to before 1pm each day. Within 10 days, by June 14th, we reached extreme fire danger levels and the pro-

hibition of equipment use on dry vegetation. Those restrictions remained in place until Mid-September. AF&R lost staffing of the Weed Abatement Coordinator position at the beginning of July, significantly reducing the ability to enforce compliance with abatement requirements.



The above photo was from the ART wing of Briscoe School and has been subsequently abated. Relationships with our local media continues to be afford us the opportunity to gain prime position in the news for prevention, events and incidents alike. After the Alameda Fire we found the opting in on our NIXLE alert system has increased. If you are interested in receiving these life saving alerts as well as mass community notifications from the City of Ashland text 97520 to 888777.

We look forward to the end of the COVID pandemic when our Firefighters and FLSS will be able to continue to provide safety education to all of the K-5 classes in the city. We also look forward in providing classes as requested from Ashland High School and the SOU Residential Life Staff.

## Fire and Life Safety (FLSD)

The ultimate inspection goal is to provide inspections to all of our businesses based on NFPA guidelines with Annual, Biennial, and a Triennial inspection program.

This will require additional staffing. Annual inspections will help to reduce the number of serious situations, continue to maintain our ISO requirements and help reduce liability claims on corporate insurance.



this program in the state for the protection of our community members.

There were 357 fire plans reviewed including site, wildfire safety landscaping, building, fire alarm, fire sprinklers, kitchen hood suppression systems, and planning applications. Of these reviews, 21 fire sprinkler plans were reviewed to be installed in 11 single family homes, and 10 commercial structures. All of these fire sprinkler plans were required by codes specifically or as an alternative to fire apparatus access or water supply.

The Wildfire & Fire & Life Safety Divisions have worked with the Building and Planning Department on the roll out and implementation of Fire Code chapter R327, requiring fire resistant construction of all new homes across the city for wildfire protection. Ashland is only the second city to implement



## WILDFIRE DIVISION

Ashland Fire & Rescue's Wildfire Division guides wildfire mitigation, prevention and forest stewardship to protect homes, lives, property, and the City's municipal water supply. Division staff partner with citizens, state and federal agencies, and non-profits for healthier and safer forests and neighborhoods under the Firewise USA, Ashland Forest Resiliency, and Fire Adapted Ashland programs. City forestlands management, watershed fire patrol, wildfire prevention and education, and the City's Forest Lands and Wildfire Mitigation Commissions also fall under the Wildfire Division's program of work.

### *Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project (AFR)*

AFR is an ongoing collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, Lomakatsi Restoration Project and the U.S. Forest Service. In 2021, AFR celebrated its 11th year of work. At this point, much of the heavy lifting has been completed, though prescribed burning remains a significant and challenging task. In 2021, the AFR Partners completed:

- Over 74,000 burn piles burned on 1,480 acres surrounding Ashland and in the watershed
- 470 acres of controlled under burning completed
- 150 acres of thinning brush and trees

AFR continued to maintain high visibility in the community via the [AFR webpage](#) and [Facebook](#). AFR also released a [Story Map](#), detailing the past decade of AFR work, with help from the City's GIS section.

As part of a \$6 million grant from the State of Oregon, AFR engaged in strategic fire planning with Oregon State Uni-

versity researcher Chris Dunn. The result is a prioritized analysis of our local forests showing where controlled burns are the highest priority and how effective our past work has been. AFR produced [a video](#) describing the strategic fire planning process.

Challenges remain in proactively applying controlled burning at the scale needed to significantly reduce risk. This will require increased tolerance of occasional smoke in town, a project we're working on through increased partnerships and outreach via a \$75,000 State DEQ



**Controlled underburning at scale is the biggest challenge facing AFR partners.**

grant. Acres of under burning needs to at least double each year to approximately 1,000 annual acres.

### *City Forestlands*

Under the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan, over 1,100 acres of City and Ashland Parks and Recreation forestlands are managed by the Wildfire Division. In 2021, staff coordinated 219 acres of fuels reduction on City and APRC forests.

The Forest Lands Commission has en-



## WILDFIRE DIVISION (continued)

gaged in climate change planning to amend the Ashland Forest Plan with quickly evolving research and management recommendations.

### *Fire Adapted Ashland*

Ashland Fire & Rescue follows the national Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) program, part of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Our program, [Fire Adapted Ashland](#) (FAA), has been active in the past year on many fronts aimed at reducing community wildfire risk. Here are some highlights of the FAA work from 2021.



**Flammable debris from Granite Firewise community.  
Project funded by State of Oregon**

First, Brian Hendrix began in July as the Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator, a critical position in our ability to work with the community. Brian worked for AF&R in the weed abatement position for 4 years prior.

Creation of a volunteer home risk assessment team called WRAP was completed in 2021 with 7 volunteers completing training and quickly helping us make up a backlog of requests for home assessments.

An exciting program developed this past year to educate realtors and home inspectors to identify wildfire hazards during home sales. The Rogue Valley Association of Realtors sponsored trainings and materials in this cutting edge partnership.

Ashland's Firewise Communities program continued successfully in 2021 with 35 Firewise USA communities continuing to recertify at the national level. Firewise groups were able to take advantage of funding passed through the Wildfire Division to do fuels reduction treatments in their neighborhoods, get green debris bins to collect flammable

debris and plants, and access a work crew from ODF.

The annual green debris drop-off day with our partner Recology Ashland Sanitary Service was a huge success with well over 100 car loads and 200 cubic yards of flammable

debris dropped off.

A milestone this past year was adoption of the Wildfire Building Code that will require fire resistant construction in all new homes in Ashland. This code follows on the 2018 Wildfire Safety Ordinance adoption and expansion of the City's wildfire hazard zone.

Work on the Smokewise Ashland partnership continued in 2021. Using large space HEPA air filters, AF&R staff were able to place filters in the new Options for Helping Residents of Ashland (OHRA) hotel, OHRA intake office, the Ashland Public Library, and a privately run cooling shelter for unhoused citizens.

We were also able to distribute 100 resi-

dential HEPA filters to vulnerable people ahead of summer fire season via a grant from Oregon DEQ for \$110,000.

AF&R worked with APD to roll out the new evacuation zone program and results from the evacuation time estimate study. Residents and businesses received postcards from the City showing their evacuation zone with information about evacuation levels and the Nixle program. Staff from the Wildfire Division spearheaded public outreach, creation of a new website, and participated in a wildfire forum hosted by the Mayor.

The spring wildfire campaign in 2021 was very successful, targeting four months of topics from April

through July using local stores as distribution points for flyers along with the Nixle community alert system to point people to each month's topic and actions to take.

Division staff lead implementation of an interdepartmental vegetation management team that identified areas where hazardous vegetation threatened homes and took corrective action to lower fire danger before fire season began. See photo above.

The Wildfire Safety Commission has helped serve as a sounding board, think tank, and boots on the ground to deliver the wildfire mitigation message. The realtor and WRAP programs were born out of the commission and they continue to help staff meet community needs, deliver messaging, and make recommendations to

City Council as needed.

### *Grant Funding*

The Wildfire Division secured final signatures on a \$3 million FEMA grant for wildfire mitigation around homes. The lengthy process resulted in a grant-funded position for three years to coordinate needed vegetation thinning and flammable roof replace-



**Workers clear dangerous blackberry and brush next to homes on a City right-of-way in the Wrights Creek neighborhood**

ment on over 1,000 homes.

In addition to \$110,000 from DEQ, another State grant from the Department of Forestry for \$173,500 funded fuels reduction, Firewise Communities, blackberry removal, and prescribed burning.

### *Watershed Drone Patrol*

Under an IGA with Rogue Valley Council of Governments, a drone pilot patrols the lower watershed two to three days a week using an infrared camera to detect small fires and illegal camping activity. In summer 2021, drone flights found 10 illegal camps on City and federal land and for enforcement contact and cleanup.

## TRAINING

The department continues to try and meet the minimum training standards as set by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and



Training (DPSST), the Oregon Health Authority, the National Fire Protection Association and the Insurance Services Office (ISO). Ashland Fire was successful in joining Medford Fire, Jackson County Fire District 3 and Jacksonville Fire in adopting the Jackson County Fire Standing Orders. Moving our staff towards working standards similar to those in our neighboring jurisdictions.

Some of the highlights for 2021 included an internal fire engineer's academy. Curriculum for the academy included operation and maintenance of fire pumps, basic and advanced hydraulics, power tool maintenance, engine inventories and safe driving practices. The academy culminated with a promotional engineer's exam. The department successfully passed three candidates who have now been promoted to the position of Engineer. We will need to hold an additional academy as well as a Captain's academy to fill projected retirements.

The difficulty in properly training our personnel increases significantly with each new layer of emergency response training firefighters are required to receive.

Without adequate training grounds, a dedicated training and Emergency Services Officer, or a dedicated training facility firefighters must take to the streets, neighborhoods and parking lots. Despite the difficulty of training without proper facilities, Ashland Fire & Rescue is dedicated to provide firefighter training with the goal to become more effective in serving the public. 2021 found crews training on basic firefighting skills as time allowed. Monthly drills were conducted to improve on such

things as water supply, forcible entry, fire stream application, ladders, ventilation, victim rescue, firefighter safety and



emergency medicine. Training was refocused on successfully getting our probationary firefighters through their first year of professional firefighter training.

## TRAINING (continued)

*Practice does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.*

**-Vince Lombardi**



## Promotions, Retirements and New Additions

2021 brought many changes to the make-up of Ashland Fire & Rescue.

### Fire Chief

On June 8th, City Council formalized the contract for Ralph Sartain to become Ashland Fire & Rescues 15th Fire Chief. Chief Sartain had been working as the Interim Fire Chief after the retirement of Fire Chief Shephard on October 30th, 2020.

Chief Sartain came to Ashland Fire from Medford Fire in September of 2017 as the Fire Marshal. With the departure of Fire Chief D'Orazi Chief Sartain assumed more administrative duties. Chief Sartain is married to Suzanne the love of his life for 26 years. They raised a daughter and son here in the Rogue Valley. Chief Sartain is a veteran of the United States Air Force and a graduate of the Managing Officer program from the National Fire Academy. Chief Sartain obtained his Paramedic degree from Rogue Community College. Chief Sartain has worked in all aspects of emergency services since becoming a volunteer firefighter in Minot, North Dakota in 1991. After leaving the Air Force Chief Sartain got his start in the Rogue Valley as a volunteer firefighter for Fire District 4 in Shady Cove before being hired by the Veterans Administration as a firefighter. Chief Sartain was also a volunteer firefighter for the City of Talent and has worked at Mercy flights both as a ground and flight paramedic and was a police officer for Medford Police before returning to the fire service at Medford Fire.

### Deputy Chief of Operations

On October 1st, after a nationwide search, Marshall Rasor was promoted from Battalion Chief to Deputy Chief of Operations.

DC Rasor was Born and raised as a native Oregonian, Marshall spent the first 30 years of his life growing up with the Willamette Valley. Marshall started his career in the fire service by first becoming a volunteer with Canby Fire. During that time, he attended Clackamas Community College where he obtained both his EMT basic and EMT Intermediate certifications, before transferring and earning his Paramedic certification from Oregon Health Sciences University in the fall of 2001. Marshall has been an employee of Ashland Fire and Rescue since March of 2003. Since that time, he has held various positions both within the department, and the association prior to recently being promoted to Deputy Fire Chief. Marshall is the youngest of 5 siblings', currently resides in Central point where he lives with his wife of 25 years, and his two sons, the oldest of whom is a freshman in college and the youngest being a sophomore at South Medford High School.

### Battalion Chief

With Marshall's promotion, Lance Menold was promoted from Captain to Battalion Chief. BC Menold moved to the Rogue Valley from Upland, California after high school, Lance attended Rogue Community College and volunteered at District 5. He was hired as a firefighter/paramedic in Ashland in 2003. In 2005 Lance married Krista and they started a family together. They currently live outside of Jacksonville with their daughter Jillian (15), son Ryan (13), a German

## Promotions, Retirements and New Addi-

Shepherd, nine chickens and a bunch of goldfish. In his free time Lance likes to ride dirt bikes, work in his shop and spend time with his family. Lance works diligently on fleet maintenance and keeping the fleet up to date.

### **The following personnel were promoted from Engineer to the position of Captain:**

Captain Todd Beck started his Fire Service career with Applegate Fire District 9 in 1993. There he obtained his EMT-Basic certification and became a Lieutenant with his first trial by fire being the New Year's Day 1997 floods. His first paid fire job was with City of Grants Pass Fire & Rescue in March 1998 and he was hired by Ashland Fire & Rescue in January 1999. During the course of his career at Ashland Fire & Rescue he has served as a Firefighter/Paramedic for 10 years, Engineer for 12 years and was a Hazmat Technician for 10 years on the Region 8 Hazmat Team for the Oregon State fire Marshal. Todd's leadership in both his private life as a coach as well as at the fire service are greatly appreciated, we are glad to have Todd as a Captain at AFR

Captain Ashley Manning is Ashland Fire and Rescues first ever female Captain. Ashley has been in the fire service for fifteen years. She started as a reserve firefighter at the Sunriver Fire Department and then became a volunteer firefighter with Fire District #5 after relocating to Southern Oregon. She began her professional career working at Ashland Fire & Rescue and has been here for thirteen years. She was a firefighter for nine years and then promoted to engineer and worked at that rank for four years. She oversees all the Rope Res-

cue training within the department and helps run the Technical Rescue Team. Ashley has also organized and put on two "Rogue Girl Fire Camps" which is a program for young women interested in the fire service. She is married to a Fire Captain who works at JCFD#3 and has two little girls ages five and nineteen months.

Captain Shannon Turner was born and raised on a small ranch where Albertsons is now located on Ashland Street. His mother, her sisters and her brother grew up in that same house. When Shannon was 4-years old his family lost everything in a fire in the middle of the night including his cat Casper. They moved to a ranch in Eagle Point where they raised cattle and horses. After high school Shannon proudly served 6 years in the U.S. Navy at Point Loma Submarine Base. After the US Navy he moved to Reno, NV and was a Member of the Washoe County Sheriffs HASTY team for 5 1/2 years. Shannon moved back to Oregon because of his love for the Rogue Valley and to pursue his dream to be a firefighter. He attended Rogue Community College & College of the Siskiyous for his fire science and paramedic degrees. Shannon was an Intern at JCFD # 3 and a volunteer firefighter with Butte Falls when he was hired by Phoenix Fire Department. He spent 5 1/2 years with Phoenix and in 2006 was hired at Ashland Fire & Rescue. Shannon has taught CERT for 10 years, was on the TERT team for 12 years and has been an active member of SOCIRT for 10 years. He has received 2 "Life Save Awards" one from NASAR & Washoe County and the other he received from the City of Phoenix. He has a wonderful, certified therapy dog named Jax that is very active helping him with SOCIRT and the MDA. Shannon is also the Inter-

## Promotions, Retirements and New Addi-

national Sergeant at Arms for Wind & Fire MC. He has a love and a passion to help others and to try to be a better person today than he was yesterday.

### **The following personnel were promoted from Firefighter to Engineer:**

Engineer Mike Mekkers currently lives in Bend, Oregon and is married to Kristi (who is an ICU nurse) for 9 years with two little boys, Aisea (8) and Owen (6), who love to play hockey and Mtn. Bike. Mike grew up and graduated high school in McMinnville, Oregon as the son of a teacher and Air Force veteran. Mike later earned his BS in Forest Management from Oregon State University. While working in Natural Resources Mike began Volunteering with the McMinnville Fire Department. During Mike's 7 years as a volunteer with McMinnville Fire Department he obtained his Paramedic degree and was hired by American Medical Response in Portland, Oregon where he worked until he was hired by Ashland Fire & Rescue in November 2014. Since being hired at AFR Mike has been a Firefighter/Paramedic and Acting Engineer while working toward advancing his career within the department. Mike enjoys spending time with his family and experiencing all things outdoors from hiking, boating, paddle boarding, mtn. biking, and snowboarding. Mike also spends time off with family and friends crabbing and fishing on the Oregon coast.

Engineer Daniel Caples has 16 years in the fire service, beginning with his time as a volunteer with the California City Fire Department. Like many firefighters, Daniel drew on time spent in construction and carpentry to enrich his new vocation, but also built on CCFD's training

by working his way through Fire-related industries. His years as a Fire Safety Officer with Fox Studios, and later as an EMT with a transporting ambulance served as ideal stepping stones toward this new career. By the time he and his family moved to Southern Oregon, firefighting had become his true calling. Daniel earned his Paramedic degree from Rogue Community College, then joined Rural Metro Fire and hired on with American Medical Response before finding a home at Ashland Fire & Rescue in 2016. At AFR Daniel has soaked up training across a wide range of disciplines - Forcible Entry (project lead), Target Hazard Preplans (project lead), Public Education, Technical Rescue and Wildland firefighting leadership, among others. Daniel still takes time for woodworking, while he, his wife and two boys enjoy camping, rivers and all the outdoor excitement Southern Oregon has to offer.

Engineer Andrew Burns grew up in the Rogue Valley and became involved in the fire service about 15 years ago when he started showing up at the Shady Cove fire station for Training Night. He spent time at District 3 and ODF as well before being hired at AFR in 2016. Prior to the fire service, Andrew mostly worked in construction, attended college off and on, and traveled. He is married to his ex-girlfriend and has five kids (3 boys and 2 girls) with his first wife. Outside of work, he enjoys working on his rural property, hunting, camping, and spending time with his family. While working as a Firefighter at AFR, Andrew has been involved with the training program and is interested in all things wildland.

## Promotions, Retirements and New Addi-

### Firefighters:

With all of the promotional movement we held three recruitment processes in 2021. Our recruitment process begins with an application process, assessment center, and Chiefs interviews. The successful candidates must then complete a psychological and medical screening, and a thorough background investigation conducted by Ashland Police Department. Candidates who are selected to be hired are then placed on a one-year probation and begin their employment with an in-house training academy. Monthly performance exams are given as well as a six month evaluation followed by an off probation examination. We welcome our probationary firefighters and congratulate them on graduating 2021's Recruit Academy!

Probationary Firefighter Jacob Bergren moved to the Rogue Valley when he was 11 years old and graduated from Phoenix high school in 2017. Currently Jacob lives in Talent with his soon to be wife Kazes and dog. He attended college for fire science at RCC and was a student/volunteer at JCFD #5 from 2017 to 2021. Jacob then got hired as a firefighter/EMT in May of 2021 at Ashland Fire & Rescue. On Jacob's free time He enjoys spending time with friends and family and getting to do art any chance he gets. Jacob looks forward to finishing his probationary year at Ashland and continuing to advance in his career.

Probationary Firefighter Luke Gregg was first introduced to Southern Oregon after taking a summer job as a raft guide on the Rogue River in 2015. Luke and his wife Carly met on the river and did a lot

of travelling, but always found themselves back in the Rogue Valley every summer. Luke got his EMT in 2018 and has worked on private ambulances in both Portland and Seattle. Luke attended the RCC firefighter academy in 2020 and was a student firefighter for Grants Pass Fire and Rescue for 6 months before being hired on at Ashland Fire and Rescue in May 2021.

Probationary Firefighter Westin Martin attended Central Oregon Community College in 2016 to obtain his Associates Degree in Fire Science and Emergency Medicine. He began his career volunteering with Crooked River Ranch Fire and Rescue but soon moved to a part-time position with Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance District. Westin moved to the valley after accepting a full-time job with the Jacksonville Fire Department. In June 2021 Westin married his now wife, Mikayla shortly after starting employment with Ashland Fire & Rescue. They live outside Eagle Point with their Heeler/Lab mix. In his free time Westin enjoys elk hunting, shooting archery, riding dirt bikes, and spending time with his wife and pup. As a third-generation firefighter and spending most of his childhood in and around the firehouse, Westin knew from an early age this was the career for him.

Probationary Firefighter Matt Brown was born and raised in a military family, spending his childhood in both Germany and England before moving to Orlando, Florida at the age of sixteen. There, he completed his education, met his wife, and started a family. Matt is a father of 3 and has been married to his wife, Rachel, for almost fifteen years. Matt and his family moved to the Rogue Valley in the summer of 2019. Prior to that, he



## Promotions, Retirements and New Addi-

worked as a full-time firefighter for almost 11 years in a suburb of Orlando called Apopka. For the past two years, Matt worked as a ground paramedic with Mercy Flights before coming on-board at AF&R. Matt and his family love the climate and active lifestyle of the Rogue Valley and look forward to spending many years getting to know the West Coast.

We currently have two additional firefighters in backgrounds and will be welcoming them to the Ashland Fire family in March 2022.

### **We welcomed our new Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator:**

Brian Hendrix was born and raised in the Northern Bay Area in a military/firefighter family, where he spent his childhood heavily involved in Scouts and 6 years as a Fire Cadet through middle and high school. Breaking from family tradition, Brian skipped military service and went to college. Working to pay his way through school, Brian gained important insights and leadership experience in work and life around the Bay Area and Hawaii, ultimately graduating from Sonoma State University. Brian is the father of 2 children and has been married for 16 years. He met his amazing wife, Yoko, then a Japanese transfer student, at Sonoma State. They moved to Japan in 2008 after their first son was born, where Brian was an English teacher for a large company and began his own English language school for children. Their second son was born in Japan. Brian and Yoko relocated from Japan to the Rogue Valley in 2011, shortly after the March 11th Tohoku earthquake. They moved to Ashland in 2014 and Brian began working for AF&R in early

2017 as Weed Abatement Coordinator and Wildfire Mitigation Assistant. Brian and his family love Ashland and enjoy adventuring throughout Oregon with family friends.

### **We also welcomed our new Wildfire Risk Reduction Specialist:**

Luke Wimmer joins Ashland Fire & Rescue as the new Wildfire Risk Reduction Specialist. He is implementing the \$3 million Pre-Disaster Mitigation FEMA Grant to create defensible space around 1,100 homes and replace 23 wood shake roofs with ignition-resistant roof material.

Luke is originally from Missouri and holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from the University of Missouri. With over 10 years working in natural resource management, his experience ranges from hazardous fuels reduction work in the Bay Area to back-country stream surveys in Montana. Since moving to Ashland in 2019, he has worked for the Medford BLM & Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest performing vegetation surveys and wildland firefighting activities. He specializes in natural resource advising and worked on emergency debris removal projects following the 2020 wildfires in Northern California. In his free time Luke enjoys camping & hiking with his girlfriend and dog.

### **Departures and Retirements:**

This year we said goodbye to Captain Brent Knutson. Brent left Ashland Fire & Rescue for a promotion as Battalion Chief of Training in Klamath Falls. Brent had worked for Ashland Fire for over 15

## Promotions, Retirements and New Addi-

years. We look forward to seeing what Brent accomplishes in his new role.

We also said goodbye to Firefighter Robert Stephens who retired from Ashland Fire & Rescue after 23 years of service. We wish him luck as he ventures out into this next chapter of his life.

Finally we said goodbye to firefighter Robert Strunk. Firefighter Strunk had to medically retire from Ashland Fire after having surgery for an injury he sustained while serving our county in the US Army Reserves.

As you can see 2021 not only was significant in that we dealt with the continued pandemic, but also multiple hiring processes for all positions, injuries to staff, medical emergencies in our on family members, deaths of our own family members, births in multiple staff members homes, forced mandatory overtime, staffing shortages and an increase to our call volume.

I am proud to say I respect the members of Ashland Fire & Rescue and all they have endured. Their professional dedication to our core values and professionalism are second to none in their continued pursuit to provide our community top level service.

Here is to 2022 and moving forward.

# THE ASHLAND FIRE & RESCUE TEAM

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



Ralph Sartain, Fire Chief  
Marshall Rasor - Deputy Fire Chief  
**Vacant**, Division Chief/Fire Marshal  
Chris Chambers, Division Chief Wildfire  
Emily Matlock, Administrative Analyst  
Brian Hendrix, Fire Adapted Community Coordinator  
Luke Wimmer, Wildfire Risk Reduction  
**Vacant**, Deputy Fire Marshal  
**Vacant**, Fire and Life Safety Specialist



## LINE PERSONNEL

### A SHIFT

Battalion Chief Steve Boyersmith  
Captain Todd Stubbs  
Captain Todd Beck  
Engineer Daniel Caples  
Engineer David Roselip  
Firefighter Jim Thomason  
Firefighter Matthew Stewart  
Firefighter Ty Haggard  
Firefighter Jake Kyle  
Firefighter Jacob Bergren  
Float Firefighter, **Vacant**

### B SHIFT

Battalion Chief Lance Menold  
Captain Nick Palmesano  
Captain Ashley Manning  
Engineer Rod LaCoste  
Engineer Mike Mekkers  
Firefighter Tim Hegdahl  
Firefighter Ron Garfas-Knowles  
Firefighter Brandon Winwood  
Firefighter Westin Martin  
Firefighter, **Vacant**

### C SHIFT

Battalion Chief Kelly Burns  
Captain Justin Foss  
Captain Shannon Turner  
Engineer Robert Trask  
Engineer Andrew Burns  
Firefighter Alfredo Echaide  
Firefighter Shawn Gallagher  
Firefighter Luke Gregg  
Firefighter Matt Brown  
Firefighter, **Vacant**

**Captain  
Ashley Manning**  
**2021 Fire Chief's  
Award**



Captain Ashley Manning received the Fire Chief's Award for  
*"Outstanding customer service and a long term commitment to improving Ashland Fire & Rescue"*







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**Thank You**