

Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

February 2023



(Wausau Fire onboards 9 new firefighters in one week!)

Fire Chief Report by Chief Robert Barteck

February was a historic month for the Wausau Fire Department as the nine firefighters being funded through the SAFER Grant began their careers with us. This moment was a long time in the works, and we are thrilled with the quality of candidates that we were able to hire during this difficult recruitment era. Each candidate has a unique and different education and background that will make a well-rounded team.

Six of the new firefighters began their educational journey to earning their Paramedic licenses through a partnership with Northcentral Technical College. That course will conclude in December. The remaining three are paramedic students at Fox Valley Technical College and Mid-State Technical College. They are working a hybrid schedule as they complete the remainder of their training, which will conclude in May.

EMS Division Chief Thompson, Deputy Chief Kopp, and I attended the annual Wisconsin EMS Association Conference in Green Bay in early February. It was a high-quality conference with a large turnout from Wisconsin EMS agencies. One of the more prominent topics was the difficulties that rural volunteer ambulance providers are experiencing. The problem is a lack of volunteer EMTs and Paramedics to staff volunteer ambulances.

A new report from the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health reported that approximately 41 percent of Emergency Medical Service providers in the state are staffed by six or fewer people, with 21 percent being run by just two or three staff members. A recent survey by the Wisconsin State Fire Chief's Association, 10 communities reported one 911 call that was never responded to because there was no staffed ambulance to send. Between rising costs and a lack of available staffing, some communities have had to go without ambulance services, left with no other option but to hope and rely upon neighboring providers.

These difficulties in rural regions will push the burden of 911 response to communities with greater resources and tilt the balance of the EMS system in Wisconsin.

Governor Evers is aware of these difficulties. During his visit to Wausau Fire, he highlighted his plan to send 20% of sales tax back to Wisconsin Communities, with a portion of the 20% earmarked for public safety (fire, EMS, and law enforcement). We were excited that Governor Evers included Wausau among his stops with this announcement.

The Wisconsin Fire Service is amazing at supporting and helping other departments in any way possible. Our success with the FY21 SAFER Grant has made us popular with other departments writing FY22 SAFER Requests. We have shared our SAFER Grant narrative and materials with eight other fire departments to aid them in wiring their own grants. Locally, Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids Fire Departments are using our documents as templates of what a successful SAFER grant looks like. We have worked to help them just as other departments, like Brookfield Fire, helped us with our grant. We have our fingers crossed that these departments experience the same amazing success that we did through this grant. I hope you find this monthly report informative. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or want additional information added to this report.

Robert Barteck – Fire Chief

EMS Division by EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson

CAAS Accreditation

In December 2022, the EMS division submitted our CAAS accreditation application for our initial review. We are excited to inform you that we have received the results of our initial application. CAAS only requested clarification on a few items from our initial application. We will be submitting those clarification documents to CAAS this week. The next step is the official on-site review, where CAAS sends three evaluators to our department to review our EMS operations internally.



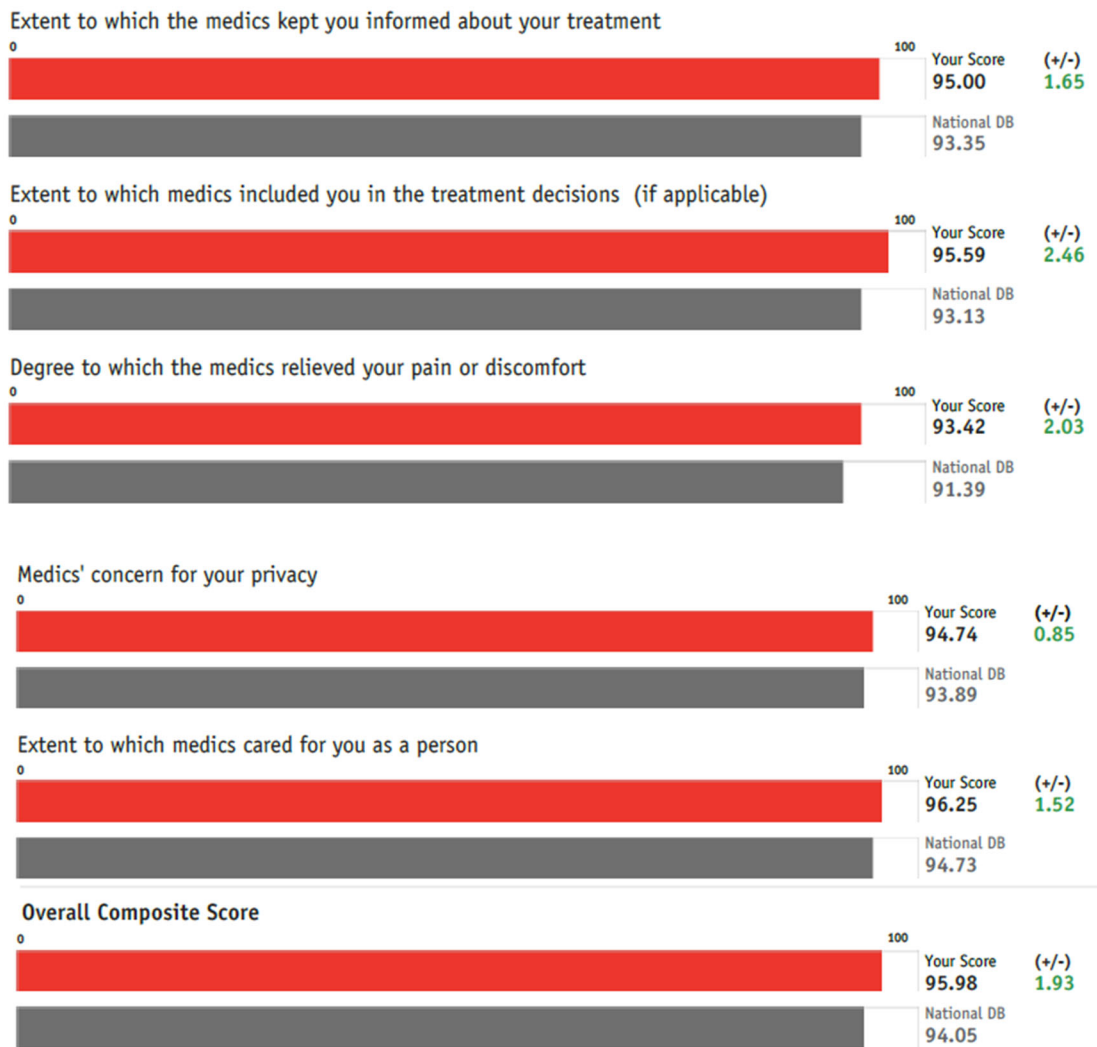
EMS Surveys

The EMS Division found that as part of the CAAS Accreditation process, we needed to send surveys to patients we transported to the emergency department. This is something very new to the Wausau Fire Department. We entered into an agreement with EMS Survey Team, who sends out surveys via US mail. EMS Survey Team is the market leader in collecting and measuring the quality of the EMS patient experience. EMS Survey Team enables EMS agencies to analyze Patient Experiences by measuring satisfaction and benchmarking services against other providers in the industry. This past month we received our first report from them. As the EMD Division Chief, I am proud to share the “Medic Composite” results. As you see, we have scored high than the national average of other agencies that report to the EMS Survey Team.

Medic Composite

This report shows mean scores for each Medic survey item and the overall composite score. The first column shows your organization score with the national database score below it. The second column is the difference between your score and the database mean.





Responses by Municipality (EMS Patient Care Reports):

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs – YTD
City of Abbotsford	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	1	0.21%	1
City of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City of Wausau	423	90.77%	910
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	1	0.21%	1
Town of Berlin	3	0.64%	7
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Cassel	0	0.00%	0
Town of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Franzen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0
Town of Halsey	1	0.21%	1
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hewitt	3	0.64%	4
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	0
Town of Marathon	0	0.00%	0

Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town of Rib Falls	1	0.21%	1
Town of Rib Mountain	2	0.43%	2
Town of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town of Stettin	1	0.21%	1
Town of Texas	2	0.43%	4
Town of Wausau	7	1.50%	22
Town of Wien	0	0.00%	1
Village of Athens	3	0.64%	3
Village of Edgar	0	0.00%	1
Village of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village of Maine	11	2.36%	24
Village of Marathon City	1	0.21%	2
Village of Rothschild	1	0.21%	1
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village of Weston	5	1.07%	8
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
Total	466	100.00%	994

Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

February Scheduled Training:

- Rope Rescue Anchoring
- Positioning Fire Apparatus
- Hearing Conservation
- Elevator Operations
- Fireground Strategy and Tactics

A brief breakdown of our scheduled activities follows:

Rope Rescue Anchoring

When it comes to technical rescue, creating a safe, effective, and efficient anchor for operations is a foundational skill. If we do not have a functional anchor, we can not use any rope skills in rope rescue, confined space, trench rescue, water rescue, etc. This month, crews performed multiple skills in an informal setting and co-taught themselves.

Members were told to use any of our approved equipment and create whatever anchor came to mind. They were then given a brief lecture on a portable white board before looking at each anchor created. We then proceeded from anchor point to anchor point discussing what had been made, how it should be used, and how it could be used. Following this round-robin style of training, we created and discussed any types of anchors not performed by the group. This session proved to be a highly effective method of refreshing on our skills.



Above: Crews created and discussed rope rescue anchoring.

Positioning Fire Apparatus

Nearly all training we do improves safety and efficiency in performing our duty. In this drill, members reviewed how to park and position vehicles while on various types of emergency scenes. While this may sound simple, it can be a balancing act of sorts. Consider this; park a fire engine directly in front of a home to allow for the hoses to enter it. Then try to position a ladder truck near the home to reach with the ladder. A 200' hoseline can be extended with extra lengths of hose. However, the 75' on Ladder 2 is only 75' long no matter how much we try to stretch it. An engine parks slightly further away to allow for an aerial truck to position it's main ladder or bucket for rescue or master stream deployment.

Hearing Conservation

Every year, WFD members must refresh on hearing conservation as part of federal and state standards. A great deal of what we do in the fire and EMS profession involves a great deal of noise. Consider a vehicle crash scene with diesel motors running, saws operating, and metal being cut, pried, and manipulated. Or consider running chainsaws and rotary saws on a fire scene. Each of these descriptions are reasons why we must educate our members on safe hearing protection methods and conservation techniques. Our training program, *Vector Solutions* has accredited courses in which members were able to view the content and receive CEUs towards fire and EMS refresher training.

Elevator Operations

With the sheer number of elevators in the City of Wausau, elevator entrapments are not all that uncommon. Each year, we are called to elevator entrapments that are usually easily remedied. To ensure all members are safe in elevator emergencies and response, we train all members on how to re-set elevators, open stuck doors, and even access the elevator shaft itself. In January and February, all crews trained on elevator anatomy, basic operations, and minor and moderate rescue techniques. Following this month's training, we have a goal of performing more in-depth rescue training throughout the year in case any of these simpler tasks become more complex.

Fireground Strategy and Tactics

As the following image explains, we simply can not go setting fire to gain experience. The lack of a fire training facility means we have to get creative to improve our knowledge, skills, and abilities in reading smoke, sizing up fires, and setting our incident action plan. The image below is one method we use to create a "mental slideshow" of fire behavior in relation to the buildings on fire. Crews met and viewed the training while discussing what they were seeing and hearing. This is the "Observation" phase. Members then discussed those findings to confirm what they were seeing and believing in the "Orientation" phase. This will either confirm they were right, or they needed to re-observe. Everyone then had to "Decide" on a plan of action or an "Incident Action Plan" as we call it in the fire service. Once the IAP was established, we would put it into action

in the “Act” phase. For some, this will sound familiar. We utilize many acronyms to assist us in our size-ups and decision making. This process as described is the OODA-Loop process as developed by Colonal Boyd during Vietnam.

Home


Administration

Calendar

Community Resources

Account

Help



Home

My Assignments

Self-Assign

My History

My Credentials

My Events

REVIEW COMPLETED ACTIVITY

WFD FIRE OFFICER DRILLS:
WFD Drill - Fireground Strategy and Tactics

While this drill is video-based, we can not just go lighting fires for this practice. Please use the videos that follow to hone your knowledge, skills, and abilities on scene size-ups, first-in reports, and initial action plans (such as assigning units). If you wish, please contact the TDC to schedule with you to facilitate this drill. If you prefer to do it as a company or you missed a group session, you may practice at your own pace. Thank you.

Please view the video on Scene Strategy, Tactics, and Tasks. Discuss how some things are similar or different to how we operate? Do we need to change or are we still relevant.

Fire Ground Strategy Tactic and Task

☒ I have read and agree to the document above.

Please use the following clips as practice for size-ups, first-in reports, and initial strategies and tactics (IAP).

The Size-Up Volume 1

☒ I have read and agree to the document above.

Please use the following clips as practice for size-ups, first-in reports, and initial strategies and tactics (IAP).

Pre-Arrival Firefighter Compilation

Driver-Operator/Aerial Certification

Below, members of Wausau FD, Merrill FD, and SAFER all joined together in a class through NTC to certify as certified Aerial Operators. This course is being taught by Training Division Chief Briggs to meet the needs of our on-duty members and those from surrounding departments. More information will follow in the March report after completion of the course.



Crew Self-Initiated Training

Ice Rescue Scenario

Lieutenant Ambrosius and Engineer Gehring planned and lead an ice rescue scenario for their crew. Several years ago, an incident occurred in which a woman fell through the ice on the Wisconsin River. Anyone who knows the river in the City of Wausau knows that the river has many islands and sloughs that can cause confusion if we are not given good directions or locations. Members were given similar information and were forced to learn to make decisions based on the information at hand. A multi-faced approach was used to find and rescue the victim. These scenarios are imperative to developing a mindset to make informed decisions with only the information provided. Kudos to Lt. Ambrosius and Engineer Nick Gehring for putting this one together.



Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	417.5	54.01%	1,000
Driver/Operator Training	89	11.51%	99.5
Facilities Training	0	0.00%	0
Hazardous Materials Training	11.75	1.52%	92.25
Misc Training	42	5.43%	45
Officer Training	66.5	8.60%	140
Specialty Training	146.25	18.92%	234
Total	773	100.00%	1,610.75

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	31	13.76%	32
EMS Training	139	61.71%	456.75
Fire Instructor Training	55.25	24.53%	78
Fire Prevention Training	0	0.00%	0
Investigation Training	0	0.00%	10
Total	225.25	100.00%	576.75

Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

Inspections: Within the City of Wausau for the month of February, we performed 69 total inspections. Of those 11 were re-inspections. We had 12 properties that had Fire Code Violations. These properties will require follow up inspections to confirm compliance. The Compliance Engine continues to perform as intended. We reviewed 98 service contractor reports with 84 being compliant and 14 that reported some type of discrepancy for us to follow up on. These reports grant us the information that was never obtained historically. These reports encompass everything related to sprinklers, fire alarms, and kitchen hood/suppression systems.

Investigations: The prevention Division conducted 4 Fire Investigations for the month of February. All these fires were determined to be accidental and/or unintentional.

Public Outreach: During the month of February, we had one scheduled public outreach. We attended a meeting with the Hmong American Center. This was at the request of the Center to go over the safety of the property and what to expect when dealing with new tenants for their property at 1109 N 6th Street. This discussion also entailed how to translate some basic fire safety instructions into the Hmong language. The biggest hurdle with this would be differentiating between their different dialects.

Education: Lieutenant Shahn Kariger successfully passed the Case Preparation and Expert Witness Testimony class at the National Fire Academy. With the completion of this class, Lt. Kariger will be set to challenge the International Association of Arson Investigators Certified Fire Investigator (IAAI-CFI) test. This credential is the gold standard for fire investigators throughout the world. Lt. Kariger is also scheduled to attend the Fire Investigation: Forensic Interview and Evidence Collection class in early April of this year.



Prevention Division Activities:

Inspections Completed	Monthly	Year to Date
Routine Fire Inspections	58	89
Re-inspections	11	45
All other Inspections (Consults/burn complaints,etc)	0	6
Total Inspections	69	139
Fire Investigations	4	4
Inspection Department Activities	Number	YTD
Public Engagement Activities	8	15

Fire Operations Division by Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp

Significant Calls:

WFD responded to seven fires in the month of February. Four of them were building fires, two of them were vehicle fires, and one was a cooking fire. In all seven calls the crews were able to extinguish the fires quickly without extension to other rooms or structures. We did have two firefighters fall down a set of stairs while advancing a hose line to the basement to put out one of the fires, luckily neither of them were hurt.

Recruitment and Retention:

On February 6th we started 6 Firefighters in our in-house paramedic program in conjunction with NTC. These 6 firefighters are in class at station 2 Monday through Friday every week training and in March they will start doing ride time on the ambulances and fire engines. We started an additional three firefighters on February 10th who are paramedic students in other technical colleges and will be completed in May. These three new firefighters are in class a couple days a week then doing ride along and training at our stations on the days they are not in class. Our entire staff has been very busy making sure we are training and helping all our new hires succeed and feel welcome.

Fleet:

Our ambulances have had continued issues through February in which we have had warranty work getting done on Med 1 at Brickners and heating issues in the other ambulances that we have been working with DPW on. We have had a couple delays with Battalion 1 and will be putting it into service in March.

Buildings and Grounds:

Leo Gau has been working on getting bids and contractors lined up to repair station 3 apparatus bay. The bay will get drains and floor replaced as well as updated gear lockers and new paint on walls and ceiling. Leo has also been working on getting damaged floor replaced at station 2 where the concrete has broken up inside the apparatus bay around one of the drains.

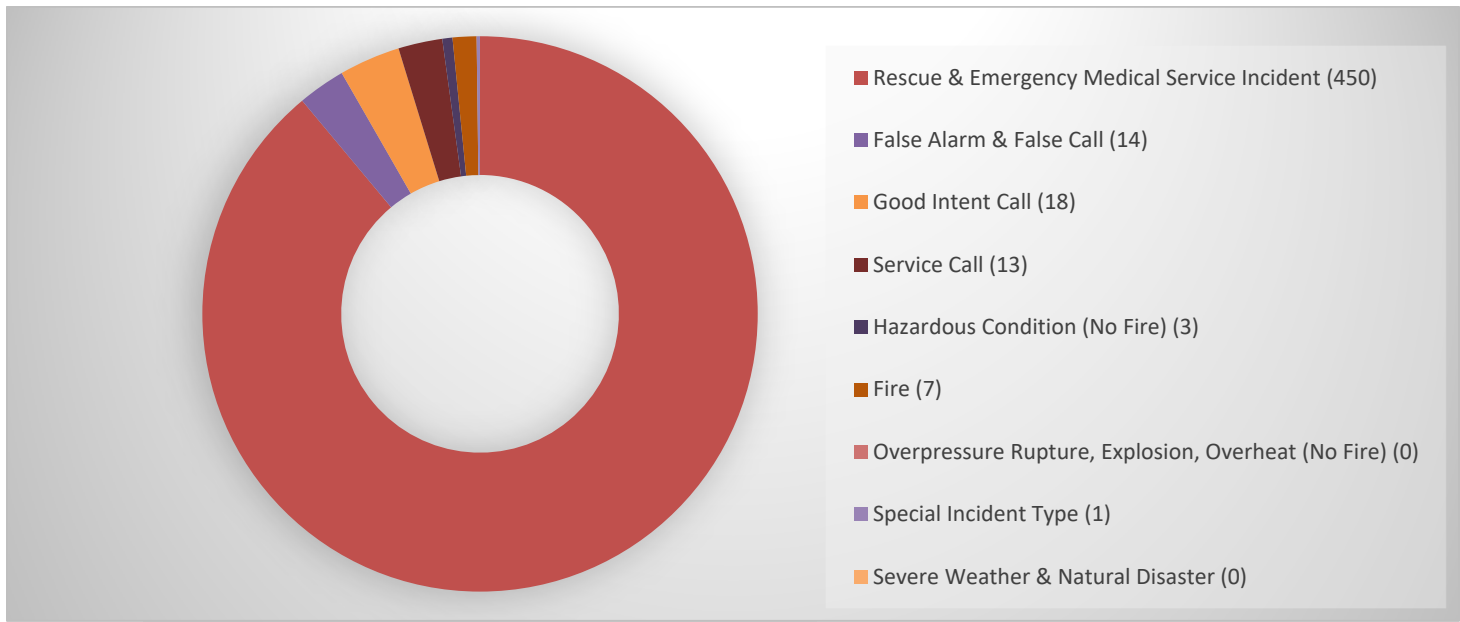
Significant Fire Events:

Date	Address	City	Incident #	Type
2/3/2023	1619 Summit Drive	City of Wausau	F23000198	Building fire
2/5/2023	5203 Sherman Street	City of Wausau	F23000208	Passenger vehicle fire
2/6/2023	3820 Stewart Avenue	City of Wausau	F23000212	Building fire
2/10/2023	232852 US 51 NB	City of Wausau	F23000232	Passenger vehicle fire
2/17/2023	602 Brown Street	City of Wausau	F23000276	Fire, other
2/18/2023	307 North 3rd Street	City of Wausau	F23000278	Cooking fire, confined to container
2/23/2023	420 Ruder Street	City of Wausau	F23000308	Building fire

Monthly NFIRS Incident Comparison:

	2023	2022	2021	% Of Change from 2022 to 2023
January	579	591	502	-2.03%
February	506	507	456	-0.20%
March		540	497	
April		498	503	
May		574	556	

June		590	583	
July		531	587	
August		600	577	
September		524	525	
October		545	552	
November		574	562	
December		612	590	
TOTAL		6686	6490	



Responses by Municipality (All NFIRS Reports):

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs - YTD
City of Abbotsford	0	0.00%	0
City of Colby	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	1	0.20%	1
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City Of Wausau	463	91.50%	1,001
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Taylor County	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	1	0.20%	1
Town Of Berlin	3	0.59%	7
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Cassel	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Franzen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Halsey	1	0.20%	1
Town Of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hewitt	3	0.59%	4
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	0

Town Of Marathon	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Rib Falls	1	0.20%	1
Town Of Rib Mountain	2	0.40%	2
Town Of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Stettin	1	0.20%	1
Town Of Texas	2	0.40%	4
Town Of Wausau	7	1.38%	22
Town Of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Wien	0	0.00%	1
Village Of Athens	3	0.59%	3
Village Of Brokaw	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Edgar	0	0.00%	1
Village Of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Maine	11	2.17%	24
Village Of Marathon City	1	0.20%	2
Village Of Rothschild	1	0.20%	1
Village Of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	5	0.99%	8
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
Total	506	100.00%	1,085

Activity/Incident Hours Committed:

Category	Time Committed
NFIRS Incidents	143:47:46 Hours
EMS Incidents	747:02:15 Hours
Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	999 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	998.25 Hours

Aid Responses:

Type of Aid	# of Runs
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	10
Mutual Aid Given – Fire	0
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	16
Automatic Aid Given – Fire	0
Mutual Aid Received – EMS	0
Mutual Aid Received – Fire	0
Automatic Aid Received – EMS	0
Automatic Aid Received – Fire	0
Other Aid Given – EMS	0
Request for EMS from Other Agencies to the City of Wausau (not Aid)	2
Request for Fire from Other Agencies to the City of Wausau (not Aid)	0
Total Non-Aid Incidents (outside City with no other agency response)	17