

The River Falls Fire Department 2013 ANNUAL REPORT





2013 Annual Report

It is with great pleasure that I submit this year's River Falls Fire Department Annual Report.

2013 was an exciting year. Fifteen new recruits were added to the ranks to fill positions that were vacated through attrition during the past two years. Our new group of recruits injected their spirit of enthusiasm into the more seasoned members, sparking a lot of accomplishments throughout the year.

This report is a compilation of many of these accomplishments as well as a review of our inventory, call volume, statistics and other items of interest. I have included reports from our Assistant Chiefs, Fire Safety Education Officer Pauline Williams, and a special feature on our recruit training program by Captain Evan Larsen. Every member of our department has helped in the success we had this past year. We are all very proud of our department, its accomplishments, and its service to the River Falls community.

I am grateful to our membership for their contributions. I would also like to thank our Mayor and City Council members, our Police and Fire Commission, the River Falls Rural Fire Association, City Administrator Scot Simpson and City staff for the support they have given the River Falls Fire Department in 2013.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Scott Simpson", written in a cursive style.

Fire Chief



SNAPSHOT OF HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2013

- Annual 2012 Awards Banquet was held in January of 2013. Matt Cernohous was awarded Firefighter of the Year for 2012.
- Oyster Feed was held on February 4; Town Board members, RFFD Rural Association, City Department heads, City Council, the Police and Fire Commission, neighboring Fire Departments and others are invited as our way of thanking them for supporting the mission of RFFD.
- Grant Awarded. On March 8, 2013, RFFD received notice from FEMA that our grant request submitted under the 2012 Assistance to Firefighters Grant program was approved. Funding from this grant was used to replace outdated extrication equipment for the department. This equipment is used to extricate victims from vehicle accidents and other emergencies. In addition to the “jaws of life”, the department will be receiving vehicle stabilization equipment and air bags that are capable of lifting vehicles from trapped victims. The approved project costs total \$52,295. The Federal share is 90 percent, or \$47,066.
- Recruit process. 15 applicants were accepted as probationary members of the department. All passed both their health assessment and background checks. These members began their initial training on March 26. The training was over 100 hours and takes several months to complete. This state-paid training was delivered through CVTC and was held at our Fire Hall. At the end of 2013, fourteen recruits remained with the program.
- All members of the department took part in pulmonary function testing (PFT) in March. This testing measures lung function and is used to determine if an individual can safely use self-contained breathing apparatus. All firefighters passed their respective tests.
- Conducted Jacob’s Ladder station tour
- Participated in UWRF’s Health Fair
- Participated in Mock Crash at High School on May 7.
- Members participated in Confined Space Recue training for most of the month of May.
- Paul Whiteside retired from the Fire Department on June 3, 2013, after more than 40 years with the department.
- Our Water Fight Team, Ky Kaminski, Dean Grisar, Dan Dudley and Matt Dodge took first place in the Roberts-Warren Fire Department 2013 Annual Water Fights.
- New fire recruits completed their entry level firefighter class. This included completing a live-burn training session.
- Department group photos were taken.
- River Falls Days Participation
 - Water Fights with Fire Department teams and separate water fights for children.
 - Participated in River Falls Days Parade
 - Washed down Beer Garden parking lots
 - Emergency Standby for tractor pull and fireworks display
- Started “On Deck” training. This is a fire ground scene management system that stresses accountability of responders and organization of the various tasks that take place during an emergency. Emphasis is on safety.

- “Wills for Heroes” took place on Saturday, July 27. The St. Croix Valley Bar Association donated time to our volunteer firefighters to assist in the preparation of wills, power of attorney, living will and financial power of attorney.
- Programmed 12 pagers that we received as part of a grant for the Pierce County Chiefs’ group. The grant was sponsored by Spring Valley Fire Department.
- Participated in the City and Utilities Customer Appreciation event that was held at City Hall. RFFD provided the Family Safety House for participants to tour.
- Chief Nelson, Asst. Chief Moody and Inspector Rudesill attended training at UWRF to familiarize the fire department with UWRF’s new fire and emergency alarm system and procedures.
- Chief Nelson and Connie Smith, UWRF Risk Manager, traveled to Eau Claire and met with a representative from the Eau Claire Fire Department to discuss how confined space rescue is handled in their city and to begin the planning process for ensuring that our confined space rescue capabilities are adequate.
- RFFD assisted Prescott Fire at a barn fire on County QQ. The building was a total loss.
- RFFD Annual Open house was held on Monday, September 30, from 6 to 8 PM. Students from the Middle School helped with some of the booths. Guests enjoyed a variety of fire safety games and informational booths along with fire extinguisher and vehicle extrication demonstrations. Donations were accepted to be used towards the replacement of “Pluggie”, who will be retired.
- Chief Nelson and Captain Evan Larsen presented Hazardous Materials Awareness Refresher training to the Police Department.
- October was Fire prevention month. Fire Education Officer Pauline Williams and her crew delivered our fire safety message to over 1,300 students in grades k-4. This included 547 students that went through our fire safety house. On October 22, Pauline presented a recap of the Fire Safety Program to City Council members.
- Chief Nelson participated as a panel member in a “Living Off Campus” workshop hosted by UWRF where students were invited to learn more about the dynamics of off-campus housing.
- Dan Moe gave us notice of his intent to retire from the department effective November 1, 2013. Dan served over 22 years with RFFD and currently held the position of Battalion Chief. We wish Dan well and expect to see him at some of our annual firefighter functions.
- Chief Ulie Seal from Bloomington, Minnesota, presented training on the concept of “On Deck” and accountability. Chief Seal was instrumental in bringing the “On Deck” concept to the metropolitan area.
- On Friday, November 29, participated in the River Dazzle Parade that was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.
- After receipt of our new FEMA grant-funded extrication equipment, representatives from Genesis equipment provided in-depth training its operation and maintenance.
- Members passed the “boot” and collected \$161.00 for Sharing Families.



MEMBERSHIP

We ended 2013 with 42 paid on call members and one full time Chief on the department.

Years of Service as of December 31, 2013

Carl Gaulke	41 years 3 months	Jonathan Gaulke	6 years 7 months
Frank Holter	40 years	Danny Nicholson	6 years 7 months
Gary Eloranta	39 years 6 months	Mike Nicholson	6 years 7 months
Gene McKahan	39 years 4 months	James Rimer	6 years 7 months
Pauly Cudd	32 years 10 months	Scott Nelson*	3 years 3 months
Tom Schwalen	30 years 9 months	Neil Engel	2 years 10 months
Tom Foley	28 years 3 months	Garrett Gill	2 years 10 months
Douglas Rudesill	27 years 10 months	Ky Kaminski	2 years 10 months
Bill Cernohous	24 years 2 months	Robert Kerr	2 years 10 months
Bill Lubich	24 years 2 months	Jacob Koskie	2 years 10 months
Troy Malmer	24 years 2 months	Tom Schmitz	2 years 10 months
Mike Moody	24 years 2 months	Ted Slowiak	2 years 10 months
Ed Nicholson	24 years 2 months	Dustin Dodge	10 months
Pauline Williams	21 years 5 months	Matt Dodge	10 months
Chris Cernohous	18 years 3 months	Dan Dodge	10 months
Jason Sammon	18 years 1 month	Dan Dudley	10 months
Molly McLagan	18 years 1 month	Brendan Johnson	10 months
Matt Cernohous	12 years	Taylor Kaminski	10 months
Dean Grisar	12 years	Megan Larson	10 months
Evan Larsen	12 years	Jake Malmer	10 months
Ed Vlack	12 years	Steve McCluskey	10 months
Scott Gavin	10 years	Charles Meyer	10 months
Matt Johnson	10 years	Mitch O'Keefe	10 months
Adam Larson	10 years	Shawn Olson	10 months
Sean Slaikeu	10 years	Brian Roquette	10 months
Michael Fecht	6 years 8 months	Justin Wilson	10 months
Nathaniel Baar	6 years 7 months	Jonathan Wright	10 months

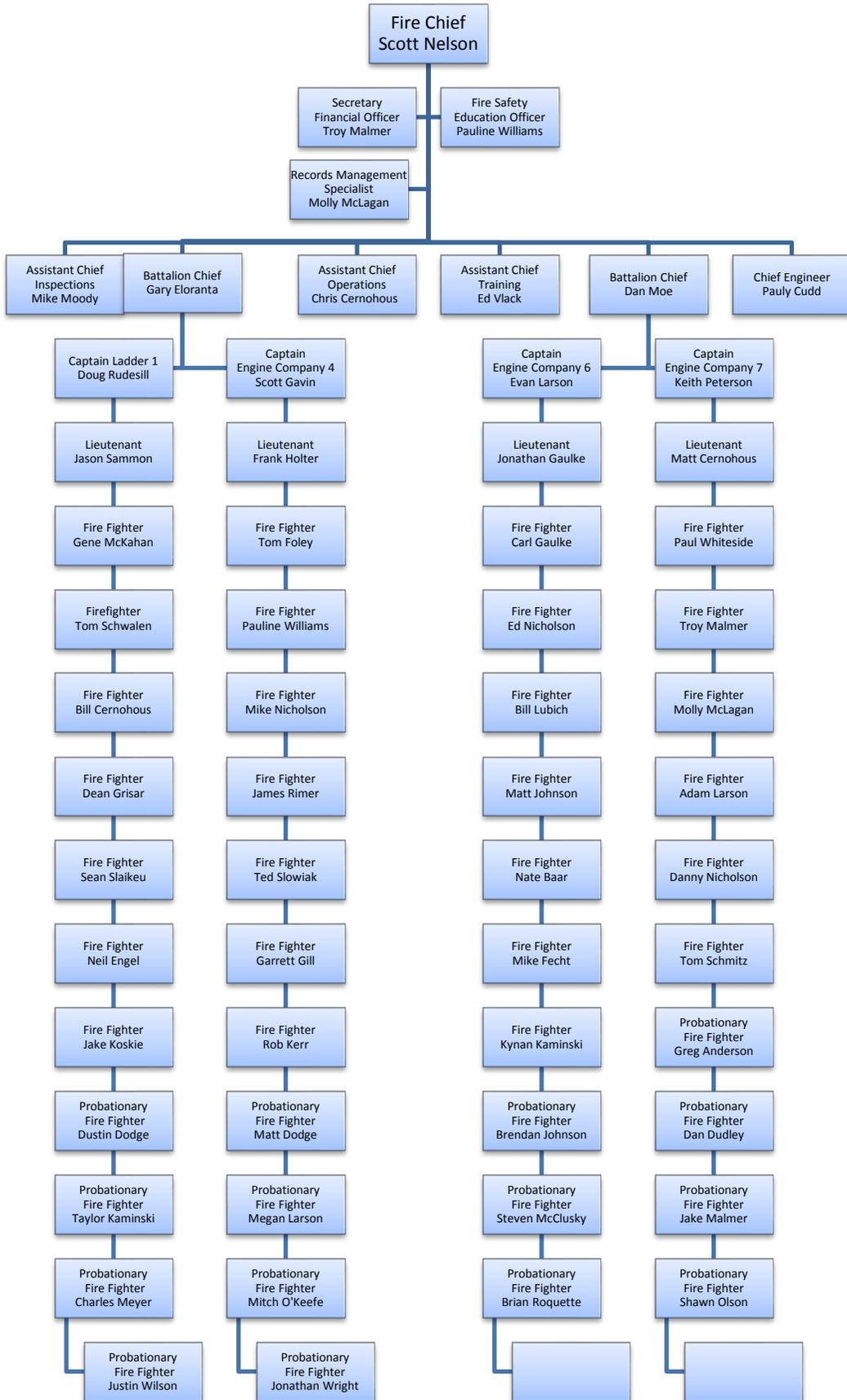
Total Years of Service **639 years 6 months**
Active Members 54 (Average of 11 years 6 months)
Full Time Active 1*

RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:

The following members retired or resigned from the department in 2013:

- Paul Whiteside
- Dan Moe
- Keith Peterson
- Greg Anderson

River Falls Fire Department (As of 4/1/2013)





APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT

Rolling Stock –

- Engine 4 - 2001 Freightliner, 1,500 GPM pumper.
- Engine 7 - 2001 Ford, 1,250 GPM pumper.
- Engine 6 - 1984 Ford, 1,250 GPM pumper.
- Ladder #1 - 2004 Pierce 100' aerial/2,000 GPM pump.
- Tanker 1 - 1994 Freightliner, 2,000-gallon tanker/personnel carrier.
- Tanker 2 - 1995 Freightliner, 2,000-gallon tanker/personnel carrier.
- Brush 1 - 2001 Ford, 250 GPM grass/brush truck.
- Brush 2 - 2012 Chevy Hi-Pressure GPM grass/brush truck.
- Ranger - 2003 Polaris Ranger.
- Model A Ford, used for department promotions.
- 1939 Ford, used for department promotions.
- Fire Safety House trailer, used for Fire Safety Education.
- 2003 Haz-Mat enclosed trailer.
- 2004 Haz-Mat enclosed trailer.

Other Equipment:

We developed a comprehensive equipment replacement plan that will meet the future needs of the department and work within the City's budget process. In addition to replacement of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and an updated fill station for air bottles, a priority item included in the replacement plan includes a new fire engine. A committee was formed to write specifications for this specialized piece of apparatus.

2013 TRAINING REPORT

By Edward Vlack – Assistant Chief – Training

I. SUMMARY REPORT

- Training for members of the River Falls Fire Department takes place EVERY Monday evening, except on holidays.
- Training on the first Monday of each month consists of monthly maintenance to ensure that all vehicles, equipment and tools are in proper working order.
- Annual training goals and the training schedule is prepared by the training committee which consists of the Asst. Chief for training, Battalion Chief, all four Captains, and one firefighter.
- There are a variety of skills that we train in, but the primary focus of training is to enhance skills needed for incidents that demand immediate, potential life-saving action, such as a structure fire or a vehicle accident.
- One training session per month is prepared and presented by two engine companies.
- The training tower is utilized for our training as often as we can during warmer months.
- A training survey was just completed to get feedback from members, the results of which will be used for future training sessions.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either:

Ed Vlack

715-441-1547

bvlack@presenter.com

Gary Eloranta

715-821-2560

gary.eloranta@uwrf.edu

II. FULL REPORT

Persons who wish to join the River Falls Fire Department, who have not already received necessary certifications, are required to attend classes and pass both written and practical exams to show that they are proficient in basic fire fighter skills. However, the education and training of River Falls Fire Fighters does not end with their receipt of those certifications. Training for the River Falls Fire Department is conducted EVERY Monday evening, from 6:30 until 9:30 p.m., except on major holidays.

Training on the first Monday of every month always consists of performing monthly maintenance on all vehicles and all equipment, to insure that all vehicles and equipment are in proper working order and that all tools and inventory are in their proper location. The River Falls Fire Department has a command structure consisting of the Chief and Four Assistant Chiefs, plus four engine companies, each headed by a Captain and a Lieutenant – Engine 4, Engine 6, Engine 7 and Ladder 1. In years past, the monthly maintenance for an engine company's vehicles was always performed by that engine company. For example, Engine 4 always performed maintenance on Engine 4 vehicles. Starting in 2014, a maintenance schedule has been adopted under which each engine company performs maintenance on its own vehicles six times a year, but then performs maintenance on other engine companies' vehicles six times a year. This enables members to have not only a better awareness of their own engine company vehicles, but awareness of all vehicles.

Annual training goals for the River Falls Fire Department and the training schedule for the other Monday nights are set by the training committee, which consists of:

Assistant Chief Ed Vlack
Battalion Chief Gary Eloranta
Captain Matt Cernohous (Engine 7)
Captain Scott Gavin (Engine 4)
Captain Evan Larsen (Engine 6)
Captain Doug Rudesill (Ladder 1)
Firefighter Tom Foley

This training committee meets on the first Monday of every month and sets the training schedule for at least the upcoming three months. There are a variety of training areas that the River Falls Fire Department covers during the course of a year, which include: Vehicle accidents, structure fires, building construction, ice rescue, ropes and knots, hazardous materials, confined space rescue, vehicle extrication, water relay (using water tenders), relay pumping (from one pumper to another), hose line advancement (into burning structures), blood borne pathogens and HIPPA (confidentiality), vehicle stabilization (using air bags and/or stabilizing struts), swift water rescue (kayakers on the Kinnickinnic River), use of thermal imaging cameras, aerial ladder operations, CPR and AED recertification, dormitory/multi-story fires, fire prevention, forcible entry, portable fire extinguishers, ventilation and roof operations, use of gas monitors; CO alarm response, incident size-up, trench rescue, SCBA (self-contained

breathing apparatus), use of ground ladders, patient packaging and movement, salvage and overhaul, pre-plan inspections, and radio communications, just to name a few.

However, the primary focus of training for the River Falls Fire Department is to enhance skills needed for incidents that demand immediate, potential life-saving action, such as a structure fire or a vehicle accident in which persons have been injured and need to be extricated from a vehicle by using special tools and equipment.

One new aspect of the training program that was instituted last year by Chief Scott Nelson is that on one Monday evening a month, the training topic for that night is selected and presented by two engine companies.

For instance, in February Engine 6 and Engine 7 were assigned to plan an evening of training. The topic they chose was scene size-up, which is an oral description of what the person in our fire squad sees when arriving at the scene of an incident. After a classroom presentation on the concept of scene size up, (which was an excellent review for older members), newer members were shown pictures of structure fires or vehicle accidents, which they then had to describe by radio to other members who were in a different room. Those other members then returned to the training room, were shown the picture that was attempted to be described and then stated if the verbal description they heard accurately described the scene in the picture.

The River Falls Fire Department is very lucky to have a training tower, located near the waste water treatment plant, which allows us to enhance skills that are necessary when dealing with any incident involving a building, such as: advancing a hose line into a building, advancing a hose line up a stairway in a building, rescuing a victim from a building via the stairway, rescuing a victim from a building via a window by ground ladder, rescuing a victim from a building using an aerial ladder, relay pumping, and aerial ladder operations at a structure. We utilize the training tower as often as we can from late spring to late fall.

Finally, we ended the year 2013 and began the year 2014 by taking a training survey of all members, which was last done by former Chief Tom Foley in 2005. The questions asked were: (1) in the last year what have you liked most about training, (2) in the last year what have you liked least about training, (3) what areas would you like to see more emphasis on, and (4) do you have any other suggestions. Responses were received from members of all ages and years of service with very constructive comments that can be utilized in the future.

Battalion Chief Eloranta and I discuss training at least three to four times a week. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us at:

Ed Vlack	715-441-1547	bvlack@pressenter.com
Gary Eloranta	715-821-2560	gary.eloranta@uwrf.edu



INSPECTION PROGRAM:

In 2011, 264 commercial properties were inspected. This number increased to 493 in 2012. The inspections team is well on its way to meeting their goal of inspecting all of our 750 properties on an annual basis, having inspected just over 600 properties in 2013.

2013 Annual Fire Inspections Report

By Mike Moody – Assistant Chief – Inspections

In 2013, Inspectors Jonathan Gaulke, Molly McLagan, Doug Rudesill and I completed just over 600 inspections. These were a combination of annual fire prevention inspections, re-inspections, on site visits to answer code questions for property owners, site plan and building plan reviews and final acceptance inspections of sprinkler and alarm systems in new construction projects.

During the annual fire prevention inspections we have also been gathering site information about the various locations. This includes information about what each location has for fire suppression and/or alarm systems and where the controls for those systems are located in the building, the size and type of construction of each location and what the occupancy it is being used for, if the location has a fire department lock box and if so where is the box located and emergency contact information for the location. This information is then loaded into our ImageTrend software data base. The purpose of doing this is to be able to have access to all of this information readily available in the event that we have an incident at one of these locations. Information will be accessible with laptop computers that will be located in first responding fire units.

Currently we have a little over 50 percent of the location data loaded into ImageTrend. Our first objective for 2014 is to get the remaining inspectable property information in the system. After getting that done then we will work on getting all the locations on a schedule to perform fire prevention inspections every 12-15 months. To get to this point will be challenging considering that all the inspectors are volunteers. We are seeing some locations that have not corrected violations from previous inspections.

Our challenge is to find ways to perform follow up inspections to make sure corrections are made and enforcement action taken when needed. We hope in develop a systematic approach to make sure this aspect of inspections gets completed in a timely manner.

2013 OPERATIONS REPORT

By Chris Cernohous – Assistant Chief – Operations

The past year some of the duties and responsibilities of the Assistant Chief of Operations were as follows:

- Involved in organizing activities during the annual River Falls Days celebration, mainly assigning and placing personnel and equipment for response during the parade on Friday night.
- Involved in the selection process of new members for the Department, which included participating on the interview panel. Once the interviews were completed the panel took their recommendations to the other officers and the other members of the Department.

Some of the other duties that have been assigned to this position include being involved on the truck committee. On this committee, we have been instructed to look at other engines, gather information and complete a truck specification that will be put out to bid to various builders.

Currently, I am leading on the SCBA purchasing committee. We are gathering information and will be making a recommendation to the Department on which equipment will best fit our needs.

One very time-consuming project is working on organizing the station and looking at outdated or unused equipment and removing from service where necessary. We hope to inventory all the other items in 2014 and enter them into the Image Trend Records Management System.

As an Assistant Chief, I have also dealt with a variety of personnel and policy issues where all of the Assistant Chiefs discuss the issue at hand with Chief Nelson. Some of these issues include: members missing training, requests for leaves of absences and driving apparatus.

2013 SPECIAL REPORT – OUR RECRUIT PROCESS

By Evan Larsen – Captain – Engine 6
(Cpt. Larsen is also a certified instructor for the fire service program at CVTC)

Joining the Fire Fraternity:

Training is much more than picking up the tools and playing with them for a few hours. Training is countless hours away from families and friends striving to perfect a task that needed to be done when minutes count; and the members of the River Falls Fire Department spend hours training practicing new skills and abilities.

In March 2013, the River Falls Fire Department was able to hire fifteen new firefighters to join the 43 other active members. Probationary firefighters are required to spend the first year learning the basics through course material as well as hands-on training. Probationary firefighters start out by taking a 60-hour entry level class meeting one night a week for three hours. Entry Level Firefighter (minimum Wisconsin requirement), Certified Firefighter I and Certified Firefighter II are state funded courses.

Entry Level Firefighter covers donning their personal protective equipment (PPE) & self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), fire hose, laddering roofs and windows, search and rescue of trapped or lost victims, team work and much more. After the 60-hour Entry Level Firefighter is completed probationary firefighters move into Wisconsin State Certified Firefighter I which is 36 hours covering building construction, radio communication, fire behavior, fire attack, ventilation, salvage and overhaul, fire cause and determination, advanced search and rescue, firefighter safety and survival and more team work and must complete a live fire training burn. Firefighter I also goes into greater detail of the skill and course material covered in Entry Level Firefighter. Once all lecture material has been covered students start to the cover hands on portion of their training. During that time student's work on becoming more familiar climbing ladders searching and removing victims to safety. Hose line stretch and advancement into burning structures is intensely stressed upon due to the teamwork needed to perform the task in a quick and flawless manner so probationary firefighters learn the understanding of working together as a unit while advancing to make a fire attack.



In the photo: Probationary Firefighter Brian Roquette discussing hoseline advancement with probationary firefighter Stefan Wood of Roberts-Warren Fire Rescue.

Earning State Certification:

Once all 96 hours were completed Probationary firefighters traveled to Chippewa valley Technical College in Eau Claire, WI in mid-October for their State certified Firefighter I written and practical exam. The written exam consists of 100 multiple questions with a minimum score of 70 percent or higher needed to pass. The test is built off of 1000 possible questions.

Many of the River Falls probationary firefighters scored in the 80th percentile or higher. During the state practical exam probationary firefighters work in a team of three performing skills. Evaluation consists of the two minute drill which means donning all PPE and SCBA under 2 minutes. Some were completed in one minute and fifteen seconds (1:15). Other skills needed to demonstrate proficiency in were fire attack, vertical ventilation of a roof via climbing a 35ft extension ladder and 16ft roof ladder (some recruits had to overcome a fear of heights to succeed), search and rescue of a victim under five minutes. All RF Fire probationary firefighters completed the task in under three minutes. Also during the state practical exam students are evaluated on their knowledge gained through course material as well as hands on material. After our probationary members completed Firefighter I they were given a few months off to be firefighters and gain some real life experience responding to calls. In that time many of the members were able to respond to structure fires, car accidents, active fire alarms, and attend regular Monday night department training.

Once the holiday season was over state certified Firefighter II was scheduled for mid-January for the recruits to start their training again. This training will last until April 2014 when they complete their state written exam and practical exam again. Firefighter II is a 42 hour class advancing the skills learned in firefighter I and building off of them. Skills expected to be learned in Firefighter II are communications, advanced fire attack, building construction, fire prevention/ public education, fire cause and detection, equipment maintenance, special rescue (ex. Confined space rescue) and vehicle extrication. After successful completion of Firefighter II, probationary firefighters will have the chance to be removed from probation and put in active firefighter status is granted by the fire chief. Being moved to active status is a huge lift off of a probationary firefighters shoulders, this means they have spent the needed time in the classroom and training ground becoming competent and safe firefighters.



Firefighter I live fire training completed on June 8 north of River Falls at 429 Highway 35.
(River Falls Firefighters dressed in black turnout gear.)



Firefighters work on advancing a hoseline up and ladder at the River Falls Fire Department training tower.



After completing training, firefighter I students and instructors stopped for a fresh glass of lemonade at a stand on their way back to the station to clean up.

RFFD's Newest Members!



Dustin Dodge #119

Matt Dodge #120

Dan Dudley #121



Brendan Johnson #122

Taylor Kaminski #123

Megan Larson #124

Jake Malmer #125



Steve McCluskey #126

Charles Meyer #127

Mitch O'Keefe #128

Shawn Olson #129



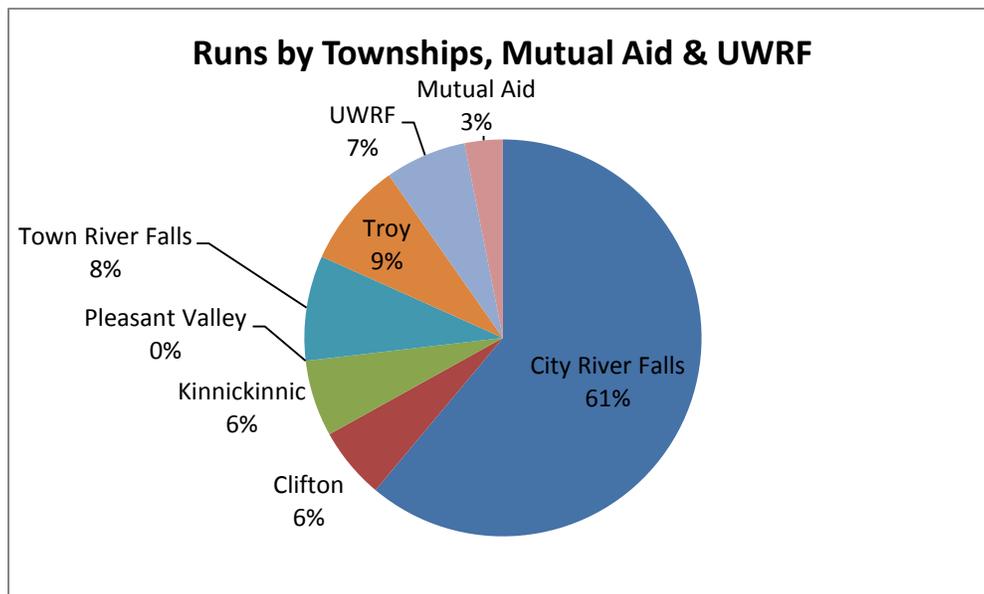
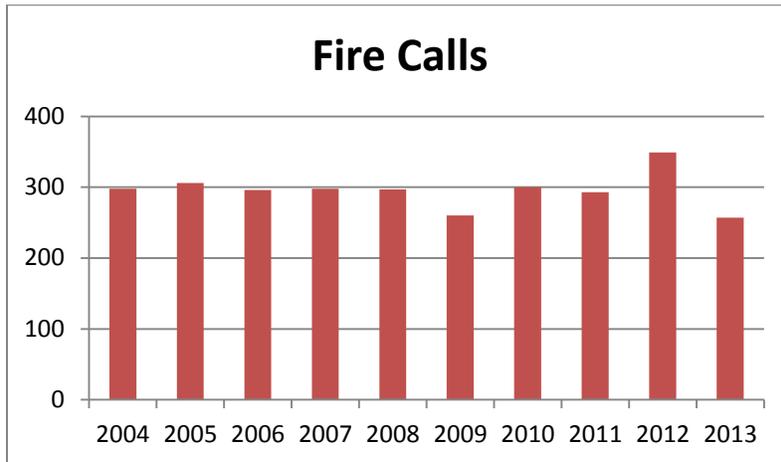
Brian Roquette #130

Justin Wilson #131

Jonathan Wright #132

CALLS FOR SERVICE

In 2013, the River Falls Fire Department responded to a total of 257 calls. Total calls for the past five years are as follows: **2013 = 257; 2012 = 349; 2011 = 293; 2010 = 300; 2009 = 260**



2013 Fire Calls – by City/Town

City of River Falls	157
Town of Clifton	15
Town of Kinnickinnic	16
Town of Pleasant Valley	0
Town of River Falls	22
Town of Troy	22
UWRF	17
Mutual Aid	<u>8</u>
	257 Total

Break down of Calls by Month and Category

General Class	Jan 13	Feb 13	Mar 13	Apr 13	May 13	Jun 13	Jul 13	Aug 13	Sep 13	Oct 13	Nov 13	Dec 13	Total by Type
Accident, potential accident (46)	2		1		1		2	1	1				8
Animal problem or rescue (54)						1							1
Chemical release, reaction, or toxic condition (42)				2	1								3
Combustible/flammable spills & leaks (41)	2		2	2				1	1	1			9
Controlled burning (63)							1		1				2
Cover assignment, standby at fire station, move-up (57)			2	1			2					1	6
Cultivated vegetation, crop fire (17)											1		1
Dispatched and cancelled en route (61)		1	3			1		2	2			1	10
Electrical wiring/equipment problem (44)	1			2	2	1			1		1		8
Emergency medical service (EMS) Incident (32)	5	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	4	5	30
Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition (25)	1												1
Extrication, rescue (35)		1	1			1		2	1		1		7
False alarm and false call, other (70)			1							2			3
Fire, other (10)	1	1											2
Malicious, mischievous false alarm (71)		1			1						1	1	4
Medical assist (31)	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	3		1	1	2	24
Mobile property (vehicle) fire (13)		1	1	1	1	1	1		2	2	2	1	13
Natural vegetation fire (14)			1	2	3	1							7
Outside rubbish fire (15)							2				1		3
Public service assistance (55)		1						1					2
Smoke, odor problem (53)									1			1	2
Special outside fire (16)	1				1						1	1	4
Steam, other gas mistaken for smoke (65)								1			1		2
Structure Fire (11)	1		1	1	2				2	4	1	1	13
System or detector malfunction (73)	1			1				1	3			2	8
Unintentional system/detector operation (no fire) (74)	7	5	7	8	6	12	8	11	4	5	4	5	82
Water or ice-related rescue (36)						1							1
Water problem (52)		1											1
Total	25	15	23	24	24	24	19	24	22	17	19	21	257

SIGNIFICANT RESPONSES

- On Sunday, March 10, 2013, shortly after 8:30 PM, the River Falls Fire Department responded to a report of a fully engulfed apartment at 430 Griffey Street. Arriving crews found heavy fire coming from the middle unit of the triplex, which is owned by the River Falls Housing Authority.

The response included three engines and a ladder truck. Thirty firefighters battled the blaze and quickly knocked down the flames, preventing the fire spreading to the adjoining units on each side of the involved apartment. Crews remained on scene for several hours to extinguish hot spots. The major fire damage was contained to the middle apartment unit.

- On Thursday, April 11, we battled a stubborn garage fire at 715 Walnut Street. We used a back hoe to help pull the roof off to expose hidden fire in order to extinguish it. Building and contents loss amounted to approximately \$60,000.
- On Tuesday, April 30, we assisted Robert's Fire with a fire at the elementary school. Chief Nelson assisted the Incident Commander and our crews provided back-up for any additional calls that might have come in.
- On Sunday, May 26, RFFD responded to a house fire at N8641 1020th St. The fire started in the area of the refrigerator and extended throughout the home. Fire crews from Ellsworth and Hudson assisted in extinguishing the blaze.
- On October 9, RFFD responded to a barn fire on Mission Road in Troy Township. Prescott, Hudson and Roberts Fire Departments assisted with fighting this fire. The building was destroyed.
- On November 25, RFFD responded to a reported house fire in the 500 block of Pearl St. There was heavy fire in the basement of the house when crews arrived. Firefighters knocked the fire down quickly but there was still significant damage to the house.
- On Thursday, December 19, 2013, at 4:33 PM, the River Falls Fire Department responded to a report of smoke and flames at 212 S. Wasson Lane.

Arriving crews found heavy fire in the garage of the home and were able to get the fire under control in less than a half hour. Crews remained on scene until 6:45 PM to extinguish hard to reach spot fires. The attached garage and a portion of the home were destroyed. The entire structure received heat and heavy smoke damage.

Twenty-nine River Falls firefighters battled the blaze. Members of the Ellsworth Fire Department responded to the Fire Hall to stand by for any other calls.



Fire Safety Education



By Pauline Williams, River Falls Fire Department Safety Education Officer

2013 was another exciting year for the safety education team. After more than 30 years we said goodbye to “Pluggie,” our robotic fire hydrant and welcomed, “Freddie,” the robotic fire truck. “Freddie” will carry on the tradition of educating children about fire safety through songs and entertainment.

The safety education program was presented to over 1,500 students in the River Falls school district. 350 children toured the fire safety house to experience a smoke filled room, escape plans, and dangers found in the home. For 320 children kindergarten meant a ride on a real fire truck! Yelling-“Don’t play with fire!” each time the horn sounded. The safety house traveled to several of our neighboring fire departments to help provide a unique experience for children in those communities learning about fire safety.

Career day at the high school gives students an opportunity for hands-on by trying on the turnout gear and donning an SCBA. Students were brought to the scene of a motor vehicle crash to witness first hand emergency services in action through the staged Mock Car Crash. For the third consecutive year Meyer Middle School students became active participants as community volunteers with their help at the Fire Department Annual Open House. The smiles and willingness of students to be a part of this event has resulted in growing participation with each year. We welcome their enthusiasm and energy!

The Fire Safety Program reaches out through community events, local organizations, home day care, pre-schools, and so much more! Over 40 different events this year alone. The program would never be as successful as it is without the dedication of a great team of individuals and a welcoming school district and community. I feel very fortunate to help facilitate such a fun program and look forward to new faces and smiles in 2014 as the River Falls Fire Department Safety Education Program continues to grow and succeed.

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

- We received twelve pagers that were part of a grant for the Pierce County Chiefs' group. The grant was sponsored by Spring Valley Fire Department.
- On March 8, 2013, RFFD received the following notice from FEMA that our grant request submitted under the 2012 Assistance to Firefighters Grant program was approved.

Re: Grant No.EMW-2012-FO-06009

Dear Mr. Nelson:

On behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), I am pleased to inform you that your grant application submitted under the FY 2012 Assistance to Firefighters Grant has been approved. FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate (GPD), in consultation with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), carries out the Federal responsibilities of administering your grant. The approved project costs total to \$52,295.00. The Federal share is 90 percent or \$47,066.00 of the approved amount and your share of the costs is 10 percent or \$5,229.00.

Funding from this grant will be used to replace outdated extrication equipment for the department. This equipment is used to extricate victims from vehicle accidents and other emergencies. In addition to the "jaws of life", the department received vehicle stabilization equipment and air bags that are capable of lifting vehicles from trapped victims.

LOOKING FORWARD

We have identified a number of projects to work on and goals to be met as our department evolves to meet the needs of the membership and the community we serve. Some include:

- **Develop short and long-term strategic/work plan**
 - Review Inspections program and processes
 - Pre-plan buildings
 - Review and revision of by-laws
 - Officer training/succession planning
 - Overall training plan
 - Rural Fire Association relationship
 - Volunteer recruitment & retention
 - Evaluate long-term facility needs
- **Research funding opportunities**
 - Grants, public & private
 - Community partnerships
 - Charges for service