



Cascade Township
FIRE DEPARTMENT

**20
24**

Annual
Report

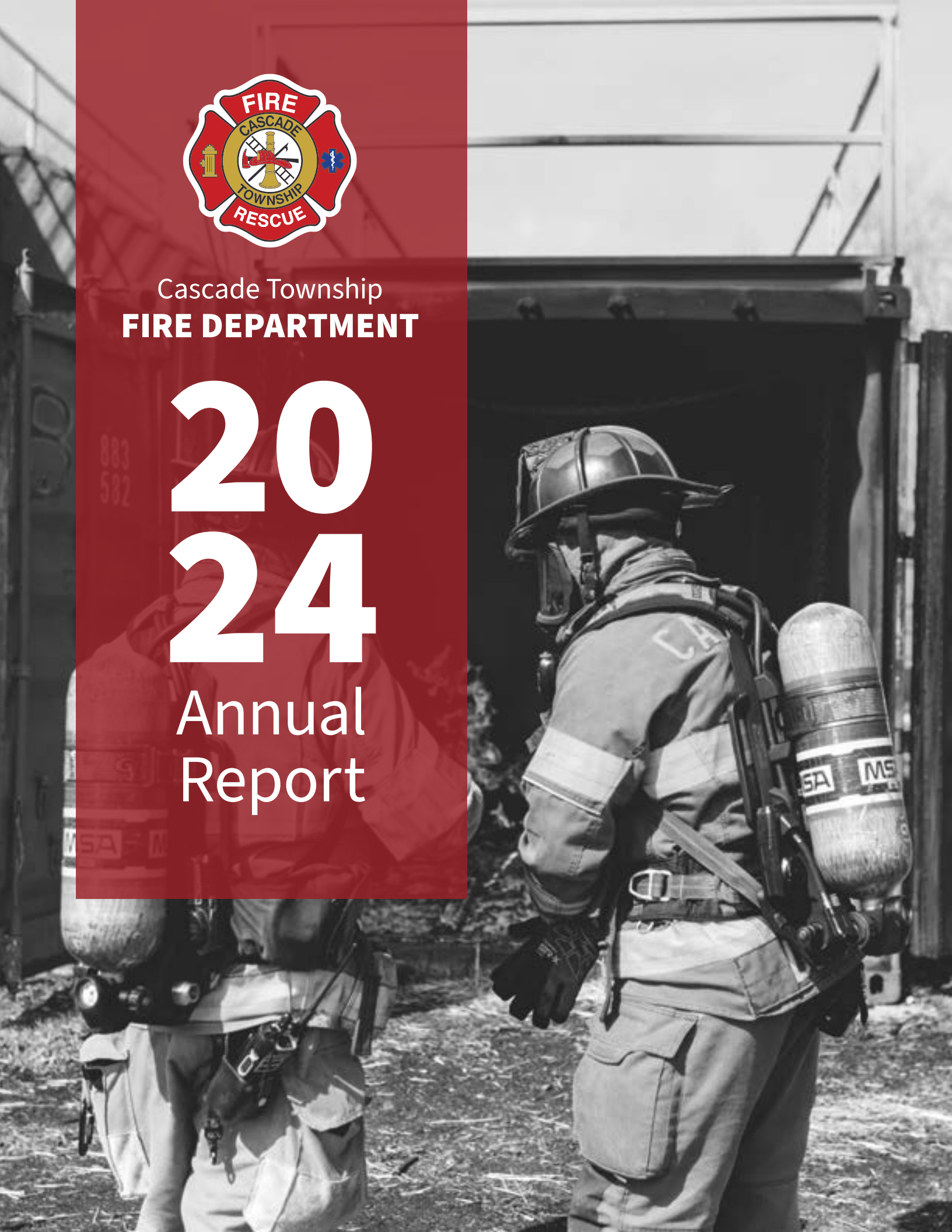




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from the FIRE CHIEF



Adam Magers
FIRE CHIEF

The Cascade Township Fire Department and I are pleased to share our 2024 Annual Report with you. In this report, you will find general information about our fire stations, personnel, vehicles, response data, and updates on the department's programs.

Cascade Fire responded to 2,550 emergency calls for service—a record year!

2024 was a busy year for the department. Service calls included fires, vehicle crashes, hazmat incidents, medical emergencies, rescues, alarms, mutual aid, and more.

Highlights for the department this year include a successful Insurance Services Office (ISO) inspection, new programs implemented, and securing citizen approval and support for a new 20-year millage to fund our department. I cannot thank our residents enough for their support and trust in our staff and department. It is an absolute honor to live and work in such an amazing community.

KENT COUNTY EMS RECOGNITION CEREMONY

Left to Right: Sergeant Andy Marsman, Deputy Chief Todd Stevenson, Fire Chief Adam Magers, Firefighter Lance Korhorn



PERSONNEL

New to the department in 2024 are full-time Firefighters: Heather Newkirk, Charles True, Kevin Jones, and Kyle May.

New Paid on-Call Firefighters in 2024 include Mark Kloosterman, Ryan Todd, Audry Bakhuyzen, Nick Agrillo, Miguel Abreu, and Lucas Thompson.

PROMOTIONS

Captain Todd Stevenson to **Deputy Chief**
Lieutenant Josh Dettwiler to **Captain**
Firefighter Mike Poolman to **Lieutenant**

ACHIEVEMENTS

Life Saving Award

Firefighter Lance Korhorn
Firefighter Jon Snyder
Captain Josh Dettwiler
Deputy Chief Todd Stevenson

Exceptional Patient Care Award

Firefighter Joel Baker
Firefighter Kyle May
Sergeant Andy Marsman
Deputy Chief Todd Stevenson
Chief Adam Magers
Captain Jeff Knowles
Lieutenant Andy Albright

Firefighter David Lintemuth certified as a Fire Inspector.

Cascade Firefighters Association raised more than \$10,000 in charity.

Lieutenant Andy Albright earned 30 years of service pin.

Firefighter Michael Lemkuil earned 15 years of service pin.

Firefighter Joel Baker earned 5 years of service pin.

2024 GOALS & OUTCOMES

Successful ISO inspection year with upgraded score.

ACHIEVED

Cascade Township Fire Department is pleased to announce that it has achieved a new **(ISO) Public Protection Classification rating of 3!**

Successful implementation of Deputy Chief position.

ACHIEVED

Plan and execute Compliant Township Emergency Readiness Exercise.

ACHIEVED

Send personnel to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1403 Live Fire Instructor Course.

ACHIEVED

Four became certified in December.

Develop and implement NFPA 1500 Safety Program.

ACHIEVED

Secure a millage replacement for operating budget.

ACHIEVED

A 20-year millage was voter approved in August.

2025 GOALS

- New Engine 2 upfitted and placed into service.
- Turnout gear grant implemented/reimbursed. Program operational.
- Fire Marshal vehicle ordered, upfitted, and placed into service.
- Establish and implement a company officer development program.
- Develop conceptual plan for Fire Station 2 remodel.
- Develop and implement Fire Department Strategic Plan.

The 2024 election season brought some changes to our Township Board of Trustees. We look forward to working with and building a relationship with our new trustees. Cascade Township truly is a special place to work, play, and live. Cascade Township Fire Department is committed to serving our citizens at the highest level with professionalism and skill.

I have high expectations for 2025 and have no doubt it will be as successful as ever!

Adam Magers
FIRE CHIEF

FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTERS



Heather Newkirk



Charles True



Kevin Jones



Kyle May

PAID ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS



Mark Kloosterman



Ryan Todd



Audry Bakhuyzen



Nick Agrillo



Miguel Abreu



Lucas Thompson

from the DEPUTY CHIEF



In my first year as the new Deputy Chief for Cascade Township Fire Department, I have had the opportunity to shape and fulfill several important responsibilities within the department. This role was developed to enhance the department's operational efficiency and readiness, especially in

managing personnel and ensuring around-the-clock command coverage. A significant part of my work involves coordinating time-off requests and vacation schedules to maintain the required staffing levels for every shift, which is critical to our ability to always respond effectively to emergencies.

As Deputy Chief, I also play a key role in Emergency Management, coordinating township-wide training sessions and developing Incident Action Plans for public events to enhance our preparedness for any large-scale emergencies. Additionally, I support both the Building Department and our Prevention Division in conducting fire inspections, which helps reinforce our community's safety standards. One of the major improvements brought by this position is our 365-day, 24/7 command coverage, allowing us to respond to incidents more effectively and provide continuous oversight. **This new role has strengthened our team's capacity to protect and serve the residents of Cascade Township reliably and efficiently.**

Todd Stevenson
DEPUTY CHIEF

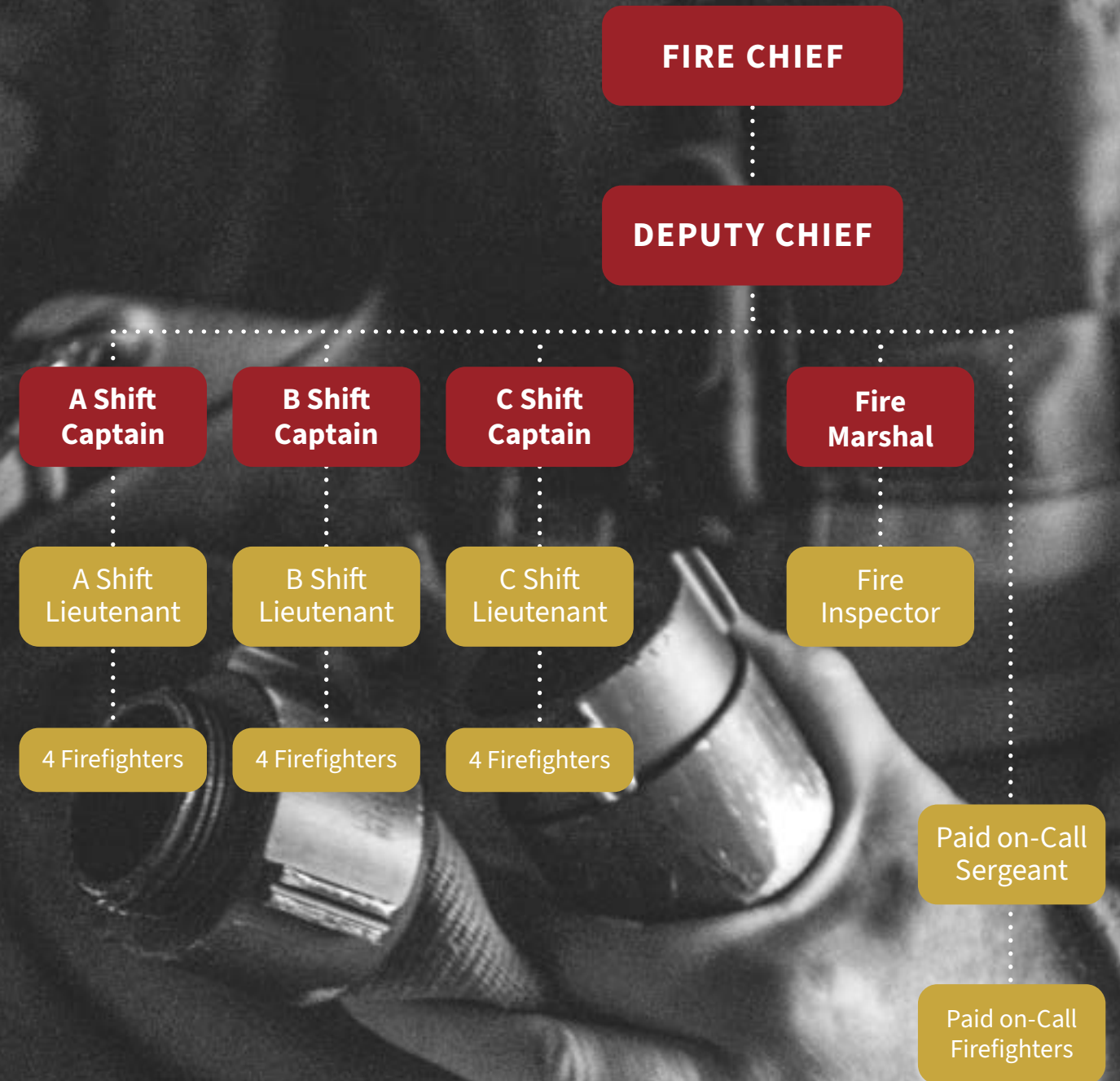
“One of the major improvements brought by this position is our **365-day, 24/7 command coverage**, allowing us to respond to incidents more effectively.”



PHOTO BY TIPPETT PHOTO

PHOTO BY ASHLEY WIERENGA

CHAIN of COMMAND





Adam Magers
FIRE CHIEF | 11/27/17

Cascade Township FIRE DEPARTMENT

2024



Todd Stevenson
DEPUTY CHIEF | 5/14/07



Jeff Knowles
CAPTAIN | 4/26/02



Michael Bolt
CAPTAIN | 12/06/10



Josh Dettwiler
CAPTAIN | 01/12/15



Andy Albright
LIEUTENANT | 08/01/94



Colin Forzley
LIEUTENANT | 11/24/06



Mike Poolman
LIEUTENANT | 04/18/18



Todd Pell
FIRE MARSHAL | 05/06/17



Brett Boonenberg
FIRE INSPECTOR | 10/26/11



Kreigh Deering
04/01/95



Andy Marsman
SERGEANT | 01/14/03



Jim Walker
EMS SERGEANT | 01/24/05



John Makuch
11/24/06



Lance Korhorn
07/07/07



Jon Snyder
09/22/06



Michael Lemkuil
10/15/09



David Lintemuth
01/12/15



Richard Raviolo
01/29/18



Joel Baker
09/30/19



Heather Newkirk
04/09/20



Matt Milmeister
09/17/21



Shane Jordan
09/17/21



Hannah Demuth
01/20/22



Brevin Sternberg
04/18/22



James Krikke
05/10/22



Kevin Delapaz
01/05/23



Mark Kloosterman
09/27/23



Austin Litchfield
11/27/23



Charles True
01/15/24



Kevin Jones
01/15/24



Kyle May
06/17/24



Tim Dieffenbach
CHAPLAIN



Will Raschke
STATION STEWARD



Cynthia Holzhei
ADMIN ASSISTANT

HEALTH & WELLNESS *program*



The Cascade Township Fire Department has completed its second year of pursuing a sports medicine model of care and instituting a health and fitness coordinator. This program has been successful in reducing OSHA-recordable injuries, which has led to reduced workers' compensation insurance premiums.

With an over **90% participation rate**, we have continued educating members about proper body mechanics, health, and physical performance. This level of participation speaks to Cascade Fire's dedication to the mindset shift and partnership it takes to bring a program like this on.

Early in 2024, Cascade Fire and humATix instituted physical readiness benchmarks. Their annual Physical Abilities Test (PAT) was part of this effort. We spent the summer revamping the course to fit with the new Station 1. Once we had several trial attempts from as many members as possible, a new time was determined to complete the course successfully.

Over the summer, we spent the bulk of our prevention efforts preparing for the new PAT, which meant strength training along with work-simulated circuit training. Through the fall, we shifted our focus toward our Air Consumption Test. We are making efforts to improve the efficiency of aerobic capacity and output through programming like HIIT, sprint, or full-effort activities, as well as education and practice of breathing techniques.

The air consumption training period is currently underway, and we hope to share results in next year's report.

Cascade Fire cares about the community they serve and has taken a proactive approach to improving physical and mental health, so they are able to continue providing a quality service to the citizens of Cascade Charter Township. Looking into the next year, we will have

further opportunities to educate personnel about mental and physical health, fitness, ergonomics, body mechanics and physical performance as it relates to the fire industry. Cascade Fire continues to pave the way for other greater Grand Rapids Fire Departments to adopt this program.

“ Cascade Fire cares about the community they serve and has taken a proactive approach to improving physical and mental health, so they are able to continue providing a quality service to the citizens of Cascade Charter Township. ”

Ken Follett
AT, ATC, CAFS, PES



▲ REST IS PRODUCTIVE!
Here, the crew is practicing progressive muscle relaxation.



FIRE PREVENTION *report*



Cascade Township Fire Department's prevention team had a great 2024 year. Between the Building Department and annual fire safety inspections, we completed **over 500 inspections** throughout 2024.

Captain Todd Stevenson was promoted to Deputy Chief and continues to assist with Fire Prevention when needed. Fire Inspector Boonenberg has been diligent in conducting fire safety inspections and assisting in the Building Department one day a week. Firefighter David Lintemuth has taken an interest in fire prevention, and this past year, he became a licensed Fire Inspector. David has proven helpful in assisting with larger occupancy inspections and plans to take more classes in 2025. Welcome, David!!

2024 also ushered in a new inspection software program called Inspection Reports Online (IROL). This software integrates with third-party contractors and **updates in real-time** with our records. It allows us to track third-party inspection deficiencies regarding fire extinguishers, fire suppression systems, fire alarm systems, and more for businesses in Cascade Township.

In October, Cascade Fire went through an Insurance Services Office (ISO) audit, which happens every five years, and because of better computerized record keeping and tracking, the Fire Prevention side of the audit was a great improvement over years past.

We are excited to continue these efforts in the upcoming year to enhance fire safety measures further and reinforce a culture of compliance and preparedness.

Todd Pell
FIRE MARSHAL

From left to right: Firefighter David Lintemuth, Deputy Chief Todd Stevenson, Fire Marshal Todd Pell, and Inspector Brett Boonenberg.



TRAINING DIVISION *report*



Cascade Township Fire Department successfully completed its first full year in our new Station 1, leveraging the improved facilities and enhanced training environment to elevate the skills and readiness of our personnel. The central location and increased resources allowed us to diversify our training program across a variety of settings, ensuring our firefighters are prepared for any emergency.

In 2024, Cascade Fire personnel logged **nearly 6,520 hours of training**, underscoring our commitment to professional development, safety, and community service.



6,520

Hours Cascade Fire spent training in 2024



▲ CLASSROOM TRAINING SESSION

TRAINING ROOM: ENHANCING CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND EMS DEVELOPMENT

Located at our new Station 1, the training room serves as the core hub for instruction, crew briefings, and group activities. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) training sessions were conducted regularly, focusing on essential skills such as airway management, trauma care, and cardiac emergencies.

The room also hosted lectures and theoretical training before transitioning into hands-on drills, ensuring that all personnel had a solid understanding of procedures before practical application. Scenario-based discussions were integrated into classroom time, helping firefighters mentally rehearse strategies before engaging in practical exercises.

HOSE TOWER: HIGH-RISE AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

The hose tower was utilized extensively for high-rise firefighting simulations, replicating real-world challenges such as ascending stairwells with equipment and hose lines. Training focused on hose advancement techniques, including carrying both charged and uncharged hoses up multiple flights of stairs to simulate vertical fire attacks. The stairwell also provided a platform for victim removal training, requiring personnel to transport rescue dummies up and down the stairs while maintaining control and safety. Regular fitness and endurance exercises were conducted in the hose tower to improve stamina, an essential element for high-rise firefighting.



▲ HIGH-RISE RESCUE SIMULATION

STATION 2: PUMP OPERATIONS AND VEHICLE EXTRICATION

Pump operations training was held at Station 2, where crews practiced water supply management, ensuring they were proficient in connecting to hydrants, nursing operations, and drafting from static water sources to maintain proper water flow. This training included troubleshooting pump issues under simulated emergency conditions, ensuring quick and effective problem-solving during real incidents. Station 2 also provided the space for vehicle extrication drills, focusing on using specialized tools to safely remove trapped victims from wrecked vehicles. Personnel refined their skills with hydraulic tools, airbag systems, and stabilization equipment, ensuring readiness for complex rescue operations.



▲ VEHICLE EXTRICATION TRAINING

THORNAPPLE RIVER: WATER RESCUE AND BOAT OPERATIONS

The Thornapple River served as an essential site for swift-water rescue and boat operations training, equipping firefighters with the skills to respond to water emergencies. Crews practiced deploying our rescue boat, managing river currents, and using rescue throw bags to retrieve victims safely from the water. Personnel were trained in cold-water rescue techniques in preparation for emergencies during colder months.



▲ LIVE FIRE AND FLASHOVER TRAINING

THORNAPPLE FIRE DEPARTMENT BURN BUILDING: LIVE FIRE AND FLASHOVER TRAINING

Live fire scenarios were conducted at the Thornapple Fire Department Burn Building, giving firefighters realistic, hands-on experience with fire behavior and suppression techniques. Personnel practiced offensive fire attack strategies, improving their ability to contain and extinguish fires under various conditions. Victim searches were conducted in heavy smoke and high heat conditions to give fire personnel realistic conditions they may encounter in real situations.

Flashover training was a key component, teaching firefighters to recognize the warning signs of a flashover and respond effectively to avoid entrapment. These controlled environments allowed teams to fine-tune communication, teamwork, and situational awareness under stress.



▲ CPR TRAINING



▲ TRAUMA TRAINING



▲ FORCED ENTRY TRAINING

The Cascade Township Fire Department made significant strides in 2024 by capitalizing on our new station and other specialized training environments. From high-rise operations and EMS protocols to refining water rescues and live fire tactics, our **personnel have demonstrated their commitment to excellence.**

With over 6,500 hours of documented training completed this year, our department is better equipped than ever to protect the community we serve. We remain focused on continuous improvement as we move forward, ensuring that our training program evolves to meet future challenges.

Todd Stevenson
DEPUTY CHIEF

A SHIFT *report*



2024 brought some big changes to A Shift. Captain Todd Stevenson was promoted to Deputy Chief, A Shift Lieutenant Josh Dettwiler was promoted to Captain, and firefighter Micheal Poolman was promoted to Lieutenant. Congratulations!

A Shift for 2024 consisted of Captain Josh Dettwiler, Lieutenant Mike Poolman, EMS Sergeant Jim Walker, and Firefighters Heather Newkirk, Jon Snyder, and David Lintemuth. Unfortunately, we had a member on leave for medical reasons during most of the year. We are pleased

to say he is making a full recovery and can't wait to get him back on shift soon. While he was out, we promoted a member of the paid on-call to temporary full-time status, Firefighter Kevin Delapaz.

Firefighter Delapaz graduated from the fire academy in the spring of 2024. He had a big task ahead of him, which was to complete the onboarding process in such a short time. Firefighter Delapaz has fit in very well and is always looking for new ways to enhance his skills. It has been a pleasure having him on A Shift. We look forward to his future path at Cascade Fire.



841

Number of calls for service A Shift ran.



1,200+

Hours spent training on medical and fire-related topics.



▲ RESCUE MISSION FOR DUCKLINGS

▼ PUMP OPS TRAINING



“We take pride in our Cascade community and enjoy spending time at our community events.”



A Shift participated in numerous community events this year, including the Independence Day parade, Cascade Heritage Day, Halloween festivities, car seat checks, school fire alarm drills, and fire safety talks, just to mention a few. We take pride in our Cascade community and enjoy spending time at our community events. When we are not running calls or doing events, we spend most of our day training.

Our training covers a wide range of items, including medical, truck operations, live fire training, hazmat, and physical fitness. We were fortunate enough to have a home in the township available to train on before demolition. We used this home to practice ventilation operations on the roof, vent enter search techniques, lowering injured patients from a roof using a ladder and ropes, forcible entry, and hose line advancement techniques.

Josh Dettwiler
CAPTAIN



▲ ROOF VENTILATION OPERATIONS/SEARCH AND RESCUE



▲ LOWERING INJURED PATIENT FROM ROOF TRAINING



▲ FORCIBLE ENTRY TRAINING



▲ HAVING FUN COOLING DOWN THE KIDS THIS SUMMER

FACILITIES *report*



It is hard to believe that it had been one year, on November 2nd, since we moved into the new Station 1. We have provided numerous tours to different groups of all ages, which allow us to show off our beautiful headquarters and educate people on what the fire service is all about.

As we close out 2024, it is a great time to reflect on the accomplishments and progress achieved by our newly built fire station. The station has allowed us to actively engage with the community through educational programs, fire safety talks, and tours. These events have helped to strengthen our relationships with the community while increasing awareness of fire safety.

The design of the station has significantly enhanced operational capabilities by allowing more restful sleep, better training areas and props along with safer and quicker exiting of the facility for large fire engines.

We have taken full advantage of all the station has to offer. We have hosted joint technical rescue training with neighboring departments in our hose tower. We have used the training room for monthly medical trainings and meetings. The bays offer plenty of room to train during inclement weather. Our annual physical agility test is now held at Station 1, as well. The hose tower allows us to climb stairs simulating high-rise events; we can set ladders for climbing and set up pulley systems to simulate pulling ceilings. These trainings in our facility ensure that all our personnel are well prepared to handle a variety of emergency situations.

The station reflects all the dedication and hard work of all involved, and is reassuring when we get all the positive feedback from the community. We truly appreciate all the support!

If you would like a tour of the station, please stop by during business hours and someone would be happy to show you around.

Josh Dettwiler
CAPTAIN



▲ VIEW OF THE HOSE TOWER



▲ NEW SIGN AT STATION 1



▲ BIRD'S-EYE LOOK OF THE STATION



PHOTOS BY DARIO LIRIO, PREIN&NEWHOF

B SHIFT *report*



B Shift had another year filled with change. January brought us Kevin Jones. Kevin previously worked for the Kent County Road Commission as a plow truck driver in Cascade and knows the area very well. He is a current paid on-call firefighter for the Lowell Area Fire Department. He has strong all-around experience and has been a great addition to B Shift. Kevin assists Lieutenant Micheal Poolman with the Vehicle Maintenance Program and is in charge of our Hose and Ladder Programs.

In April, Firefighter Brevin Sternberg left the Cascade Township Fire Department and took a job with the Wyoming Fire Department. We gained Kyle May as a full-time firefighter in June. Kyle was employed by Triangle Associates, the general contractor for our new Station 1, and served as our site supervisor. Kyle is also a member of the Cannon Township Fire Department as a paid on-call firefighter. We have enjoyed Kyle's addition to B Shift, and he has begun assisting Captain Josh Dettwiler with station maintenance.



866

Number of calls for service B Shift ran.



1,402

Hours spent training on medical and fire-related topics.



▲ EXTINGUISHING A BRUSH FIRE WITH BRUSH 6



▲ MUTUAL TRAINING WITH LOWELL FIRE DEPT. HOUSE BURN



▲ LIFE FIRE TRAINING

HAPPY RETIREMENT, RANDY HOFFMAN! Randy is a retired Cascade Fire Paid on-Call Firefighter who is now a retired American Airlines Pilot. Crew members from the Cascade Fire Dept. and the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Fire/Rescue came together for a proper send-off.



Austin Litchfield joined the B Shift in November 2023. He came to us from the Ada Township Fire Department. This past year, Austin and his wife adopted triplets! At work, he has completed the Fire Instructor 1 Program and oversees the Small Equipment/Battery-Operated Equipment Program. At home and at the station, Austin has been very busy!

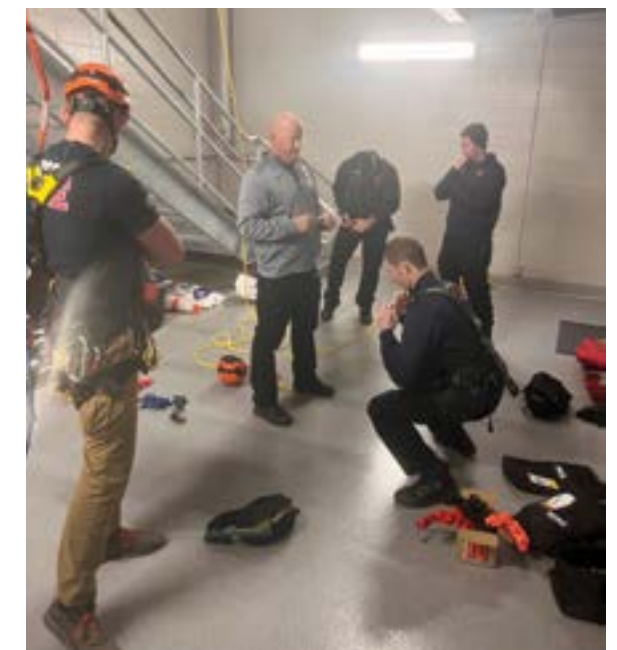
The old guard remained the same with Captain Michael Bolt, Lieutenant Colin Forzley, and Firefighter John Makuch being the remaining members of B Shift. Captain Bolt oversees CPR/first aid education, fire hydrants, and assists with tech rescue. Lieutenant Forzley is in charge of our radios and PPE turnout gear. Firefighter Makuch is in charge of the Tech Rescue Program. This past year, Lieutenant Forzley was able to secure a Michigan grant for new turnout gear for all full-time firefighters. Captain Bolt and Firefighter Makuch completed the 1403 Live Fire Instructor Course, a state requirement for our department to continue with the live fire training we conduct twice a year at the Thornapple Kellogg Training Facility.

As a shift, the crew responded to 866 calls for service, which included four structure fires, three brush fires, multiple mutual aid fire calls to other departments, hundreds of medicals, two elevator rescues, and many non-emergent citizen assists. The shift completed 1278 hours of fire-related training and 124 hours of live fire training.

Michael Bolt
CAPTAIN



▼ ROPE TRAINING



CPR & FIRST AID *report*



Bystander Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) is critical to increasing survival from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. An individual experiencing a cardiac arrest is almost twice as likely to survive when witnesses perform CPR while emergency personnel are en route. Preparing lay responders to recognize the

signs of sudden cardiac arrest, call 911, and perform CPR in public and private locations are crucial to increasing survival from this public health problem.

Cascade Township Fire Department serves as a Regional Training Center for the American Heart Association (AHA), offering classes in CPR and first aid. The AHA's Basic Life Support (BLS) Course is designed for healthcare professionals and other personnel who need to know how to perform CPR and other basic cardiovascular life

support skills in a wide variety of in-facility and pre-hospital settings. The AHA's Heartsaver First Aid CPR AED Course trains participants to provide first aid, CPR, and use an automated external defibrillator (AED) in a safe, timely, and effective manner.

“Over the past year, we have had 885 students certified in CPR by one of our 21 instructors.”

The AHA offers an online course and then the student can schedule a time to come to the station to be tested on the skills or we can offer a class in-house to teach the basics of CPR and first aid. Over the past year we have had 885 students certified in CPR by one of our 21 instructors.

Michael Bolt
CAPTAIN



▲ CASCADE FAMILY DENTAL CPR & FIRST AID TRAINING



▲ AT HOME REHAB CENTER CPR & FIRST AID TRAINING

▼ GRAND RAPIDS GYMNASTICS CPR & FIRST AID TRAINING



▲ CASCADE FIRE CREW CPR & FIRST AID TRAINING



▲ SLEEP APNEA CLINIC



An individual experiencing a cardiac arrest is almost **twice as likely** to survive when witnesses perform CPR while emergency personnel are en route.

TECHNICAL RESCUE *report*



Cascade Township Fire Department began 2024 settled into a new, state-of-the-art station that incorporated many training opportunities into the design. The Technical Rescue Team started off the year by finding every opportunity to use these new training facilities. The indoor hose tower allows crews to train at an elevated height of

approximately 40-feet in all types of weather.

At the end of January, the Cascade Fire Technical Rescue Team practiced raising and lowering rescuers using rope rescue equipment.

rescue incident is not common, when seconds count, knowing what skills and equipment are available is crucial to a successful outcome of an incident.



▲ HOSE TOWER TRAINING



▲ ROPE RESCUE

During February, crews utilized airbags, a tool used to lift heavy objects a few inches to free a trapped victim. Thornapple Excavating was happy to host Cascade Fire at their facility, where heavy blocks of concrete were lifted and stabilized. This is a seldom used skill but one that is important in certain situations.



▲ AIR BAG TRAINING AT THORNAPPLE EXCAVATING



At the beginning of March, Cascade Fire hosted the Kentwood Fire Department Technical Rescue Team for confined space technical-level training. Kentwood and Cascade team members trained together to rescue a simulated victim from a confined space that was simulated with tubes in Cascade's hose tower. It is vitally important for departments to build strong working relationships that share resources. While a confined space



▲ CONFINED SPACE TRAINING IN THE HOSE TOWER

Near the end of March, all Cascade Fire personnel trained at Grand Rapids Gymnastics (GRG) on foam pit safety. A foam pit is often found at a gymnastics gym underneath various equipment. The foam pit is made up of foam blocks, typically stacked 8-10 feet deep, with a trampoline underneath. This setup allows a gymnast to practice without fear of landing on a solid surface. While this is common practice for gymnasts, firefighters responding to an injured person in a foam pit is challenging. Crews worked with staff at GRG to safely and effectively remove a simulated victim from a foam pit.



▲ FOAM PIT SAFETY RESCUE

Throughout the year, crews responded to eleven documented technical rescue types of incidents. These included six elevator rescues and five vehicle extrications.



▲ AT THE GRAND RAPIDS TRIATHLON

During an elevator rescue, crews use special tools to open a stuck elevator's door to help people out who are trapped. During a vehicle extrication, motorists are trapped in their vehicle, typically from damage sustained during a crash. Crews often use hydraulic spreaders and cutters (jaws of life) to remove a trapped motorist.



▲ WEDDING RING REMOVAL

During the summer, Lieutenant Mike Poolman and Firefighter Kevin Jones attended a class called *Man vs. Machine*. During this class, they were taught how to respond to various emergencies where a person is stuck in some type of machine, like a snow thrower, or has an object stuck on them, like a wedding ring. After the completion of this class, both Mike and Kevin shared valuable techniques on how to safely respond to incidents that may not be as common and shared new techniques on mitigating emergencies at these types of incidents.

Cascade Fire continues to work with the Grand Rapids Triathlon, held on the Thornapple River and on roads through Cascade Township. Crews provided Boat 2 (water rescue boat) with two trained personnel for the swim portion, and Brush 6 (Polaris UTV) with three trained personnel to respond to any EMS incident on the bike and run portions. Having the boat and UTV on the course greatly reduces response times to any incident on the course.

During July, the entire department participated in water rescue training. Personnel practiced water rescue techniques and practiced operating the Department's water rescue boat.

While incidents involving technical rescue skills and techniques are an infrequent occurrence in Cascade Township, personnel still spend hundreds of hours practicing techniques. We are looking forward to a new year of challenges and training opportunities.

John Makuch
FIREFIGHTER | TECHNICAL RESCUE TECHNICIAN

2024 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Utilized in-house training facility to host Kentwood Fire Department technical rescue team
- Utilized in-house training facility for Cascade Technical rescue team to train periodically
- Strengthened relationship with Kentwood Fire Department technical rescue team
- Replaced outdated equipment (harnesses, drysuits, life jackets, cold water ice rescue suits)
- Train new personnel on basic technical rescue skills

2025 GOALS

- Host a Rope Rescue Operations Course for department personnel
- Purchase confined space operations level equipment
- Improving capabilities to technical rescue types of incidents
- Continue building relationships with neighboring agencies to increase capabilities for responding to technical rescue incidents
- Send rescuers to Ice Rescue Technician Training



PHOTO BY ASHLEY WIERENGA

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT *report*



2024 was a great year for the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) program at Cascade Fire. Chief Magers has dreamed a second set of turnout gear for all suppression personnel for many years. Though Cascade Fire maintains a healthy budget for personal protective equipment, the cost of turnout gear is significant and continues

to increase every year. The average cost to fully outfit a firefighter with structural turnout gear is nearly \$5,000 and the gear has a maximum lifespan of 10 years, though most sets are retired around the 6-8 year mark due to wear and tear.

In late 2023, the State of Michigan announced there would be a \$15 million Turnout Gear grant opportunity available for all Michigan fire departments employing full-time suppression personnel. The purpose of the grant was to aid departments in the purchase of a second set of turnout gear for all full-time firefighters by issuing funds in the amount of \$3,500 per full-time personnel. The

grant application opened in May, and shortly thereafter Cascade Fire learned that it was one of the departments in the state qualifying for the grant. In total, Cascade Fire was awarded \$63,000 towards the purchase of turnout gear to outfit its 18 full-time personnel with a second



The average cost to fully outfit a firefighter with structural turnout gear is **nearly \$5,000** and the gear has a maximum lifespan of 10 years, though most sets are **retired around the 6-8 year mark** due to wear and tear.

set of gear. While this amount will not fully cover the cost of gear purchased, it will certainly ease the financial obligations of Cascade Fire.

Colin Forzley
LIEUTENANT



C SHIFT *report*



Cascade Township Fire Department's C Shift is a dedicated and hardworking team, committed to serving the community and ensuring public safety. Comprised of Captain Jeff Knowles, Lieutenant Andy Albright, Senior Firefighter Kreigh Deering, and Firefighters Michael Lemkuil, Joel Baker, and we welcomed Charles True. The team is known for its professionalism, camaraderie, and ability to handle high-pressure situations. Throughout the year, C Shift responded to 843 calls, ranging from emergency medical services to fire suppression, demonstrating their versatility and readiness to tackle any challenge that comes their way.



843

Number of calls for service C Shift ran.

The crew on C Shift works seamlessly together, with each member bringing a unique skill set and perspective to the team. Captain Jeff Knowles leads the shift with experience and expertise, ensuring that all C Shift operations run smoothly out of Station 1. Lieutenant Andy Albright supports the team with his experience as the longest serving member within the department. Lieutenant Albright is the department's Community Risk Reduction Officer, which keeps us engaged in the community, schools, assisted living facilities, churches, etc. Firefighter Deering is the second longest serving member within the department and is our uniform quartermaster for the department. Firefighter Lemkuil has done a lot of internal construction projects at Station 2, which turned our bunk room into individual rooms for member privacy. His construction experience and knowledge are used to keep costs down and maintain professional quality. Firefighter Baker completed his Company Officer Certifications this year, which is



▲ C SHIFT DURING FORCED ENTRY TRAINING



▼ BUILDING TEAM CAMARADERIE AT COMERICA PARK



▼ A FUN DAY ON THE GOLF COURSE



a large accomplishment. Joel is assisting our paid on-call cadets who are currently attending the fire academy, by going over the skill sheets and answering any questions they have each week to help them succeed while completing their Probationary Instructor hours. Joel is also the Vice President of our Firefighter Association. Firefighter Charles True joined Cascade Fire in 2024 and was assigned to C Shift. Firefighter True has been a great asset to Cascade Fire and he fit into our family right away. Firefighter True was a paid on-call firefighter for the past few years at the Walker and Algoma Fire Departments and worked full-time for Michigan CAT construction equipment.

While C Shift is known for its hard work and commitment to the community, they also know how to balance the intensity of the job with some well-deserved downtime. A highlight of the year for the team was their shift outing to Detroit, where they spent the day at Comerica Park watching the Tigers play. This trip not only provided an opportunity for the team to bond and unwind but also strengthened the camaraderie that makes C Shift so effective in the field. The outing was a reminder that while their work is serious, building relationships and supporting one another is just as important in fostering a cohesive and successful team. C Shift also had a golf day as a shift, which brought a ton of laughs and fun while the younger guys cheated and slightly edged the older guys on the scorecard. It wasn't contested much because the fun we all had was not worth arguing over a few missed strokes on a scorecard. C Shift is remaining together for 2025 which will ensure another great year together.

Jeff Knowles
CAPTAIN

HAZMAT *report*



A material that poses an unreasonable risk to the health and safety of people and the environment if it is not properly controlled is considered a hazardous material. More than 80,000 chemicals are registered for use in commerce in the United States, with an estimated 2,000 being introduced annually. The Cascade Township Fire Department responded to 75 hazardous incidents in 2024. Most of these incidents include natural gas incidents, carbon monoxide incidents, and fuel spills.



75

Number of calls for hazardous incidents including natural gas incidents, carbon monoxide incidents, and fuel spills.



Cascade Fire is part of a Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team which includes the City of Kentwood Fire Department and Gaines Township Fire Department, called Tri-Com HazMat Team. Our team consists of 18 active members and the three fire chiefs. All active members are trained to the Technician Level. Captain Knowles is the co-lead for the team. Tri-Com also is a part of the Region 6 HazMat group through the Michigan State Police.

Our team did respond to Bowne Township to assist the Alto-Bowne Fire Department for a Road Commission vehicle carrying close to 3,000 gallons of tar which rolled over, rupturing the tank, and spilling tar into a field and on the road. Our team dug multiple holes in the ground to track the tar, making its way through the ground and heading toward a drain that leads to a creek. We ended up placing booms at the drain to prevent any tar making its way to the creek.

▼ FROM THE 2024 HAZMAT TRAINING EXERCISE



Tri-Com was the host of the Region 6 HazMat exercise in 2024, held on October 19 at a local manufacturing facility. This facility is equipped with its own response team, which also participated in the exercise to provide real-life scenarios and beneficial training for all who attended. Agencies represented at this exercise included the Tri-Com HazMat Team, Grand Rapids Fire HazMat Team, Muskegon County HazMat Team, Ottawa County HazMat, Kent County Emergency Management, EGLE (Michigan Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy), and the Michigan State Police, along with others.

Cascade Township currently has 16 occupancies that fall under the SARA Title 3 ACT. This is the Emergency Planning and Community-Right-To-Know Act. These facilities have certain hazardous chemicals, or a quantity of a chemical above the reportable quantity threshold limits, which requires them to report all hazardous chemicals onsite. In addition to these facilities, we also have a major interstate, railroad, and an international airport that all types of hazardous materials are transported through and across each day.

Jeff Knowles
CAPTAIN

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION *report*



Cascade Fire Community Risk Reduction focuses on enhancing fire safety and preparedness within the community through a variety of engaging initiatives. Central to our mission is education, where we conduct informative sessions and fire prevention talks aimed at raising awareness about fire risks and safety measures. These programs

Halloween by setting up booths and participating in festivities, where we distribute educational materials and engage with residents. These events offer a platform for the community to connect with fire safety professionals in a fun and relaxed atmosphere.



are tailored for all age groups, ensuring that everyone in the community understands how to protect themselves and their property from fire hazards.

One of the unique aspects of Cascade Fire's outreach is their "birthday drive-bys." Firefighters celebrate local children's birthdays by visiting with a fire truck, creating memorable experiences while also delivering safety messages. This blend of celebration and education fosters a sense of community and reinforces the importance of fire safety in everyday life. Through these diverse initiatives, Cascade Fire Community Risk Reduction strives to create a safer, more informed community.

Central to our mission is education, where we conduct informative sessions and fire prevention talks aimed at raising awareness about fire risks and safety measures.

In addition to educational efforts, the Cascade Fire team organizes safety talks that provide practical tips for fire prevention at home and in businesses. These sessions often include demonstrations and interactive discussions, making the information more accessible and memorable. We also conduct high-risk building tours, allowing participants to see firsthand potential fire hazards and learn best practices for mitigation.

Community engagement is another cornerstone of the Cascade Fire initiative. We celebrate local events like the Independence Day Celebration, Heritage Day, and

Andy Albright
LIEUTENANT



▲ FOREST HILLS PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL



▲ THORNAPPLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (EMS) *report*



EMS management at the state level has continued to focus on maintaining the high standards of patient care and continuing high quality for initial and ongoing continuing education training programs for first responders. At the county level of EMS management, also known as the Medical Control Authority, there has been a large change, mainly in personnel. The management personnel that were there moved on to other positions in the private and state level EMS management positions. The incoming personnel are highly qualified individuals with well over a decade of service in the field of EMS. Their skills in EMS management and high-quality patient care were learned right here in the West Michigan area at various public and private EMS response agencies.

This year, the Cascade Township Fire Department ran 1,891 EMS-based calls for help. These calls have varied from serious auto accidents and life-threatening medical conditions to calls at homes for citizens that can't get up without a little extra help. The department continues to stay current and update its EMS patient care skills with trainings being conducted here at our new Station 1. We have been fortunate enough to have some ER physicians and other medical team members help teach and lead some of those trainings throughout this past year. We look forward to serving our citizens next year with continued skill and compassion.

Jim Walker
EMS SERGEANT



1,891

Number of calls for EMS-based help

PAID ON-CALL *report*



2024 was another exciting and busy year for our paid on-call staff! Our team of 13 members has worked diligently throughout the year to further our knowledge through training, ensuring that when a 911 call is dispatched, the level of care given is uninterrupted while full-time staff are responding to other emergencies.

This year, paid on-call firefighters responded to 1,039 emergency calls throughout the Township. On any given day, our team responds to a variety of incidents ranging from wire down calls, car accidents, structure

fires, water rescues, and medical emergencies. While Cascade Fire has a full-time staff, paid on-call is an essential element for our department, ensuring that we always have trained staff available whenever a 911 call is dispatched. In addition to responding to calls or training, paid on-call firefighters backfill shifts if full-time members are sick or on vacation. In 2024, our members logged 4,494 hours of service to Cascade Township.

I am incredibly proud of the work our staff provides to the Township. These individuals, who live in our community, are always prepared, no matter the time of day or night to step away from their families, jobs, events, or holidays to respond to emergencies in support of their fellow residents. While most of the calls we respond to are resolved in under an hour, they respond knowing that it may be 12 hours or more before they are able to return home.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve this department, along with our community, and will continue to further our knowledge in 2025.

Andy Marsman
SERGEANT



▲ **FRONT FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Matt Milmeister, Miguel Abreu, Audry Bakhuyzen, Nick Agrillo, and Hannah DeMuth
BACK FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Lucas Thompson, Mark Kloosterman, Ryan Todd, Shane Jordan, Sergeant Andy Marsman, and Kevin Delapaz



1,039

Number of calls for service Paid on-Call ran.



4,494

Hours of service to Cascade Township.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a paid on-call firefighter, applications are available online or at Station 1.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE *report*



In the fire service, vehicle maintenance is crucial for ensuring operational readiness, safety, and efficiency. Firefighting vehicles, command vehicles, and support vehicles are essential tools for emergency response. Regular maintenance not only prolongs the life of these vehicles but also directly impacts their performance during critical incidents. The Cascade Township Fire Department currently has three fire engines, a water tender, a medium-duty rescue, a medic unit, four staff vehicles, and two utility vehicles.

As a fire department, we are required to adhere to DOT and NFPA standards, which include pump testing.

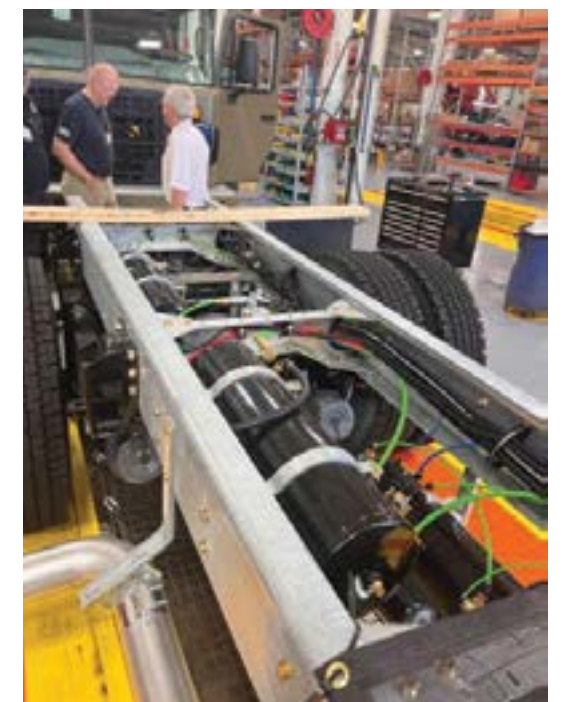
Pump testing is done by a third-party vendor. Pump tests include measuring water flow, pressure tests, and inspection of the mechanical pump and fluids.

Outside of scheduled maintenance and repairs, we are eagerly awaiting the delivery of our new engine, with an estimated delivery in early 2025. In June, members of Cascade Fire went to approve the cab and chassis at Spartan Emergency Response in Charlotte, Michigan.

Once in service, our current Engine 2 will become a reserve engine and will be placed in service when other frontline apparatus are out of service. Adding a reserve engine will also improve our ISO score which can lower insurance costs in our community.

We look forward to implementing these changes to our fleet in 2025.

Mike Poolman
LIEUTENANT



FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION *report*



The Cascade Firefighter's Association (CFA) is a dedicated nonprofit organization made up of current members of the Cascade Township Fire Department. Since its founding, the association has worked tirelessly to

support the local community through a variety of charitable efforts and initiatives as well as our own members who have lost loved ones or retired. Through our charitable work, the association has formed strong partnerships with local organizations and causes.

The flagship event organized by the Cascade Firefighter's Association is its Annual Charity Hockey Game, which this year celebrated its 4th installment. The event brings together a diverse mix of skilled players, including current and former professional hockey players, Division 1 college players, and even Olympic athletes, who take to the ice for a good cause. This year's game raised an impressive \$13,000, with proceeds benefiting two local charities: Riding for Ryan, a charity that gives away bike flags to promote the safety of young riders through visibility and awareness, and Brody's Be Cafe, a local community coffee shop that provides jobs and training for people with disabilities.

The success of the hockey game is a testament to the dedication and passion of the CFA members, as well as the strong sense of community that underpins the organization's mission. Through these fundraising efforts and other initiatives, the Cascade Firefighter's Association continues to play an important role in supporting the well-being of the community, demonstrating how the spirit of giving and service can extend far beyond the firehouse.

Joel Baker
FIREFIGHTER | ASSOCIATION
VICE PRESIDENT



Firefighter's Association FOURTH ANNUAL CHARITY HOCKEY GAME



▲ FOX 17 COHOST ELLIOT GRANDIA WITH FIREFIGHTER ASSOCIATION VICE PRESIDENT JOEL BAKER & TREASURER JON SNYDER



▲ PRESENTING BRODY'S BE CAFE WITH A DONATION OF \$4,500

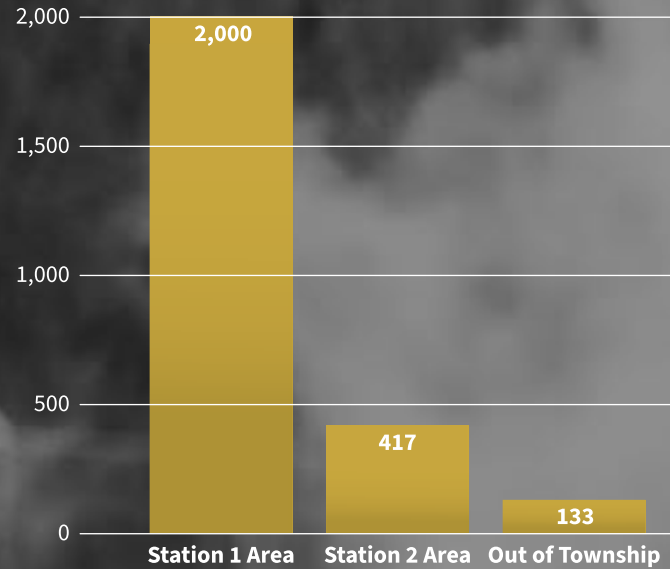




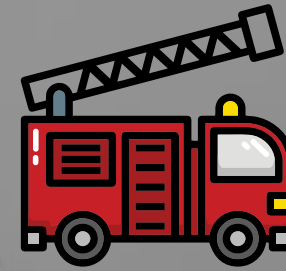
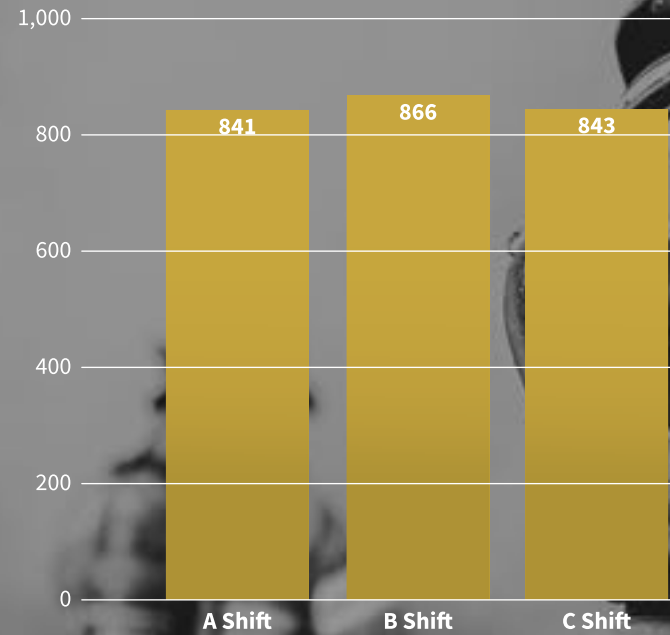
Firefighter's Association **FOURTH ANNUAL CHARITY HOCKEY GAME**

RESPONSES 2024

INCIDENT COUNT PER ZONE



INCIDENTS BY SHIFT



AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME
(Dispatch to Arrival)
05:33



AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME
(Dispatch to En route)
01:24

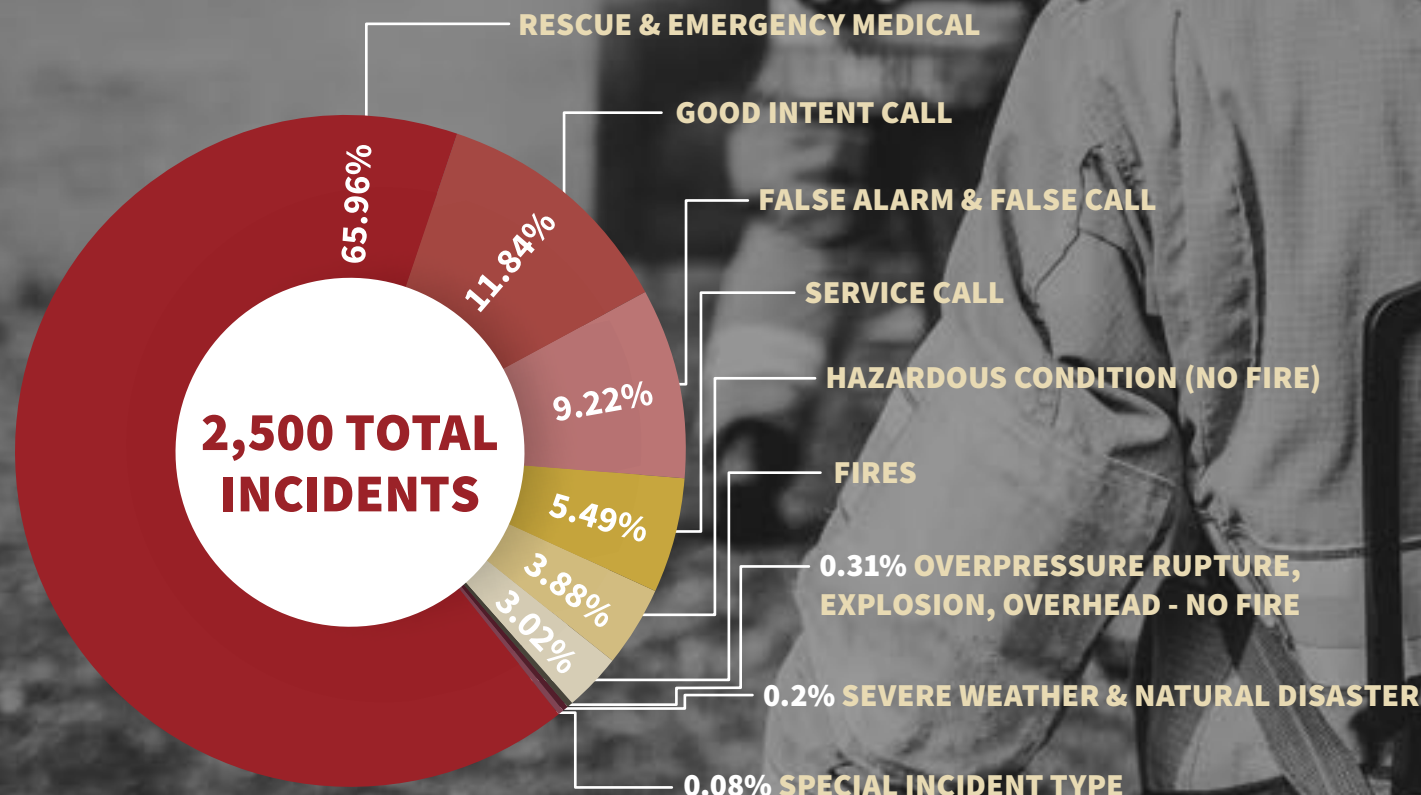


INCIDENT COUNT FOR EMS CALLS
1,891



INCIDENT COUNT FOR FIRE CALLS
659

BREAKDOWN BY MAJOR INCIDENT TYPES



INCIDENT COUNT FOR ALL CALLS
2,550



MUTUAL AID
80 CALLS FOR AID GIVEN
48 CALLS FOR AID RECEIVED



TOTAL TRAINING HOURS
6,520



Live Fire TRAINING



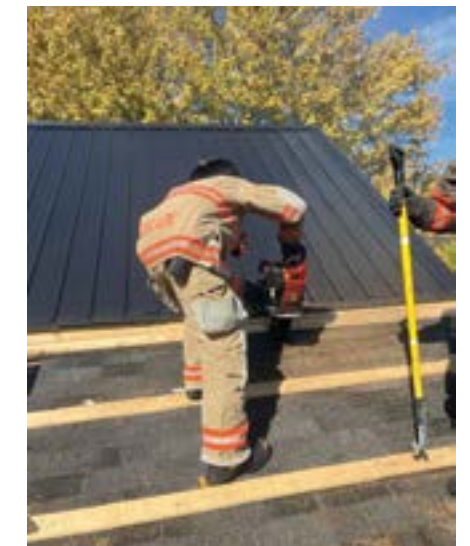
2024 TRAININGS



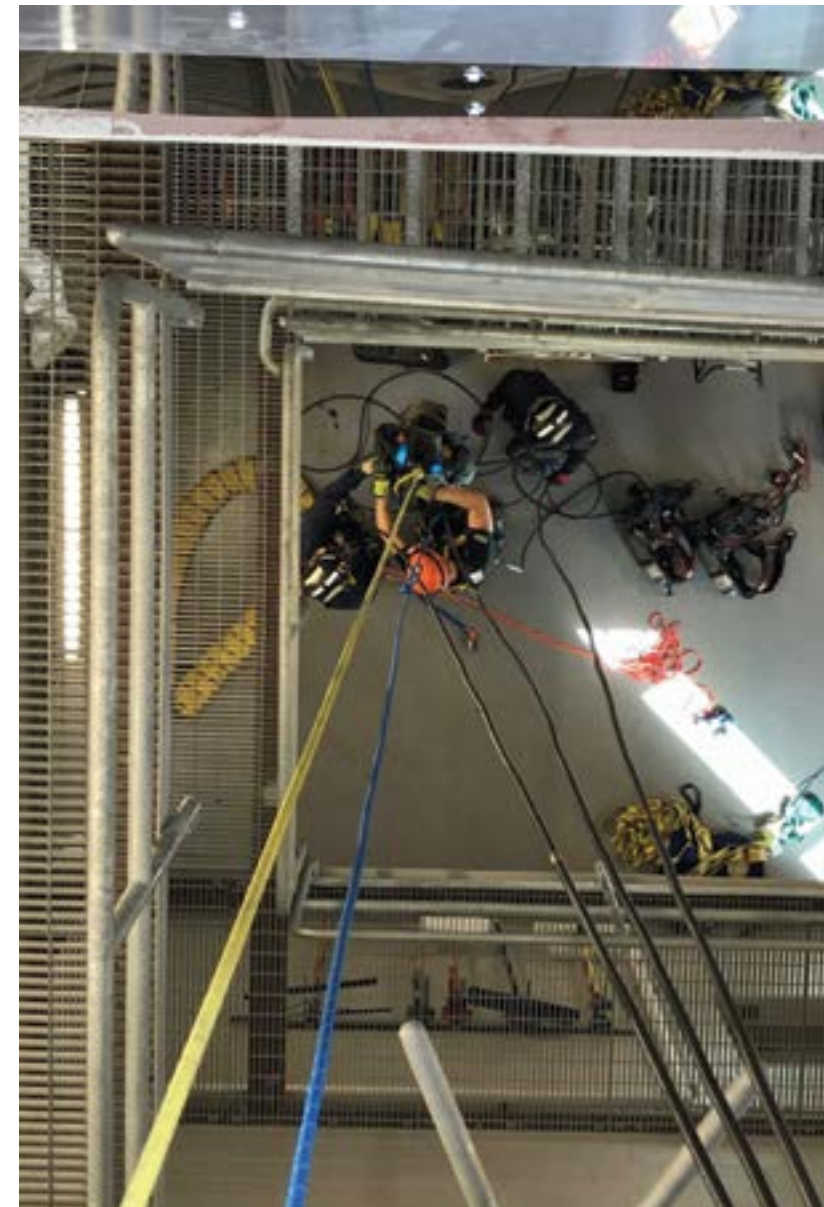
▲ PUMP OPERATIONS



▲ EXTRICATION TRAINING



▲ ROOF VENTILATION OPERATIONS / SEARCH AND RESCUE



▲ CONFINED SPACE TRAINING in the Cascade Fire hose tower with the Cascade Township Fire Department and Kentwood Fire Department

FUN PHOTOS



▲ **C SHIFT AT COMERICA PARK:** Front to back: Firefighter David Lintemuth, Lieutenant Andy Albright, and Firefighter Joel Baker



▲ **FOREST HILLS RANGER RALLY DAY** Left to right: Captain Josh Dettwiler, Deputy Chief Todd Stevenson, Lieutenant Andy Albright, Firefighter Charlie True, and Firefighter Michael Lemkuil



▲ **LIVE FIRE TRAINING** Left to right: Deputy Chief Todd Stevenson, Firefighter Joel Baker, and Captain Jeff Knowles



▲ **FIRE DEPARTMENT STEWARD WILL RASCHKE HARD AT WORK**



▲ **LIEUTENANT ANDY ALBRIGHT WITH A FUTURE FIREFIGHTER AND EMBER THE RIVER OTTER**



▲ **EMBER WITH A FUTURE FIRE CHIEF ON HALLOWEEN**



▲ **EXTRICATION FITNESS TRAINING**



▲ **EMBER VISITING WITH THE K-9 UNIT**



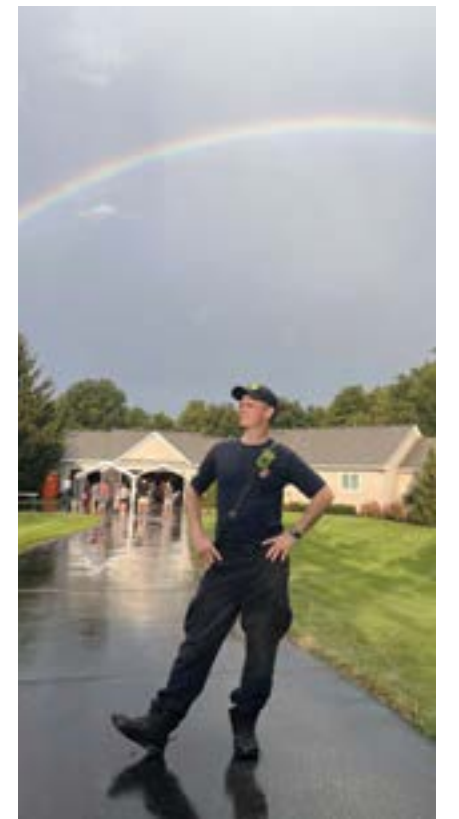
▲ **EMBER WITH PUPPIES ON HALLOWEEN**



▲ **EMBER AND FIREFIGHTER KREIGH DEERING WITH HIS FIRST GRANDDAUGHTER, REMINGTON**



▲ **FIREFIGHTER JOEL BAKER WITH HIS SON, MAX**



▲ **FIREFIGHTER CHARLIE TRUE UNDER THE RAINBOW**



Dedicated to Serving You

STATION 1

2865 Thornhills Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

616-949-1320 (Non-Emergency)

STATION 2

2990 Buttrick Ave. SE
Ada, MI 49301

616-259-7020 (Non-Emergency)

