

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# WESCOTT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



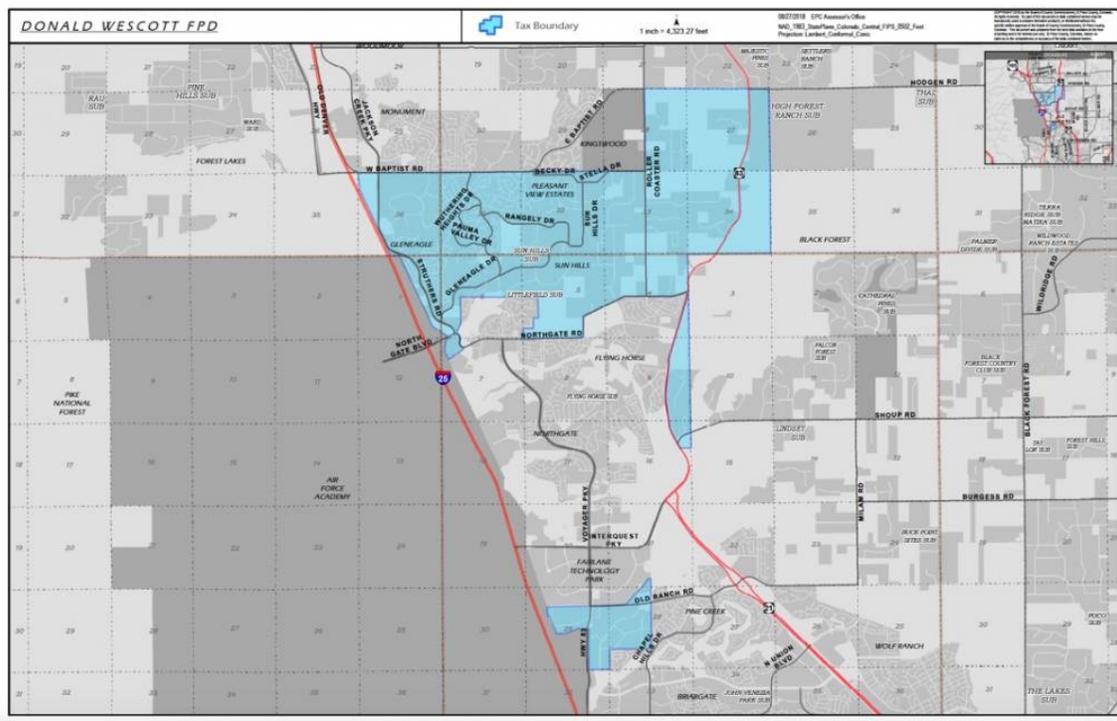
**Chief Vincent Burns**  
**Assistant Chief Scott Ridings**

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## DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Wescott Fire Department (WFD), originally El Paso County Fire, has been providing emergency services to northern El Paso County since 1976. We protect 12 square miles and a population base of over 10,000. The district is largely a bedroom community with a growing commercial base. The district contains suburban housing establishments as well as urban and rural areas, creating a unique combination of wildland interface risks ranging from moderate to severe wildfire hazards, as identified in our 2011 Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The district continues to see commercial growth, especially along the western edges of our district and anticipates continued growth in this area, as well as in the north east area of our district. The district has seen increased traffic volume through the Baptist Road and Highway 83 corridors and can expect increased traffic, as the county sees increased growth.



## DISTRICT SERVICES

WFD provides emergency services to the community to include:

- Structural fire response and suppression
- Wildland fire response and suppression
- Basic and Advanced Life Support emergency medical services

- Hazardous materials response
- Vehicle extrication
- Ice rescue
- Low angle rescue
- Air trailer

WFD provides non-emergency services to the community to include:

- Smoke detector services
- Public education
- Car seat safety checks
- CPR classes
- Public appearances
- Blood pressure checks
- Firewise home safety inspections (Ready, Set, Go)
- Community fire mitigation and chipping projects

## **STAFFING**

WFD is a combination department, relying on both full-time career staff and volunteers supported by administrative staff. WFD uses a three-shift model, with one Battalion Chief, two Lieutenants, two drivers and two fire fighters per shift. With 21 total line staff, we operate with minimum daily staffing of 3 on an engine company, 3 on a ladder company and a Battalion Chief. Career staff are supported by a full time Chief and a full-time administrative assistant.

In 2020 we revamped our volunteer program. We established a Volunteer Program Coordinator position, responsible for recruitment and onboarding of Volunteers. We assign volunteers to a shift and station in order to increase visibility and accountability with a career officer, providing volunteers more consistent training and crew integration.

We established strategic goals for the program based on operational goals, available seats in apparatus and available bed space as seen below:

- 1 volunteer on duty 24x7 per station
- Up to 7 additional staff during winter storm staffing
- Up to 6 additional staff during red flag staffing
- 1 volunteer Lieutenant and 1 volunteer fire fighter for back fill during extended incidents

We will continue to support volunteer recruiting to meet our strategic staffing goals. We closed 2020 with 22 active volunteers that provided 6,970 labor hours. This represents

the equivalent workforce of approximately 2.5 full time employees, which would have provided staffing for both response companies, at 4 people for one of the three shifts.

In addition to normal firefighting duties, each Battalion Chief is currently responsible for the following areas: station maintenance, vehicle maintenance, public relations, fire marshal, community risk reduction activities, health and safety, communications, training, information technology/record keeping, fire equipment and uniforms.

## BENEFITS

The district provides retirement, medical, dental, accident-disability and identity theft benefits. The retirement plan is funded by both the district and employee, all other benefits are funded by the district. The district funds a volunteer retirement plan.

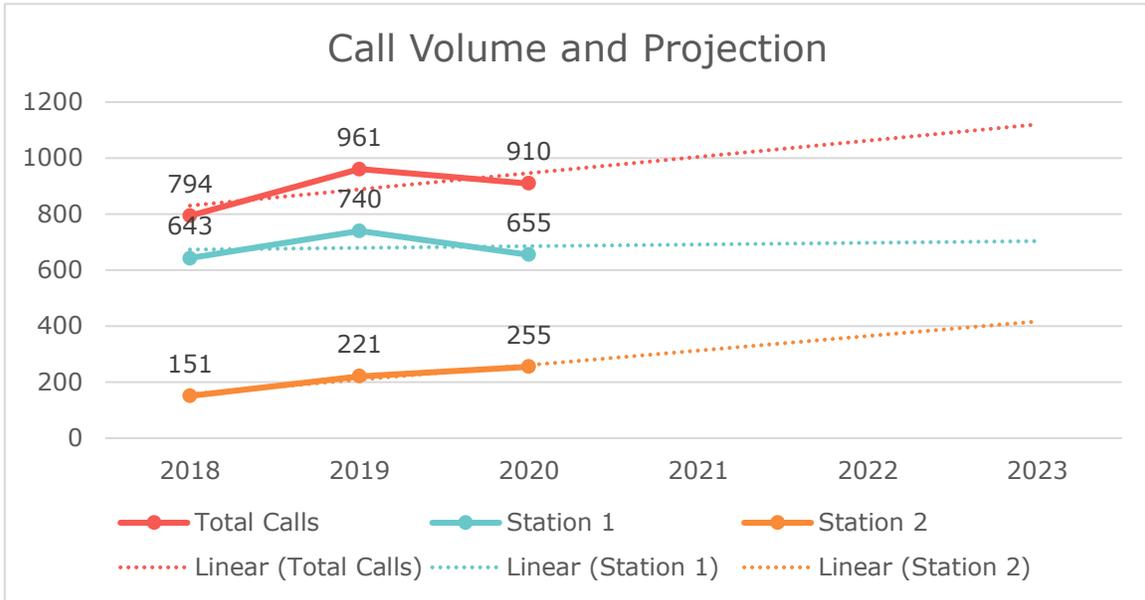
The district provides the following competitive pay package:

Chief			\$120,700.00				12/5/19
<b>NON-EXEMPT</b>							
				<b>Salary Range</b>			
			<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>STEP 3</b>		
Battalion Chief			\$103,000.00	\$114,000.00	Additional 3% each year after		
Lieutenant			\$80,000.00	\$84,000.00	Additional 3% each year after		
<b>Time In Grade Increase</b>							
		Base amounts	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Step 5</b>
FF / MEDIC				\$66,500.00	\$68,500.00	\$69,500.00	\$70,500.00
FF / DRIVER				\$64,500.00	\$65,500.00	\$66,500.00	\$67,500.00
FF / EMT			\$52,500.00	\$55,500.00	\$58,500.00	\$61,500.00	\$64,500.00
			<b>Step 6</b>	<b>Step 7</b>	<b>Step 8</b>	<b>Step 9</b>	<b>Step 10</b>
FF / MEDIC	6-10		\$73,500.00	\$74,500.00	\$75,500.00	\$76,500.00	\$77,500.00
FF / DRIVER	6-10		\$70,500.00	\$71,500.00	\$72,500.00	\$73,500.00	\$74,500.00
FF / EMT	6-10		\$67,500.00	\$68,500.00	\$69,500.00	\$70,500.00	\$71,500.00
			<b>Step 11</b>	<b>Step 12</b>	<b>Step 13</b>	<b>Step 14</b>	<b>Step 15</b>
FF / MEDIC	11-15		\$78,500.00	\$79,500.00	\$80,500.00	\$81,500.00	\$82,500.00
FF / DRIVER	11-15		\$75,500.00	\$76,500.00	\$77,500.00	\$78,500.00	\$79,500.00
FF / EMT	11-15		\$72,500.00	\$73,500.00	\$74,500.00	\$75,500.00	\$76,500.00
			<b>Step 16</b>	<b>Step 17</b>	<b>Step 18</b>	<b>Step 19</b>	<b>Step 20</b>
FF / MEDIC	16-20		\$83,500.00	\$84,500.00	\$85,500.00	\$86,500.00	\$87,500.00
FF / DRIVER	16-20		\$80,500.00	\$81,500.00	\$82,500.00	\$83,500.00	\$84,500.00
FF / EMT	16-20		\$77,500.00	\$78,500.00	\$79,500.00	\$80,500.00	\$81,500.00

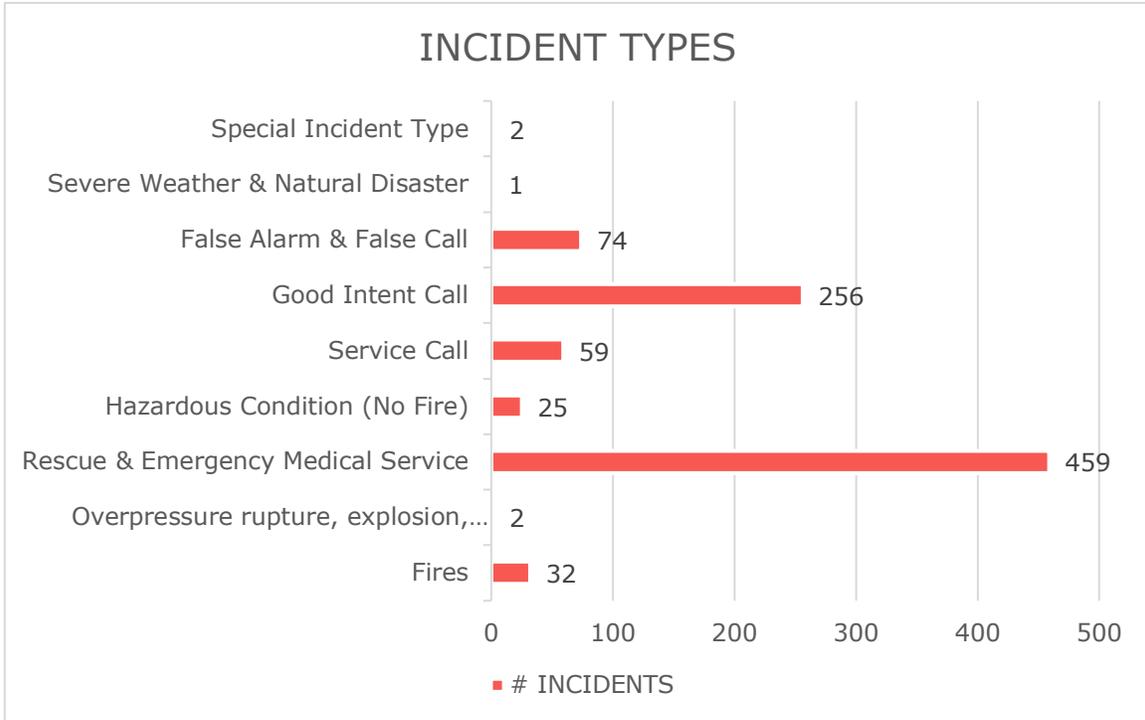
## CALL STATISTICS

WFD, like many agencies, saw a decrease in call volume in 2020, largely associated with stay-at-home orders and restrictions imposed, as a result of COVID-19. WFD responded to 910 incidents in 2020, a decrease from 961 in 2019. As seen below, despite the decrease, trend lines indicate an increase in call volumes from the past three years and

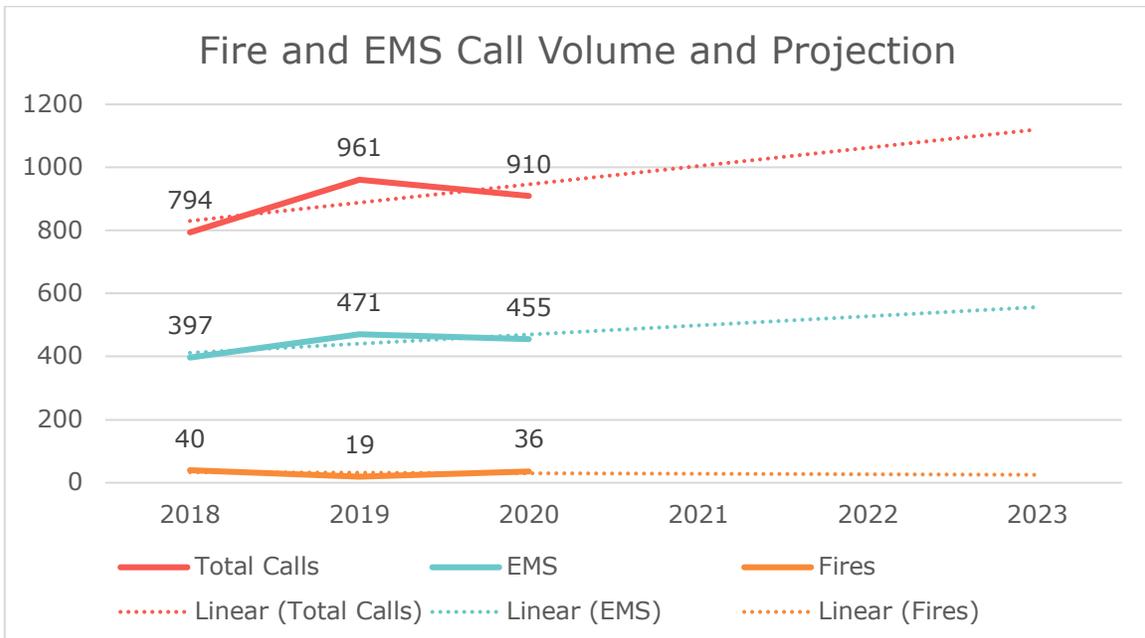
assuming the trend continues, we can expect to nearly double call volume by 2027 and be running equal numbers of calls out of both Station 1 and Station 2. Station 2 is seeing a sharp increase in call volumes while Station 1 is experiencing a gradual decline.



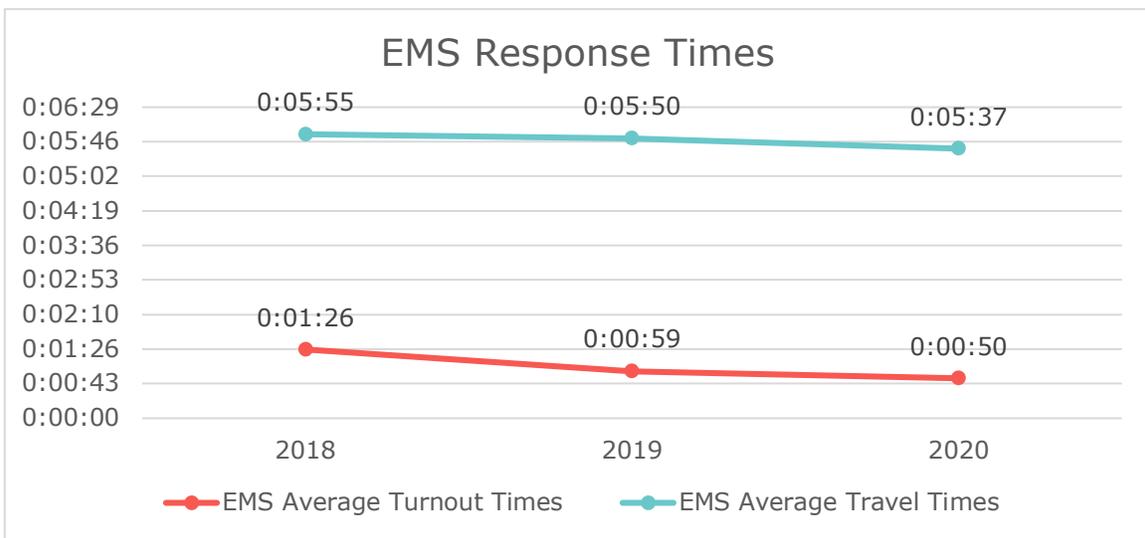
The largest percentage of incidents ran by major incident category remains EMS calls although the number was expected to be higher. This may indicate a problem with the data being collected and bears further evaluation.



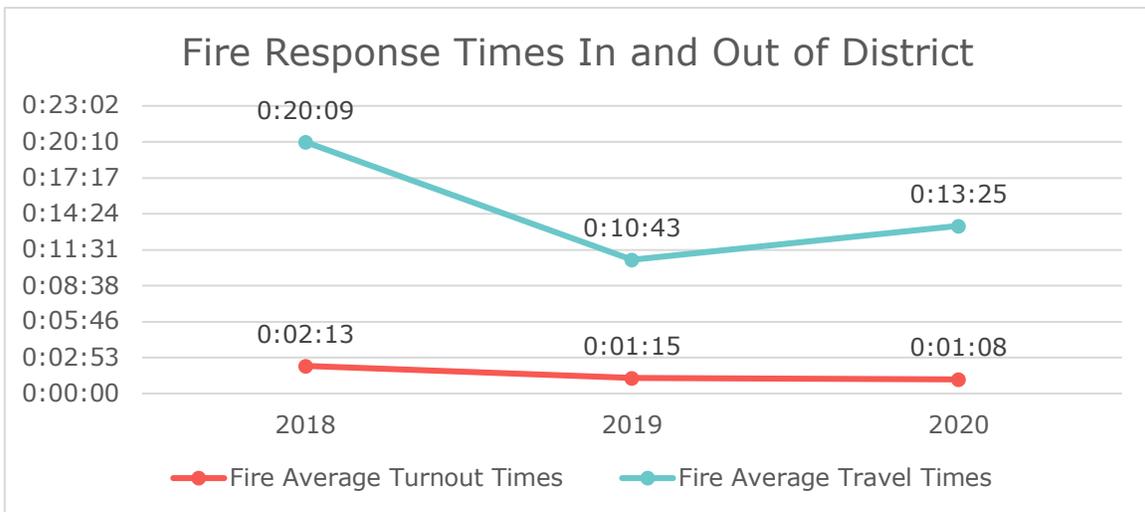
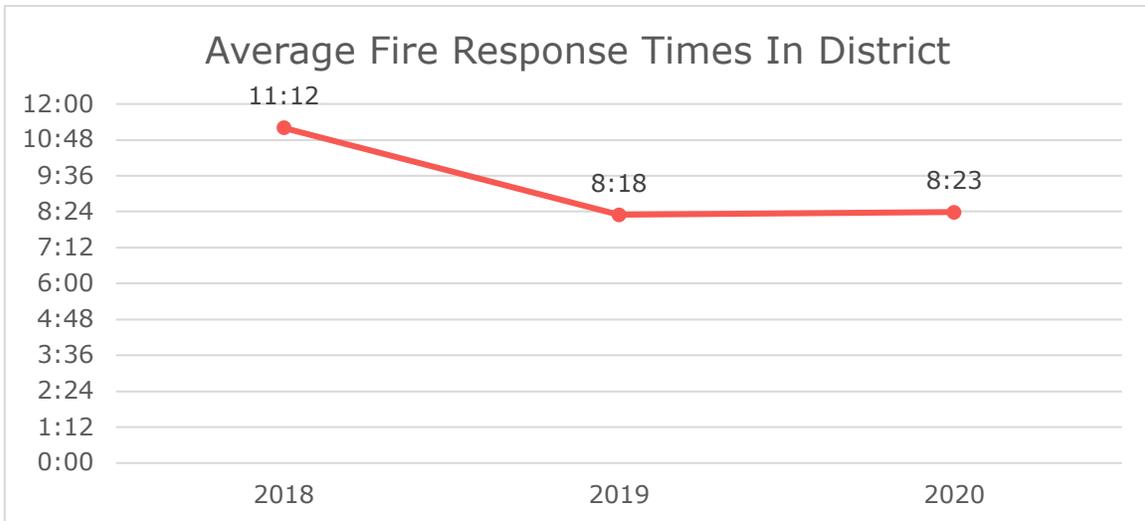
In projecting the trends for fires and EMS calls, based on three years of data, trend lines do not suggest that EMS or fires will trend up or down much. We anticipate that fires will continue to account for approximately 5% of our call volume, but expect the number of fires to increase as population density, traffic through the district and call volume increase.



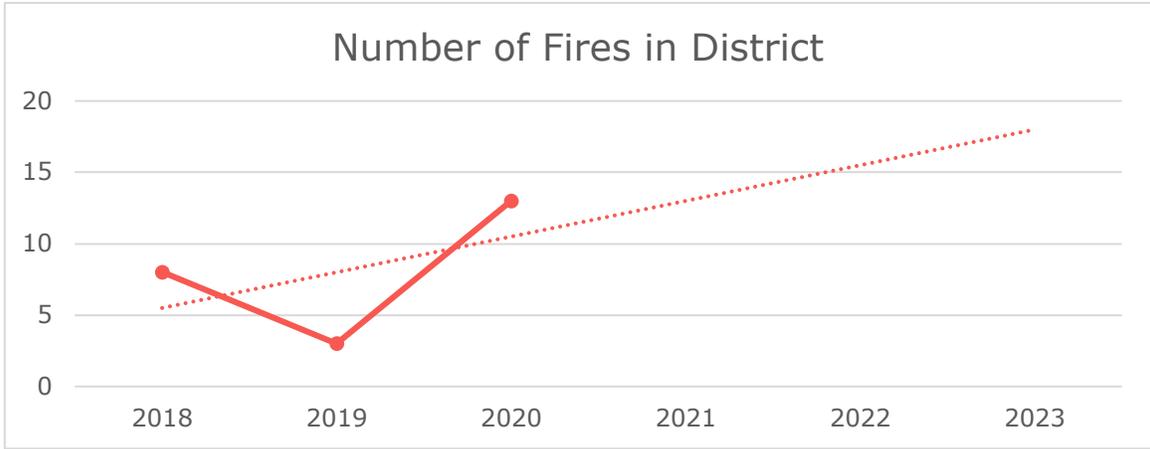
WFD measures turnout times (the amount of time it takes a crew to leave the station after being dispatched) and travel times against the standards set in NFPA 1710. We previously identified the need to improve turnout times and have shown drastic improvements and our average turnout time now exceeds the NFPA 1710 standard. We currently lack the fidelity within our reporting program to exclude response times that were code 2 responses, due to either inclement weather or based on the acuity of the patient according to emergency medical dispatching, which would likely show an improvement in EMS response times.



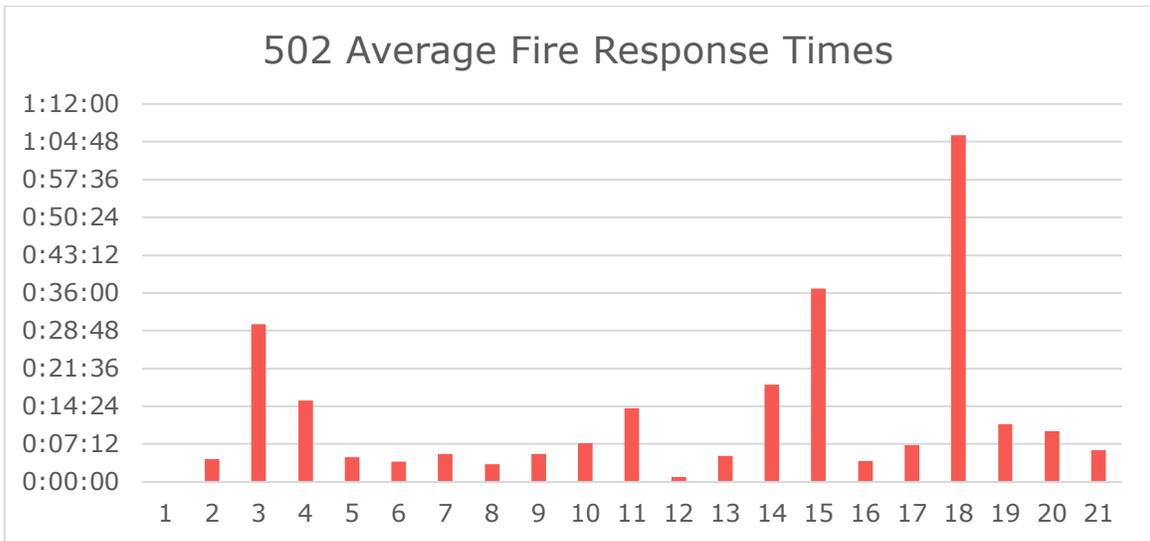
Turnout times for fires are anticipated to be slower than EMS calls to account for crews putting on personal protective equipment prior to departing the station. Although the NFPA standard suggests measuring against the arrival of a full first due assignment, we lack the fidelity of data in our current reporting system to account for this. All county departments on the north end of the county rely on responses from multiple agencies to fulfill this requirement.



In evaluating the number of fires in district, as they have trended over the past three years to project future fires, we anticipate seeing more fires and must focus on strategic goals that focus on availability of command staff, staffing first due apparatus, and training. These numbers represent all types of fires (dumpsters, vehicle fires, wild land fires, structure fires etc.) and do not always result in ‘newsworthy’ events. Numbers may appear higher than anticipated because of this.



In 2020 the Battalion Chief (502) was placed at Station 3 to provide a central response to fires, especially in district, to act as a safety and command function. There were 13 in-district fire calls that 502 responded to, with an average response time of 4:51. The use of Station 3 has met our goal.



## APPARATUS

WFD operates a fleet of front-line apparatus designed to meet our emergency services in district, in the local area for automatic and mutual aid, as well as to support deployments to regional and national emergencies. WFD made an investment in 2020, placing a new 3,500-gallon tender to our response fleet, more than doubling our capacity to provide for water supply during structure fires in non-hydranted areas as well as to support wild land fire operations.

	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make</b>	<b>Station</b>
<b>531</b>	Truck	2009	Rosenbauer	1
<b>511</b>	Engine	2007	Rosenbauer	2
<b>542</b>	Brush	2018	Dodge	1
<b>561</b>	Tender	2001	American LaFrance	2
<b>562</b>	Tender	2020	Midwest Fire	1
<b>502</b>	Battalion Chief	2012	Dodge	3
<b>500</b>	Chiefs vehicle	2019	Chevy	1
<b>Air</b>	Air trailer	2006	Scott	1

To provide for uninterrupted services to our communities during routine and unexpected vehicle maintenance, WFD maintains a reserve fleet. This practice has allowed us to operate in times that other departments would have experienced a decline in service and has afforded us the service to frequently loan reserve apparatus to neighboring departments, that do not maintain reserve equipment. We also have several specialized and utility vehicles maintained in this fleet that augment our response capabilities in ways that our neighboring departments lack. The best example of this is our hummer, outfitted with advanced off-road capabilities, a snowplow, and the ability to provide patient transport during winter storms when it is not possible to rely on local ambulance capabilities. We utilize NFPA 1911 (Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance and Testing of Fire Apparatus)

	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make</b>	<b>Station</b>
<b>512</b>	Engine	2011	Rosenbauer	2
<b>513</b>	Engine	2001	American LaFrance	1
<b>550</b>	Winter/off road rescue	1997	Hummer	2
<b>553</b>	Utility/reserve Battalion Chief	2008	Ford	3
<b>Chipper</b>	Wildland mitigation	2011	Vermeer	

## **STATIONS**

WFD operates 3 full time stations spread at intervals throughout the district, approximately 2.5 miles apart from each other, to increase coverage and reduce response times across the district. Station 1 was built in 1998 with 5 bays and contains community

living quarters for 9 fire fighters, a private Lieutenants office, the Chief's office, an administrative office and a training/board room. The station contains a large gym for staff, as well as a PPE extractor. Station 1 is located at 15415 Gleneagle Drive. Station 2 was built in 2011 with 5 bays and contains community living quarters for 8 fire fighters and a private Lieutenants office. In addition to WFD staff, Station 2 is home to American Medical Response ambulance 582, providing ALS transport capability to our citizens. Station 2 contains a large gym and a medical treatment room for walk-in medical emergencies. Station 2 is located at 15055 Highway 83. Station 3 was built in 1983 with four bays and contains living quarters for 2 fire fighters. Station 3 is located at 15000 Sun Hills drive.

In 2020 we placed Station 3 in service for the Battalion Chief's to provide a central response location to both stations. This proved to be very successful, as discussed in the call statistics section. By utilizing Station 3 we have capitalized on previous district investments in real property and increased operational capabilities for our citizens with minimal investments. Station 3 will require investments in 2021 to maximize on the value and return on investment.

We were successful in obtaining grants for plyovents in 2020. In 2021 all stations will be equipped with plyovents to reduce fire fighter exposure to diesel and exhaust particulates as we continue to evolve to a clean station concept as part of our overall employee health and wellness program.

## **TRAINING**

The Department has made significant progress in transitioning to proactive training that improved Fire Fighter safety, regulatory compliance, adopting NFPA initiatives along with meeting Insurance Rating Organization (ISO) training protocols.

During the last quarter of 2019 and 2020, the Department undertook a major shift in training. A new training / tracking program was introduced along with the initial steps in the development of a formal training program that included monthly Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the Department officers. I take great pride in reporting success. The 2020 training data is clearly documented as never before. The topics covered include areas that have not been addressed in years past.

Officer performance in conducting and documenting training is presented in monthly KPI's which can be used to provide coaching as may be needed. This level of documentation and KPI data is new to Wescott.

Examples of 2020 success include:

- *The Departments submission to the ISO requires the Department to submit documentation of training for each member in the following areas: Company training, Hazmat training, Officer training, Driver training, and Facility training. I am pleased to report that the Department has met this requirement with the career staff with limited exceptions, most of which were explainable and at times beyond our control due to COVID-19.*
- *As of 31 December 2020, the Department has documented the completion of approximately 9,138 hours of training, activities and events. The average of all members currently is approximately 199 hours.*
- *The State of Colorado identifies Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) for Fire Fighters. Upon review with Chief Burns, a goal was developed for the career staff to demonstrate and document completion of Fire Fighter 1 JPRs for Colorado by years end. This goal was effectively met with limited exceptions. This global approach was new for Wescott.*
- *National Fire Protection Association standard 1410 identifies a series of performance drills. A portion of these drills were successfully adapted to the Department and incorporated into the departments training. These drills specify performance expectations for tasks and time criteria for execution. Upon completion of training, performance was achieved in line with this national standard which was new for Wescott.*
- *Battalion Chiefs (BCs) completed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's thirty hour Safety and Health course. In 2020 training, OSHA*

*topics were incorporated to address employee safety and improve regulatory compliance. Providing the BC's with this nationally recognized health and safety program, improved their ability to manage a safe compliant work environment. This program was new for Wescott.*

- *Online learning has been introduced to supplement in person learning. Courses assigned supported the cognitive learning in fire ground operations, introduction of leadership skills for officers, OSHA compliance, Human Resource skills, and Driver safety.*
- *The Department completed its first hybrid learning course based on the International Fire Service Training Association's Hazardous Materials Operations course. The program provided flexible scheduling to meet the needs of our volunteer members. It was planned to conduct this same hybrid approach for Fire Fighter 1 training for the new volunteer members.*
- *The new training program began the process of targeting leadership skills training for the first line officers. New officers and existing officers are being introduced to leadership and the legal requirements of their position. This has been a significant change for some. Expanded leadership training was originally planned to expand in 2021.*
- *New to Wescott was the requirement that it is no longer acceptable for officers to just conduct training that is not documented and/or supported by approved, recognized standards and OSHA compliance. The requirement to document and follow lesson plans, ensures that the training is accurate, reproducible, effective and safe for the members.*
- *The Department participated in a series of joint training drills with the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) at the CSFD training center.*

## **ISO**

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) is meant to score a fire department's ability to protect the community it serves. This score, on a scale of 1-10, not only highlights a department's capability but is used to determine property insurance costs.

WFD has been focused on improving our ISO rating over the life of the department, continually setting programs in place to improve. Improving our ISO is one of the most noticeable and impactful ways we can serve our community, as it may result in lowering home ownership costs through reduced homeowner insurance rates.

WFD was notified in and underwent an ISO review in 2020. Our district is currently rated an ISO 3/3Y and hopes that following the results of the evaluation (to be delivered in 2021) that we will be able to report improving to a 2/2Y. Since our last ISO evaluation WFD has focused on improving water delivery capabilities, staffing, the inclusion of Station 3 and training that would support this increase.

## **WILDLAND DEPLOYMENT PROGRAMS**

As a committed member of the fire service, WFD recognizes that in as much as we have benefitted in our local communities from the deployment of National resources during wildland fires, we must invest our resources into that same resource pool. Outside of having a duty to support other communities, these deployments provide training opportunities for our staff in low frequency, high risk, high impact events that is irreplicable and invaluable. This training increases the safety of our staff when responding to local incidents, while also increasing our efficiency and impact in saving our local communities.

Our strategy has been to combine career and volunteer staff when participating in deployments. This decreases the operational burden on staff that do not deploy by taking a smaller number of career staff off the line. This acts as a recruitment and retention tool for our volunteers by offering experience that aspiring career fire fighters, as a general rule, cannot gain from other combination or volunteer departments.

In addition, these programs supplement the districts revenue, having generated over \$480,000 in 2020.

## **COVID**

WFD rose to the challenge of COVID-19 as it hit our state and local communities starting in March of 2020. To address the unique challenges of COVID, we immediately assembled a COVID Incident Command Team consisting of Chiefs and Lieutenants from both the career and volunteer side, to provide the broadest and best breadth of capabilities. Numerous operational changes were made, to put in place the largest number of safety control measures possible based on available data. In many cases, the COVID Command Team implemented safety controls ahead of recommendations that would become national best practices.

While the response to the pandemic continues to evolve, WFD has focused our responses on ensuring we take all possible steps to keep enough of our work force in place to remain operational, reduce the exposure risks to our employees and families, reduce the exposure risk to our patients, and reduce the exposure and spread risk to our community. Once the COVID incident is closed, we will provide a detailed report on tracked costs, number of calls ran etc.

## **HIGH HAZARD CONCERNS**

WFD has completed numerous community hazard and risk assessments and continues to assess the community for potential high hazard events and plans strategic, organizational and operational goals around these events. These events may focus on potential impacts to critical infrastructure both in ours or surrounding districts, events that have the potential for high loss of life, or events that have the potential for high loss of property.

Although WFD may experience any number of these types of events, such as mass public shootings, impacts to gas/oil pipelines, impacts to power sub-stations and impacts to cellular communication sights, the most concerning area continues to be catastrophic wildland fires.

These types of fires have impacted the local area numerous times and involved the use of district resources to fight, including the Hayman fire, Waldo Canyon fire and Black Forest fire. These types of events can take days, weeks or months to contain, can impact many hundreds of homes and can take decades or more to fully recover from. WFD will continue to focus on mitigation, education, planning and training that will help to minimize all high hazard concerns, but will be especially focused on catastrophic wildland fires.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

2020 represented a significant year for WFD. The staff accomplished a lot including, several key strategic goals:

- Staffing levels were increased and Battalion Chiefs were introduced. This has increased our operational capability and safety, especially at fires while creating promotion paths previously not available to career staff.
- Gallagher amendments were passed on multiple levels, providing for future financial solvency and stability for the district.
- A new piece of front-line apparatus was placed in service.
- ISO audit complete
- ALS capabilities enhanced
- Total Fire Loss was kept low at \$78,659