

# Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

## Quarter 1 – 2024



(Wausau Fire Personnel attend as many job fairs as possible to recruit new members)

## Fire Chief Report by Chief Jeremy Kopp

This year's unusually above-average temperatures were a welcome treat for our staff on a working level. Performing fire, rescue, and EMS operations in ultra-cold temps make everything more difficult and dangerous. When temps drop below zero, operations can become brutal. Crews take extra time to don proper warm protective gear. Paramedics must protect themselves and the patients they care for from the cold. During the cold weather, they pack extra blankets and towels to bundle the patient up during the movement from the home to the ambulance. Every little detail becomes more difficult in extreme weather conditions.

This first quarter has been an exciting one for the Wausau Fire department and me. My first few months as fire chief have been educational, challenging and very exciting. We hired Deputy Chief Justin Pluess who comes from the Wisconsin Rapids Fire Department where he has served the past 20 years and since arriving here, he has proven to be an invaluable addition to our department with his knowledge, experience, and connections all around the state with political figures as well as other fire department leaders. Together as co-leaders of this department we have taken on more and conquered more challenges than I even thought we would in this first quarter. Things like building partnerships with many organizations in the city such as Northcentral Technical College, Marathon County Departments, Community Foundations, and Aspirus Hospital to name a few. This management team has managed to apply for more grants in 2024 than it has in any other year that I am aware of. We have even strengthened our partnership with the Wausau Police Department which was already one of the strongest fire/police partnerships in the state. These partnerships have also helped us successfully propose and receive a Community Care Paramedic position which will be funded for a 3-year trial period with some of our partners.

This year has already proven to be as difficult as past years recruiting and keeping quality employees in the fire department. In 2024 we have on-boarded 4 new employees and have seen 2 resignations and another resignation expected in the next couple months. The 2 resignations were from employees brought on in 2023. We are currently running another hiring process and are hopeful to get to full staff early into the year in anticipation of 3 retirements at the end of 2024. We have also brought on a shared full-time employee as an administrative assistant that we share with P.D. Governor Evers and Senator Baldwin are aware of these difficulties. We are currently working with both offices to employ an apprenticeship program in partnership with NTC to resolve statewide recruitment issues in the fire service.

Congressional Directed Spending Request: In February, Senator Baldwin's regional representative, Gregg Wavrunek, visited Central wanting to know what the needs of Wausau Fire are, and he encouraged us to apply for a Congressional Directed Spending Request through Senator Baldwin. In March, the announcement came that the application period was open. We requested over \$300 million in conjunction with the leaders at NTC to help fund the apprenticeship program. We also submitted a separate request for money to help replace the 11-year-old ladder truck that is housed at station 1.

Central Fire Station: The discussion of the future of the Central Fire Station continues. The problems with the aging facility are becoming more troublesome every year. We hope to begin the discussion about the future of the facility, especially with the purchase of the old floral property in 2023 by the City. As a first step to restarting conversations we have moved another step forward with Five Bugles Design to perform a conceptual fire station design on this property. The existing station needs many updates and repairs, and we have just outgrown its space with new employees and parking. The facility assessment report found a myriad of problems that need to be addressed.

Wisconsin Chief's Education Conference: Deputy Chief Pluess and I traveled to Madison to attend the Wisconsin Chief's educational winter conference. This conference is unique because it is only full-time career Fire Chiefs from around Wisconsin. The conference had many interesting topics, with the biggest being Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the fire service.

# Fire Operations Report by Deputy Chief Justin Pluess

As Deputy Chief of the Wausau Fire Department, I am pleased to present my inaugural quarterly report, covering the period from January to March 2024. Since assuming this role, I have been deeply engaged in the department's operations and am grateful for the warm reception received from both the members of the Wausau Fire Department and the Wausau community. Our commitment to exceptional service remains unwavering, with a focus on enhancing capabilities while prioritizing the safety of our citizens and dedicated staff.

## Fleet:

During this quarter, ongoing repairs were undertaken on two new engines in collaboration with Custom Fire, Sutphen, and the Department of Public Works (DPW). Engine 3 has returned from Custom Fire after repair of a



water tank leak covered under warranty, while Engine 1 has also returned from Cummins following repair of a minor oil leak under warranty. Ladder 2 remains out of commission pending a thorough investigation into an incident resulting in severe injury to a Lieutenant, detailed in the significant events section. Ambulances continue to be in for repair on a weekly basis due to the amount of uses they receive. Additionally, plans in April are in

place to take delivery of a new ambulance manufactured by AEV, with a second slated for delivery in November 2024.

## Buildings and Grounds:

The installation of cubicles in dormitories at Fire Stations One and Three has been completed, providing much-needed privacy and space for firefighters during their overnight shifts. Fire Station One continues to face maintenance challenges and limited space, with plans underway to examine the front vestibule/entryway for the addition of two necessary workstations. At Station Three, the apparatus bay has been repainted in preparation for the installation of a washer and dryer for firefighter turnout gear. Station Three has been approved funds to repair the leaking roof.



## Operations:

Multiple hiring processes have culminated in a recruit academy scheduled for mid-May, bolstering our personnel resources. A revised staffing deployment model has been crafted to optimize emergency response efficiency. Stations Two and Three will consistently maintain a staffing complement of five personnel each, while Station One's staffing levels will adapt daily according to available personnel resources. This refined deployment strategy aims to enhance apparatus assignment efficiency, ensuring optimal utilization of both personnel and equipment. Additionally, this updated deployment approach will bolster the availability of Med-5, particularly during periods when all three primary ambulances are engaged in ongoing emergency responses.





I had the privilege of participating in the National Fire Academy's Executive Planning course in Mayland MA in February, paid for by FEMA. Throughout this rigorous program, attendees were tasked with formulating



strategic initiatives and developing comprehensive implementation plans. As a result of this training, I formulated a proposal for the establishment of a Firefighter Apprenticeship program, representing a groundbreaking initiative within Wisconsin. This proposal garnered the attention of Governor Evers and Northcentral Technical College, both of whom visited Wausau Fire Station 2 for an in-depth presentation and

discussion on the recruitment challenges faced by Wisconsin fire departments. Subsequently, Wausau Fire and Northcentral Technical College have initiated the planning process to materialize this program, with anticipated commencement scheduled for June 2025.

#### **Summary of Significant Incidents - Wausau Fire Department (WFD) First Quarterly Report 2024**

**January 8, 2024:** WFD crews assisted the Village of Maine with a fully involved building fire. Lieutenant Prausa received commendation from Town of Texas Chief Walters thanking Lt Prausa for his effective collaboration and tactical expertise in extinguishing the fire. WFD worked alongside Texas FD and Maine FD to deploy resources and coordinate suppression efforts, ensuring a coordinated and effective response. WFD demonstrated exemplary teamwork and professionalism in challenging conditions.

**January 14, 2024 (First Incident):** WFD crews extinguished a vehicle fire near a structure coordinated with Village of Maine FD. Upon arrival, WFD found a fully involved passenger truck on fire approximately 20-30 feet from a structure. A thorough extinguishment was conducted, utilizing the entire reserve tank from Engine 3 (750 gallons). WFD deployed a 1 3/4" hoseline for fire suppression, ensuring effective containment and preventing fire spread to nearby structures. The scene was turned over to Chief Bozinski of the Village of Maine FD. WFD demonstrated efficient coordination and collaboration with mutual aid partners.

**January 14, 2024 (Second Incident):** WFD crews responded to a fully engulfed garage fire that was threatening adjacent structures. WFD Engine company three arrived at the scene, confronting a two-car garage fully engulfed in flames. Crews utilized a 2 1/2" hoseline for fire suppression, effectively controlling the blaze and preventing further escalation. WFD conducted aggressive fire attack and ventilation operations, ensuring structural integrity and preventing exposure to neighboring properties. WFD demonstrated exemplary tactics and coordination in a challenging firefighting scenario.

**February 1, 2024:** WFD crews responded to a possible structure fire at Wausau West High School, where smoke was reported in the metal shop. Upon arrival, WFD found a large amount of smoke emanating from the school, filling the entire high school with smoke. WFD mitigated the fire hazard and exhausted the smoke, ensuring the safety of students and staff. The smoke was contributed to a fire in the dust collector system filters due to a student burning wooden handles for a project. WFD provided guidance to maintenance for system inspection and maintenance, highlighting proactive measures for fire prevention.

**February 1, 2024 (Second Incident):** WFD dispatched for a fire at Kolbe and Kolbe, where a fire was reported in a pipe's inner liner. Upon arrival, WFD extinguished the fire and advised staff to monitor for further signs of ignition. WFD conducted thorough investigation and ensured safety of personnel. WFD demonstrated

proactive measures and effective communication to mitigate fire risk and ensure safety.

**February 6, 2024:** WFD responded to a grass fire at N 4th Ave/W Campus Dr, caused by a burn barrel. Upon arrival, WFD extinguished the grass fire and educated property owner on city regulations ensuring compliance and preventing future incidents. WFD crews demonstrated community engagement and education on fire prevention measures.

**February 17, 2024:** WFD Dispatched for a structure fire at 1300-4H N 9th Avenue, where flames were reported between apartments O and P. Upon arrival, WFD crews quickly extinguished exterior fire and ensured safety of residents. WFD conducted thorough investigation and coordinated with maintenance for alarm system reset. Crews demonstrated effective firefighting tactics and collaboration with stakeholders for incident resolution.

**March 4, 2024:** WFD dispatched to Jefferson Street Parking Ramp for a fire alarm due a detected fire. Upon arrival, crews located and extinguished a small fire. The fire was a result of burnt paper towels near the elevator. WFD collaborated with law enforcement and building management for system reset. WFD demonstrated proactive response and effective coordination to mitigate fire risk and ensure public safety.

**March 12, 2024 (First Incident):** WFD crews responded to the Wisconsin River for reports of a body in the water. Upon arrival, WFD deployed watercraft and assisted dive team in recovery efforts. Coordinated with law enforcement and medical examiner for proper handling of the situation. WFD crews demonstrated effective collaboration with multiple agencies for a safe resolution of the incident.

**March 12, 2024 (Second Incident)** WFD requested for mutual aid for a grass fire near 3104 W. Wausau Ave. Upon arrival, crews positioned strategically to prevent fire spread and assisted in quick extinguishment efforts. WFD ensured safety of personnel and containment of the fire. Crews demonstrated effective mutual aid support and proactive measures for fire prevention.

**March 12, 2024 (Third Incident):** WFD crews responded to 406 Elm Street for a structure fire, where smoke and charring was observed on the siding of a second-floor porch area. Upon arrival, crews conducted interior search and overhaul to ensure fire extinguishment and prevent rekindling. WFD Crews demonstrated thorough investigation and effective firefighting tactics for incident resolution.

**March 14, 2024:** WFD responded to reports of a person in the water near the gazebo on Scott St. Upon arrival, Wausau Police Department (WPD) was standing on the seawall near the gazebo on the river's edge. WPD officers had thrown the victim a throw rope. The victim was holding onto the rope but stating that he "couldn't hold on much longer". Rescue 1 (R1) arrived on scene with members in water rescue suits and immediately deployed into the water for victim retrieval. WFD provided medical assessment and treatment. WFD and WPD demonstrated effective coordination and response in water rescue operations.

**March 19, 2024:** WFD responded to a structure fire, finding a large wood frame building with visible smoke showing on the bravo side. Ladder 2 initiated an exterior offensive attack while Engine 1 controlled power and conducted a search, initially finding no fire inside. However, upon opening the bravo side gable, it was revealed that the fire originated from arcing electrical behind an the attached cross. During suppression efforts, the hydraulic aerial ladder retracted, crushing and trapping the Lieutenant's lower extremities, prompting swift action from the Engineer and crews to free him. The Lieutenant was then transported to a local hospital for treatment, accompanied by Chief Kopp and Deputy Chief Pluess until notification and arrival of his spouse. Firefighting operations continued until the fire was fully extinguished. The injured firefighter is expected to recover, although the road to recovery will be lengthy. WFD crews conducted aggressive firefighting tactics to extinguish fire caused by electrical arcing, ensuring safety of occupants and property. The Battalion Chief Kruzan demonstrated effective incident command and firefighting techniques for swift resolution. This incident remains under investigation.

**March 26, 2024:** WFD responded to TerX Shredding and Recycling Center for a structure fire, where heavy smoke was observed on the A/D side of a building. WFD provided extensive mutual aid support and conducted

aerial operations to extinguish fire and prevent further spread. WFD demonstrated effective teamwork and strategic firefighting efforts for incident containment.

**March 31, 2024:** WFD dispatched to 1500 N 1st #116 for a structure fire, where smoke was reported in an apartment complex. Crews donned full PPE and conducted interior search and extinguished fire caused by burning cardboard boxes. WFD crews demonstrated swift response and effective firefighting tactics for incident resolution, ensuring safety of residents and property.

Overall, this quarter has been marked by ongoing efforts to enhance operational efficiency and advance our mission of serving the Wausau community with excellence. Please feel free to contact me at (715) 261-7903, [justin.pluess@ci.wausau.wi.us](mailto:justin.pluess@ci.wausau.wi.us) or visit me in person at Station One.

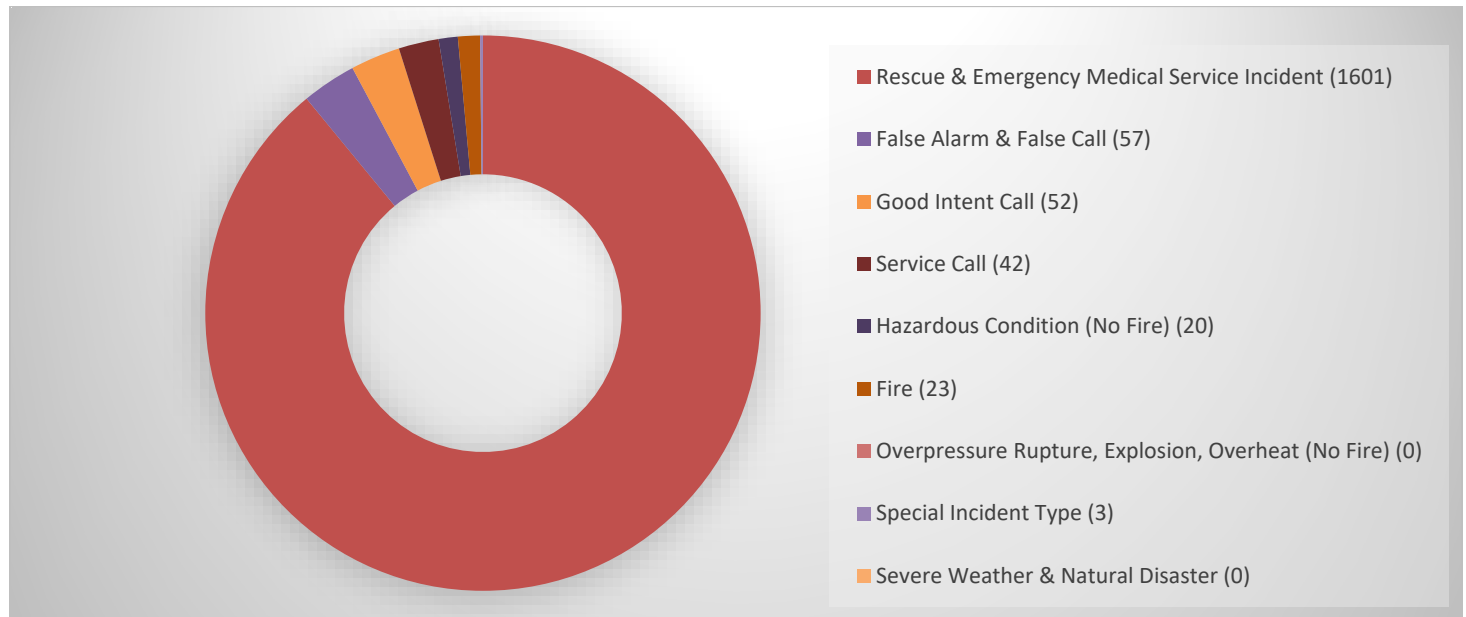
**Significant Fire Events:**

Date	Address	City	Incident #	Type
1/2/2024	152707 South Mountain Road	Rib Mountain	F24000016	Building fire
1/6/2024	1819 Stewart Avenue	City of Wausau	F24000035	Cooking fire, confined to container
1/8/2024	1016 Evergreen Road	Wausau	F24000040	Building fire
1/8/2024	903 South 60th Avenue	City of Wausau	F24000047	Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire
1/14/2024	530 Evergreen Road	Wausau	F24000078	Passenger vehicle fire
1/14/2024	1327 North 2nd Street	City of Wausau	F24000081	Building fire
1/14/2024	1321 North 2nd Street	City of Wausau	F24000081	Building fire
1/24/2024	1240 Merrill Avenue	City of Wausau	F24000149	Cooking fire, confined to container
1/27/2024	2101 Nehring Street	City of Wausau	F24000166	Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire
2/1/2024	1200 West Wausau Avenue	City of Wausau	F24000198	Outside equipment fire
2/1/2024	1323 South 11th Avenue	City of Wausau	F24000200	Trash or rubbish fire, contained
2/6/2024	500 West Campus Drive	City of Wausau	F24000221	Grass fire
2/17/2024	1300 North 9th Avenue	City of Wausau	F24000285	Cooking fire, confined to container
2/21/2024	163080 Ross Avenue	Village of Weston	F24000306	Building fire
2/25/2024	2515 Elmwood Boulevard	City of Wausau	F24000337	Passenger vehicle fire
2/26/2024	6400 State Highway 29	City of Wausau	F24000347	Passenger vehicle fire
2/29/2024	1300 North 9th Avenue	City of Wausau	F24000361	Building fire
3/4/2024	425 North 1st Street	City of Wausau	F24000383	Trash or rubbish fire, contained
3/12/2024	3104 West Wausau Avenue	Wausau	F24000430	Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire
3/12/2024	406 Elm Street	City of Wausau	F24000432	Building fire
3/19/2024	1101 Elm Street	City of Wausau	F24000474	Building fire
3/26/2024	107 Everest Avenue	Village of Brokaw	F24000507	Building fire
3/31/2024	1500 North 1st Street	City of Wausau	F24000535	Building fire

**Monthly NFIRS Incident Comparison:**

	2024	2023	2022	2021	% Of Change from 2023 to 2024
January	646	579	591	502	11.57%
February	597	506	507	456	17.98%
March	555	551	540	497	0.73%
April		527	498	503	
May		574	574	556	
June		553	590	583	
July		679	531	587	

August		571	600	577	
September		548	524	525	
October		616	545	552	
November		624	574	562	
December		623	612	590	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6951</b>	<b>6686</b>	<b>6490</b>	



### Responses by Municipality (All NFIRS Reports):

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs - YTD
City of Abbotsford	1	0.06%	1
City of Antigo	0	0.00%	0
City of Colby	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	0
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City Of Wausau	1,694	94.22%	1,694
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Oneida County	1	0.06%	1
Rosholt	0	0.00%	0
Taylor County	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Berlin	8	0.44%	8
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Cassel	2	0.11%	2
Town Of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Frankfort	0	0.00%	0
Town of Franzen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Halsey	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hamburg	1	0.06%	1

Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hewitt	6	0.33%	6
Town of Hull	1	0.06%	1
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	0
Town of Knowlton	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Marathon	1	0.06%	1
Town Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town of Norrie	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Rib Falls	1	0.06%	1
Town Of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town of Ringle	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Stettin	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Texas	12	0.67%	12
Town Of Wausau	26	1.45%	26
Town Of Weston	1	0.06%	1
Town Of Wien	1	0.06%	1
Village Of Athens	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Brokaw	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Edgar	1	0.06%	1
Village of Hatley	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Maine	31	1.72%	31
Village Of Marathon City	3	0.17%	3
Village Of Rib Mountain	4	0.22%	4
Village Of Rothschild	0	0.00%	0
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	3	0.17%	3
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,798</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,798</b>

### **Activity/Incident Hours Committed:**

Category	Time Committed
NFIRS Incidents	559:50:07 Hours
EMS Incidents	2719:18:39 Hours
Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	2,889.40 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	4,319.05 Hours

### **Aid Responses:**

Type of Aid	# of Runs
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	9
Mutual Aid Given – Fire	6
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	56
Automatic Aid Given – Fire	1



Mutual Aid Received – EMS	0
Mutual Aid Received – Fire	0
Automatic Aid Received – EMS	0
Automatic Aid Received – Fire	3
Other Aid Given – EMS	0
Request for EMS from Other Agencies to the City of Wausau (not Aid)	5
Request for Fire from Other Agencies to the City of Wausau (not Aid)	2
Total Non-Aid Incidents (outside City with no other agency response)	21

## EMS Division by EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson

### EMS Patient Experience

The EMS Division would like to share our patient care experience report from December 2023 to March 2024.

Patient Experience Report

December 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023

Your Score

93.38

Your Patients in this Report

25

Total Patients in this Report

4,240

Total EMS Organizations

228

Patient Experience Report

January 1, 2024 to January 31, 2024

Your Score

94.16

Your Patients in this Report

39

Total Patients in this Report

5,945

Total EMS Organizations

228

# Patient Experience Report

February 1, 2024 to February 29, 2024

Your Score

**93.06**

Your Patients in this Report

**28**

Total Patients in this Report

**5,517**

Total EMS Organizations

**228**

## Current Initiative

EMS Division has been moving towards its new initiative to become a **HEARTSafe Community!** We have teamed up with the Marathon County Parks department to implement the first phase of our initiative, which is to place public access AEDs outside our fire stations, in some parks, pools, and the 400 Block. We have submitted our funding requests for this initiative through the Community Foundation.

SaveStation was founded by a group of likeminded individuals who saw the need to work together to create an easy-to-identify AED housing station so that the PUBLIC could quickly find any AED.



Please stay tuned as this initiative moves forward!

## New Initiative

Another initiative is called Project **ADAM**. I am very excited about this initiative! Project ADAM began in 1999 in Wisconsin after the death of Adam Lemel, who was just 17-years-old when he collapsed and died while playing basketball. Adam suffered a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), in which ventricular fibrillation occurred, a condition in which the ventricles cannot pump blood into the body. Defibrillation, or an AED, could have saved his life. Adam's parents, Patty and Joe, teamed up with Children's Wisconsin to create Project ADAM.

While sudden cardiac arrest is uncommon in young people, it sadly does happen. And it's exactly that — sudden and unexpected. But, immediate CPR and the availability of an AED can double or triple a person's chance of survival. So while you can't predict when one might strike, you can plan your response. That's where Project ADAM is making a difference.

*Project ADAM is a nationwide initiative that has saved the lives of more than 200 children, adolescents and adults who went into sudden cardiac arrest. Today, there are 38 Project ADAM affiliated sites in 29 states.* I will be reaching out to the Wausau School District Superintendent to see how the fire department can assist them in becoming a Heart Safe School.



## New Piece of Equipment

We have just completed our initial in-house training on our new Sapphire IV Pumps. Our paramedics have the ability to initiate and manage different IV infusions to support blood pressure, relieve chest pain, and manage different emergent obstetrical emergencies. These new IV pumps are smaller and easier to work with. All four of our fully equipped advanced life support ambulances have a dedicated IV pump.



## New Ambulance Status

It has been a while since our new ambulance was mentioned in our reports. It is almost at its completion.

We are in the process of making arrangements to complete the final inspection in the first week of April at the manufacturer in North Carolina.



### **Responses by Municipality (EMS Patient Care Reports):**

City	# of Reports	% of Reports	# of Reports – YTD
City of Abbotsford	1	0.06%	1
City of Antigo	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	0
City of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City of Wausau	1,543	94.14%	1,543
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Oneida County	1	0.06%	1
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Berlin	8	0.49%	8
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Cassel	3	0.18%	3
Town of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Frankfort	0	0.00%	0
Town of Franzen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hamburg	1	0.06%	1
Town of Halsey	0	0.00%	0
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hewitt	6	0.37%	6
Town of Hull	1	0.06%	1
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	0
Town of Knowlton	0	0.00%	0
Town of Marathon	1	0.06%	1
Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town of Norrie	0	0.00%	0
Town of Rib Falls	1	0.06%	1
Town of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town of Ringle	0	0.00%	0

Town of Stettin	0	0.00%	0
Town of Texas	12	0.73%	12
Town of Wausau	26	1.59%	26
Town of Wien	1	0.06%	1
Village of Athens	0	0.00%	0
Village of Edgar	1	.06%	1
Village of Hatley	0	0.00%	0
Village of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village of Maine	28	1.71%	28
Village of Marathon City	3	0.18%	3
Village of Rib Mountain	2	0.12%	2
Village of Rothschild	0	0.00%	0
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	1,639	100.00%	1,639

## Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

First quarter scheduled Fire/Rescue training:

- Annual Respiratory Fit Testing
- Declaring a Mayday
- Hearing Conservation
- Fall Protection
- Scene Resource Management
- Haz-Mat with State Hygiene Lab (Inservice)
- Elevator Operations
- Minor Equipment Maintenance
- Air Management
- Coaching and Mentoring V2
- Line of Duty Death Case Study – Nathan Flynn and Capt. Josh Laird
- Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC)
- Search and Rescue

Each month, our members are assigned specific training drills for safety, efficiency, and to provide functional service to the community and visitors. These assignments are also to meet state statute and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requirements. Topics range from basic firefighting tasks to equipment maintenance, or even Hazardous Materials Response. Some of the assignments are mandated to address physical and mental health and safety requirements such as our breathing apparatus fit testing, hearing conservation, and fall protection.

### Health and Safety

This quarter, all members of the department were assessed for proper fit and function of our breathing apparatus and masks. This is required by Statute, NFPA, and federal regulations. If any deficiencies are found, our in-house breathing apparatus technicians address the equipment issues and members seek medical consultation if it is a medical concern. The issues discovered are generally minor and equipment related. Hearing Conservation and Fall Protection are also mandated training. Members receive a refresher on when and how to use hearing protection whenever possible. Our profession is extremely noisy at times and the ability to preserve our hearing is crucial. Fall protection is self-explanatory. However, we are often put in positions required by our profession that do not allow for general industry type fall protection. We are unable to use fall restraint when transitioning from a ground ladder to a roof, or when entering a window to perform



a search. However, when we can, we utilize fall protection lanyards, ladder belts, and other means to protect ourselves from avoidable falls.

### Firefighting

As the Fire Training Division Chief, I would like to say that we see a lot of fire and we all have extensive experience. However, that is simply not true. 85% + of our job involves EMS. Plainly stated, we acquire far more EMS experience in a short period of time than we have, or can, with firefighting as a member of the Wausau Fire Department. What we can not obtain through experience, we must address in training. This is not always easy since the nearest purpose-built training facility is in Merrill. However, we make the best of what we do have.

We often utilize our own stations to simulate training environments. This may include placing ground ladders, pulling hose lines through the apparatus bays, entanglement drills, basic hi-rise firefighting, and a few other concepts.

The few acquired structures we have had in the past four years are limited in duration, limited in what we may do with them, and if we can burn in them at all. These acquired structures are second to none when it comes to the reality our firefighters face. They are often unknown, unfamiliar, and thus, most like a home they may face when called for a fire or emergency.

Luckily in this current quarter of 2024, we have been blessed with two different structures. One was provided by the Hagar House for a few weeks. This collaboration provided an unknown structure and the ability to perform skills essential to the fireground, but also destructive in nature. Our crews were able to search unknown spaces, breach walls as if we were checking for extended fire, cut the roof to simulate releasing hot gases and smoke, and even rescue firefighters from the basement in the event they were trapped.

The second structure is on the corner of North 2<sup>nd</sup> and Bridge Street. This building is planned to include live-fire training following the other uses just described. Performing live-fire training takes weeks of planning and special certifications to conduct according to state statute. We have the equipment and staff to make this a highly beneficial training event for the Wausau Fire Department. The live-fire training is scheduled for the first week in May.





### Hazardous Materials

Over the past few months, we have had multiple opportunities to train in various aspects of hazardous materials. As the city team, the county team, and a level two response team for the State of Wisconsin, we must make every attempt possible to remain proficient.

The Wisconsin Lab of Hygiene was gracious enough to come to Wausau for three days and provide training. Each shift received brief lectures and hands on training regarding substance classification, identification, and evidence collection. Everyone was trained on the state protocol to transfer evidence from a scene to the state lab in Madison.

In March, the Wisconsin 54<sup>th</sup> CST (Civil Support Team) joined the Wausau Fire Department in a collaborative exercise that included a makeshift lab being discovered with materials that resembled higher risks than “normal.” The practical scenario began with the WFD performing reconnaissance and then calling in the specialists of the CST to assess and mitigate CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, or Nuclear) threats. This exercise concluded when the substances were identified, and the area was made safe for cleanup. The location for the exercise was another aspect of collaboration with the City of Wausau Wastewater Treatment Plant. They have been instrumental in this exercise, as well as other training with the WFD over the past year.

One more hazardous materials training in March was the WAHMR (Wisconsin Association of Haz-Mat Responders) conference in Stevens Point. Members of the WFD attended the conference to learn from state and national experts and vendors with emerging products on the latest and greatest in hazardous materials response. Unique this year, was a presentation by WFD Lt. Ambrosius and Training Division Chief Briggs on how to create and implement a hazardous materials training program. Lt. Ambrosius is the Assistant Coordinator for the Wausau FD Hazardous Materials Response Team. The presentation was given to team members, team leads, chemists, county emergency managers, and others on the content we should be training on related to hazardous materials response. It was very well received.





### Crew-Initiated Training

Throughout the year, company and crew officers train and assess their members for proficiency in all aspects of fire, rescue, and EMS. As areas needing improvement are discovered, the officers and crew instructors conduct the required training to ensure all members can perform our essential duties. This training is in addition to the pre-scheduled training that is issued department wide.



### Grant Writing/Grant Management

Grant writing is not exactly a training function. However, when you have experience in it, you assist where

needed. In the first quarter, a grant was submitted for the AAA Auto Club Grant for the purchase of fire suppression blankets and Electric Vehicle (EV) Emergency Plugs to utilize during vehicle fires and incidents involving “EVs.” This request was placed after performing company-level walk throughs of apartment buildings with EV charging stations and below-grade parking for electric vehicles. These vehicles have been identified as posing a far different hazard to responders in the event of a collision or fire.

Another grant activity this quarter included educating members on the grant process. Grant writing, management, and grant closeout can be a difficult task considering all the detailed criteria put in place by the entities that offer the opportunity. This training will continue to pay dividends in the future as we continue to submit for all grants that we find applicable to serving the community.

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	2301.30	68.22%	2301.30
Driver/Operator Training	123.75	3.67%	123.75
Facilities Training	6	0.18%	6
Hazardous Materials Training	570	16.90%	570
Misc Training	113	3.35%	113
Officer Training	133.75	3.96%	133.75
Specialty Training	125.50	3.72%	125.50
Total	3373.30	100.00%	3373.30

*Training Categories:*

*Company Training – General firefighting training*

*Officer Training – Included leadership, management, supervision, and tactical considerations*

*Driver/Operator Training – Operation of fire apparatus*

*Hazardous Materials Training – How to mitigate the leak or spill of hazardous substances*

*Specialty Training – Rope, confined space, trench, collapse, ice, water, and other special rescues.*

*Facilities Training – Training at a live-burn facility (may include off-duty time)*

*Misc Training – Any other training category such as software, administrative, etc.*

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Admin Training	33.50	3.54%	33.50
EMS Training	755.25	79.86%	755.25
Fire Instructor Training	157	16.60%	157.00
Fire Prevention Training	0	0.00%	0
Investigation Training	0	0.00	0
Total	945.75	100.00%	945.75

## Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

**Inspections:** Throughout the first quarter of 2024, we inspected 874 public buildings and places of employment. We performed 799 inspections that passed, and we had 75 properties with Fire Code Violations. 78 of the 799 inspections were follow-up inspections from previous violations. The failed inspections were primarily comprised of overdue fire extinguisher annual maintenance, overdue vent hood cleaning service, and Fire alarm annual maintenance. These properties will require follow-up inspections to confirm compliance. We conducted 19 consultation inspections for the quarter. These entailed consulting for Fire Alarm Systems, Knox Box updates, and new construction. We also received and reviewed 420 reports through the Compliance Engine for services and maintenance of Fire Protection Systems at various businesses.

**Investigations:** There were 3 fire investigations performed during the first quarter of 2024. Two of these fires originated on the exterior of residential housing properties. Both were determined to be started from careless use and disposal of smoking materials. The third originated in the kitchen of a residential housing property. This was the result of a stovetop burner being accidentally turned on. The burner was unintentionally turned on and there was a cardboard moving box left on top of the burner.

**Public Outreach:** Throughout the first quarter we had several outreach opportunities. We performed a Fire Safety Outreach Program for 34 special needs adults. New smoke and CO detectors were placed 6 different times in private residences with a total of 17 smoke detectors and 4 CO detectors placed.

**Education:** There were no formal education classes completed or available for the first quarter of 2024. The Prevention Division utilized this time to complete department benchmarks for equipment usage. This entails getting fit tested for the use of SCBA & N95 masks. Ensuring our respirators for fire investigation are up to date and functioning properly. Maintaining and ensuring we have the proper protective equipment and clothing to safely perform our job.



**Prevention Division Activities:**

Inspections Completed	Quarterly	Year to Date
Routine Fire Inspections	777	777
Re-inspections	78	78
All other Inspections (Consults/burn complaints,etc)	19	19
<b>Total Inspections</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>874</b>
Fire Investigations	3	3
<b>Inspection Department Activities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Public Engagement Activities	14	14