

**RIVER FALLS
FIRE DEPARTMENT
2018 ANNUAL REPORT**



Mission Statement

“The purpose of the River Falls Fire Department is to protect and preserve life and property in the City of River Falls and surrounding Towns and to promote the prevention of fires and other emergencies through fire safety education”.



Letter from the Chief

It is my privilege to present the 2018 Annual Report for the City of River Falls Fire Department. This document represents considerably more than statistical data, rather it highlights the accomplishments, vision, and challenges overcome by the many paid-on-call firefighters who comprise the membership of this department. The success we enjoy today and the opportunities that lie before us are only made possible due to the commitment and professionalism of each of our members. Every member of our department has ownership 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.

We couldn't meet our mission without the support of the public, the Police and Fire Commission, City Council members, the River Falls Rural Association, City officials, and especially all the fire department members; who serve our public by providing public safety education and professional emergency response.

Scott Nelson, Fire Chief



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MEMBERSHIP

2018 ended with 44 paid on call members and 1 full time Chief on the department

Years of Service as of December 31, 2018

Carl Gaulke	46 years 3 months	Michael Fecht	11 years 8 months
Gary Eloranta	44 years 6 months	Nathaniel Baar	11 years 7 months
Gene McKahan	44 years 4 months	Danny Nicholson	11 years 7 months
Pauly Cudd	37 years 10 months	James Rimer	11 years 7 months
Tom Foley	33 years 3 months	Andrea Ellefson	9 years 8 months
Douglas Rudesill	32 years 10 months	Scott Nelson*	8 years 4 months
Bill Cernohous	29 years 2 months	Neil Engel	7 years 10 months
Troy Malmer	29 years 2 months	Garrett Gill	7 years 10 months
Mike Moody	29 years 2 months	Ky Kaminski	7 years 10 months
Ed Nicholson	29 years 2 months	Robert Kerr	7 years 10 months
Pauline Williams	26 years 5 months	Ted Slowiak	7 years 10 months
Chris Cernohous	23 years 3 months	Dustin Dodge	5 years 10 months
Jason Sammon	23 years 1 month	Brendan Johnson	5 years 10 months
Molly Foley	23 years 1 month	Charles Meyer	5 years 10 months
Mark Hilden	18 years	Shawn Olson	5 years 10 months
Matt Cernohous	17 years	Brian Roquette	5 years 10 months
Dean Grisar	17 years	Justin Wilson	5 years 10 months
Evan Larsen	17 years	Justin Athorp	1 year 10 months
Ed Vlack	17 years	Greg Deitsche	1 year 10 months
Scott Gavin	15 years	Adam Meier	1 year 10 months
Adam Larson	15 years	Kyle Morrow	1 year 10 months
Sean Slaikeu	15 years	Andrew Rinneck	1 year 10 months
		Chad Zess	1 year 10 months

*Indicates Fire Chief

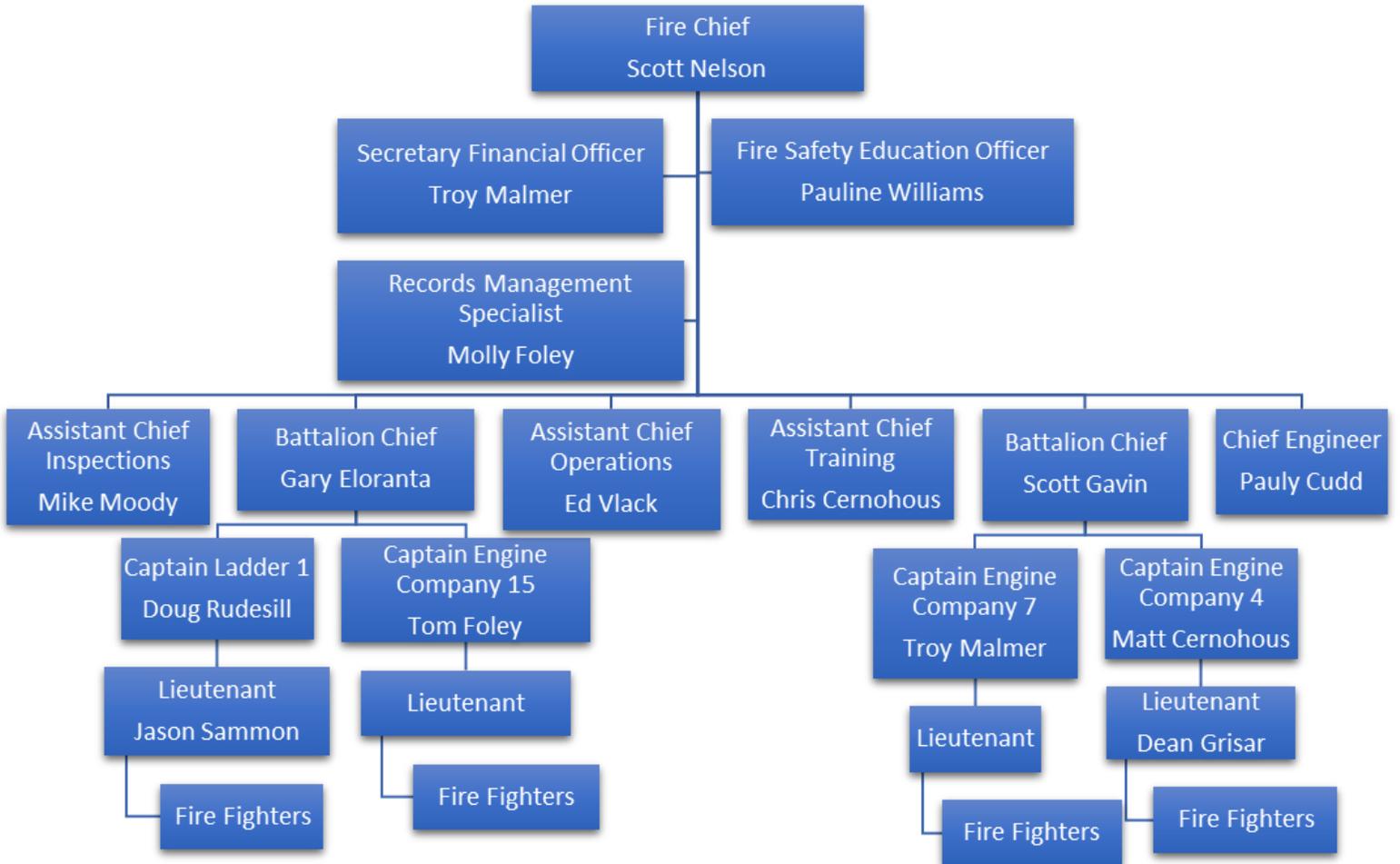
Total Years of Service 732 years 1 month
(Average of 16 years 7 months)

Retirements/Resignations

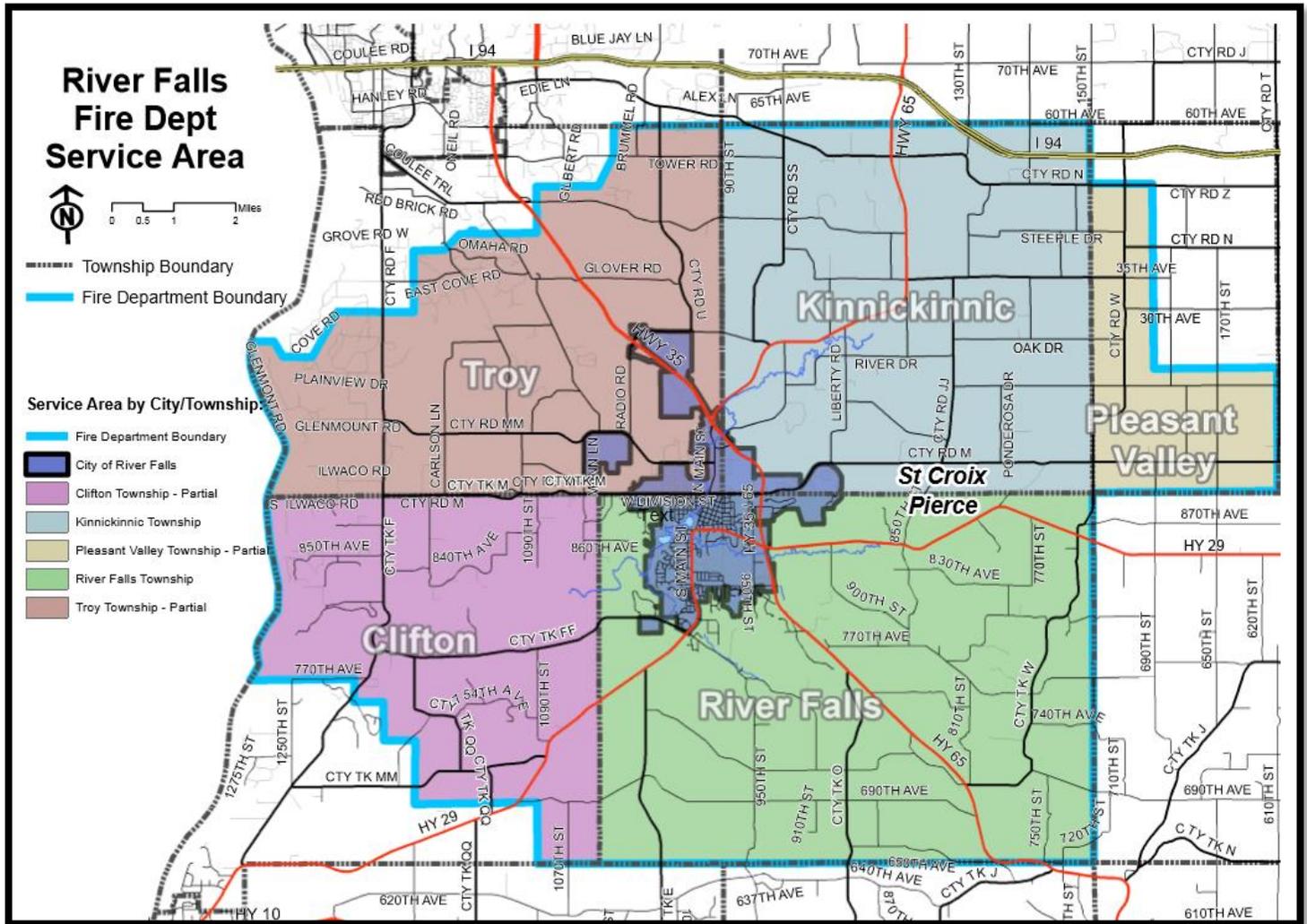
The following members retired or resigned from the department in 2017:

**Bill Lubich
Matt Johnson
Matt Dodge
Ryan Bailey**

Organizational Chart



Service Area Map



Partnerships

In 2018, the Rural Association (made up of the Towns of Troy, Kinnickinnic, Clifton, River Falls, and Pleasant Valley) contributed \$293,788 of the \$839,395 department budget or 35%. The River Falls Fire Department would like to thank the Rural Association for their partnership and support.

2018 Highlights

2018 Firefighter of the Year: Justin Wilson



On Saturday, Jan. 19, Justin Wilson was at the annual River Falls Fire Department awards banquet. Wilson said he was very surprised to realize he was this year's Firefighter of the Year. "It wasn't something that I was necessarily expecting," he said. "It was quite a surprise. But it was exciting. It was something that I was honored to receive. "Assistant Chief Mike Moody, whose family sponsors the award, said Wilson was chosen for the added responsibilities he's taken on, and because he can be counted on. Moody described Wilson and "very reliable, responsible and dedicated. "He said he feels it's important for the department to recognize members who "go above and beyond."

The Firefighter of the year is chosen by a committee of past firefighters of the year. Chief Scott Nelson said the committee made a great choice with Wilson. "Justin is one of our newer firefighters that has come a long way and has shown a lot of leadership qualities within the department," said Nelson. "He has a way of bringing people together." Nelson said Wilson, who has been with the department six years, "exemplifies the pride and ownership" that firefighters take in the River Falls Fire Department. "He bridges the gap between the younger firefighters and the veterans," said Nelson. "So that we can all work well together." "Justin's outgoing personality creates a positive environment with whatever is going on at the time," said Moody.

What Wilson likes best about being a part of the RFFD is working with the community, whether it's community education or being there for people in a time of need Wilson often volunteers to help with events such as the fire department's annual open house or the kids' water fight during River Falls Days.

His favorite memories with the department have been times that the department has brought together the members and families for events. He counts them as especially meaningful, because there are often days when he gets a page during dinner, for example, and he has to get up and leave. Wilson said his family has been supportive of his decision to join the department, especially his wife.

"To be able to be a part of the fire department is really a way that I can give back to the community," he said. "It's just outstanding how many people support the department and always appreciate what we do. That doesn't go unnoticed, for sure."

Story and photo courtesy of the River Falls Journal, author Gretta Stark

2018 Department Highlights

- Bill Lubich retired after 29 years of service (see photo).
- The Fire/EMS and the Police consultants met with Council and staff regarding their recommendations for location and square footage of proposed public safety facilities.
- Several members participated in Park and Rec's "Firefighters Are Your Friends" event that was held at the Fire Hall. Approximately 80 parents and children had a Fire Hall tour and took part in a variety of fire education stations and watched several demonstrations.
- RFFD Family Picnic was held on July 18th. This is one of the ways we thank firefighters' families for their support of our firefighters. RFFD members and families were also special guests at the Fighting Fish game.
- RFFD worked with Park & Rec and helped with Family Fun Day at Glen Park.
- Participated in Children's School Supply Giveaway Night.
- Members of the Department participated in the 911 Memorial Emergency Vehicle Salute that crossed the I-94 Bridge meant to remember victims of 911.
- Annual Open House was held on Monday, September 24th. Approximately 500 people attended the event, which is the fire department's kick off for Fire Prevention month activities in October. The event included farm safety displays and featured some of our antique apparatus.



Department Training

Except for holidays, members of the River Falls Fire Department attend training every Monday evening from 6:30 p.m. until around 9:30 p.m. Training on the first Monday of every month consists of maintenance on vehicles, equipment and tools to ensure that all vehicles, equipment, and tools are in proper working order. On the first Monday of even numbered months, once the maintenance is completed, we then have a business meeting. On the first Monday of odd numbered months, once the maintenance is completed, we then have an officer meeting, which may also include officer training. For months in which there are five Mondays, the fifth Monday is used for committee meetings, such as our training committee. Training on the remaining Monday evenings emphasizes training for true emergencies, such as structure fires or vehicle accidents, but, in general, training for members of the River Falls Fire Department covers a variety of topics.

Annual training goals and the training schedule are prepared by the Training Committee, which consists of the following members:

- Firefighter Mike Fecht: Committee Chair
- Firefighter James Rimer: Committee Vice Chair
- Lieutenant Dean Grisar
- Lieutenant Jason Sammon
- Firefighter Andrea Ellefson
- Firefighter Ky Kaminski
- Firefighter Brian Roquette
- Firefighter Sean Slaikeu



In addition to the training room at the Fire Hall and on-site training, members of the Department have the benefit of using the Department training tower, which is located near the City of River Falls wastewater treatment plant and is utilized for training as often as possible.

Training for other area fire departments varies from only two times a month to just three times a month. Therefore, attending our training is a significant commitment by our members. Even with the number of Monday nights that we train, the training officers frequently comment that there are not enough Mondays to train on all the topics we would like to train on.

Equipment and Apparatus

Rolling Stock

- Engine 4: 2001 Freightliner, 1,500 GPM pumper.
- Engine 7: 1989 Ford, 1,250 GPM pumper.
- Engine 15: 2015 Pierce, 1,500 GPM rescue/pumper
- Ladder 1: 2004 Pierce 100' aerial/2,000 GPM pump.
- Tender 1: 1994 Freightliner, 2,000-gallon tanker/personnel carrier.
- Tender 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.
- Kubota UTV Brush & Rescue Unit.
- Model A Ford, used for department promotions.
- 1939 Ford used for department promotions.
- Fire Safety House trailer used for Fire Safety Education.
- 2003 Fire Prevention enclosed trailer.
- 2004 Specialized Rescue enclosed trailer.
- 2017 Hazmat enclosed trailer.
- 2004 Durango Squad



Hydrants

The City of River Falls maintains over 690 fire hydrants that can be used to provide water for fire suppression operations. These hydrants are flushed annually and maintained by the River Falls Water Utility.

Public Education

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”

Helen Keller

Those words couldn't ring more true as I reflect on the fire safety and public promotions events of 2018. Each year the River Falls firefighters step up to build on the success of our education program and to participate in a wide variety of community events. What builds even more community is that family members and friends also give of their time to make many of our events such a great experience for all.

Our year began with fire hall tours for students from Jacob's Ladder, a fire truck visit to the UWRF Care Center, and hosting "Firefighters Are Your Friends." Climbing on fire trucks, spraying pump cans, and learning what it takes to be a firefighter are just a few of the experiences shared.



Summer brings a variety of fire dept. events including the River Falls Days parade and the always popular children's water fights! This year the Chamber of Commerce offered a new venue for the event on the Maple Street Bridge. River Falls Park and Rec invited us to participate once again in the annual Water Week events at Glen Park. The splashes and spraying water couldn't have been any more inviting for young and old on what were very hot July days!



Visits to Fox Den Books and Abundant Life Church were among other events of the summer and carried us into the fall activities of participation in the 9-11 Tribute Run, "Never Forget-343," and the fire dept annual Open House. The 2018 Open House drew an amazing crowd and offered a wonderful opportunity for interacting with the River Falls community and more.



As part of the Open House we took some time to pay tribute to the firefighters of yesterday by recreating a photo from Circa 1940. We are proud to have retained such an amazing piece of history in these trucks.



Once again October meant a busy time in the schools with Fire Safety Education Month. We visit more than 1,500 students over the course of 2 weeks and over 300 children spend time in the fire safety house learning the importance of escaping a smoke-filled room. Freddie brings smiles, song, sprays of water and lessons on being fire safe. There are over 400 combined volunteer hours spent in the schools during October, the enthusiasm and excitement of students making every day fun. Our fire safety house visited the communities of Spring Valley, Baldwin, Durand, and of course River Falls.



Our year concluded with the always entertaining River Dazzle Parade and a fire safety themed float. Together we had a fun-filled and educational year with the River Falls Fire Department.

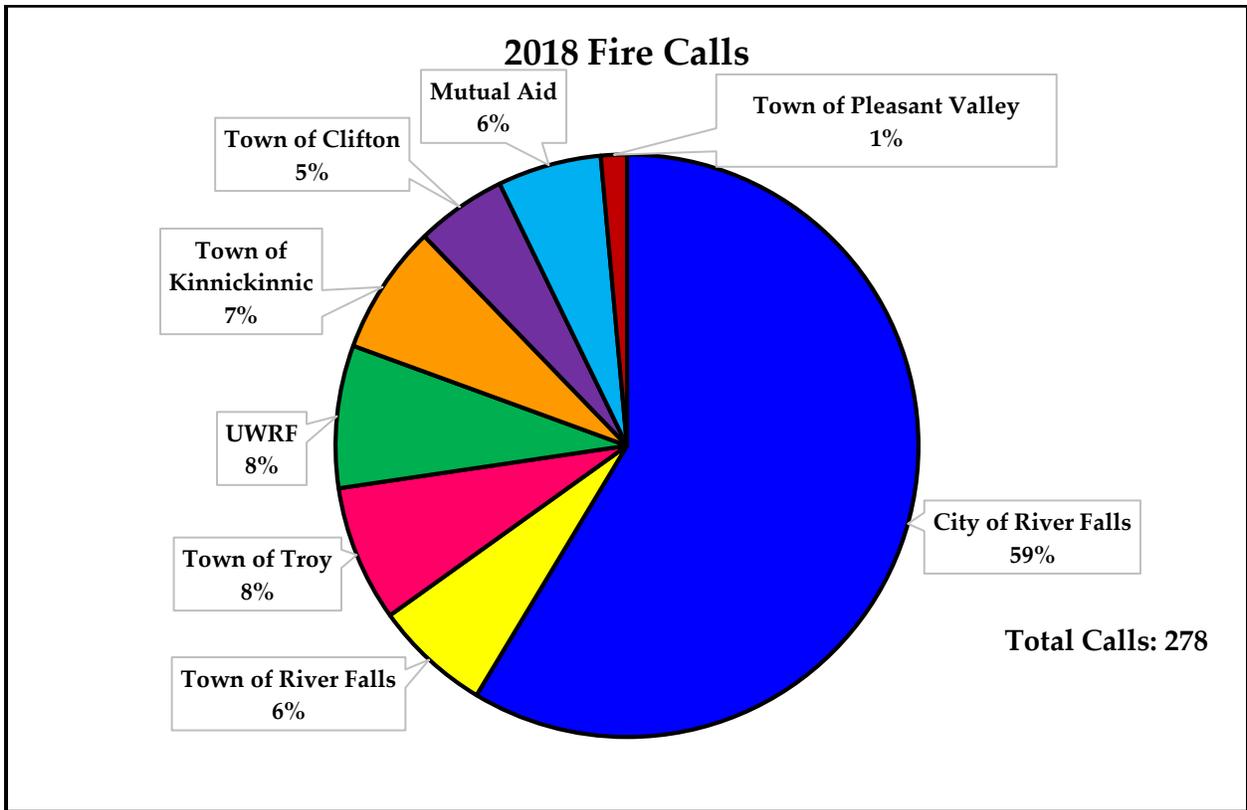
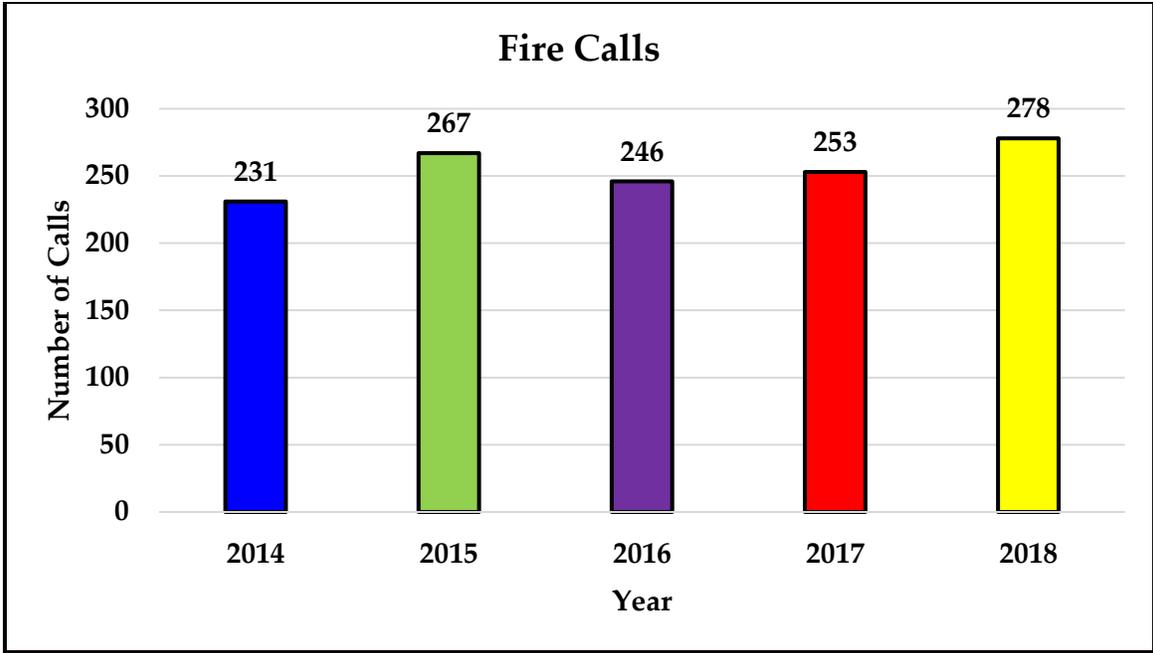
Respectfully submitted,
Pauline Williams-River Falls Fire Dept

Safety and Inspections

Thanks to the efforts of inspectors Tom Foley, Molly Foley and Doug Rudesill we again completed inspections on over 600 properties within the City and surrounding Towns within our fire district. Because of the continuing focus on fire safety education we continue to see improved compliance.

2018 was a very busy year for construction projects as there were roughly 100 meetings pertaining to construction projects. These meetings dealt with everything from site plan review meetings, onsite inspections during the construction process and then final acceptance inspections of sprinkler systems and alarm systems for final occupancy. 2019 is already beginning to look like another busy construction year as there have been a lot of calls from people with questions about fire code, fire extinguishers, recreational fire pits, controlled burns, etc.





Annual Alarm Summary Report

Reporting Between: 01/01/2018 - 12/31/2018

Situation	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sept 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Total
100 Series Fire	5	3	1	2	8	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	32
300 Series Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident	4	0	8	3	6	4	4	4	4	8	7	5	57
400 Series Hazardous Condition (No fire)	3	3	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	0	4	3	24
500 Series Service Call	2	4	1	1	2	4	1	4	3	4	1	1	28
600 Series Good Intent Call	3	3	1	4	7	2	4	4	4	0	5	0	37
700 Series False Alarm & False Call	9	13	6	8	11	9	5	12	5	8	8	6	100
Grand Total	26	26	18	19	37	22	17	28	20	21	27	17	278

Incident Type Report (Summary)

From 01/01/18 To 12/31/18

Incident Type	Count	% of Incidents	Est. Property Loss	Est. Content Loss	Total Est. Loss	% of Losses
1 Fire						
Fire, other (100)	2	0.72%	\$156,000.00	\$78,500.00	\$234,500.00	15.04%
Building fire (111)	13	4.68%	\$641,875.00	\$191,800.00	\$833,675.00	53.47%
Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue (114)	1	0.36%	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	0.06%
Passenger vehicle fire (131)	3	1.08%	\$15,500.00	\$100.00	\$15,600.00	1.00%
Road freight or transport vehicle fire (132)	2	0.72%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Off-road vehicle or heavy equipment fire (138)	2	0.72%	\$374,290.00	\$0.00	\$374,290.00	24.01%
Natural vegetation fire, other (140)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Forest, woods or wildland fire (141)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire (142)	3	1.08%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Grass fire (143)	2	0.72%	\$98,915.00	\$0.00	\$98,915.00	6.34%
Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire (151)	1	0.36%	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	0.01%
Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire (154)	1	0.36%	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	0.06%
	32	11.52%	\$1,288,680.00	\$270,400.00	\$1,559,080.00	99.99%
3 Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident						
Medical assist, assist EMS crew (311)	10	3.60%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Motor vehicle accident with injuries (322)	33	11.87%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Motor vehicle accident with no injuries. (324)	8	2.88%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Lock-in (if lock out , use 511) (331)	2	0.72%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Extrication of victim(s) from vehicle (352)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Removal of victim(s) from stalled elevator (353)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

Extrication of victim(s) from machinery (357)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Ice rescue (362)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
	57	20.51%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
4 Hazardous Condition (No Fire)						
Hazardous condition, other (400)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Combustible/flammable gas/liquid condition, other (410)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Gas leak (natural gas or LPG) (412)	4	1.44%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Oil or other combustible liquid spill (413)	2	0.72%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Carbon monoxide incident (424)	3	1.08%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Heat from short circuit (wiring), defective/worn (441)	2	0.72%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Overheated motor (442)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Power line down (444)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Vehicle accident, general cleanup (463)	9	3.24%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
	24	8.64%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
5 Service Call						
Person in distress, other (510)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Ring or jewelry removal (512)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Water or steam leak (522)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Smoke or odor removal (531)	4	1.44%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Animal rescue (542)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Public service assistance, other (550)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Assist police or other governmental agency (551)	11	3.96%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Unauthorized burning (561)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Cover assignment, standby, moveup (571)	7	2.52%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
	28	10.08%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
6 Good Intent Call						
Good intent call, other (600)	2	0.72%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Dispatched and cancelled en route (611)	27	9.71%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Authorized controlled burning (631)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Smoke scare, odor of smoke (651)	2	0.72%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
HazMat release investigation w/no HazMat (671)	5	1.80%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
	37	13.31%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
7 False Alarm & False Call						
Local alarm system, malicious false alarm (715)	3	1.08%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
System malfunction, other (730)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Smoke detector activation due to malfunction (733)	3	1.08%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Alarm system sounded due to malfunction (735)	8	2.88%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

CO detector activation due to malfunction (736)	6	2.16%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Unintentional transmission of alarm, other (740)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Sprinkler activation, no fire - unintentional (741)	5	1.80%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional (743)	34	12.23%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Detector activation, no fire - unintentional (744)	1	0.36%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional (745)	28	10.07%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO (746)	10	3.60%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
	100	35.98%	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Total Incident Count:	278		Total Est. Loss:		\$1,559,080.00	

Summary of Significant Events

Date	Incident Description
1/2/18	Dryer fire
1/6/18	Boiler fire confined to furnace room
1/9/18	Porch fire that spread to the house
1/31/18	Payloader fire
2/4/18	Chimney fire
2/13/18	Electric motor fire at UWRF
2/21/18	Bedroom fire in apartment building
3/8/18	Ice rescue on Lake George
3/29/18	Car went off the road, hit a driveway, went airborne, hit a tree and started on fire
4/28/18	Grassfire that consumed 60 acres
5/11/18	Shed fire believed to be arson
5/25/18	Lightning strike with no fire
5/26/18	Lightning strike with burn marks on the siding but no fire
7/4/18	Fire that destroyed the upper level of a duplex
7/21/18	Hay baler fire
7/28/18	Accident with serious injury requiring 2 extractions
8/4/18	Hay shed fire
9/22/18	Cut handcuffs off UWRF student who put them on but could not get them to unlock
10/16/18	Help farmer get his hand out of a corn picker
11/15/18	House fire that resulted in major burns to occupant
12/7/18	Porch fire confined to porch
12/16/18	Car missed a corner, went airborne over 150 feet and ended up in a house

Fire Department Organizational Review

The River Falls Fire Department has a rich history that dates to 1885. The culture has been one of serving the community while remaining an autonomous group. Today, the River Falls Fire Department is under the umbrella of the City of River Falls.

Fire departments are being held more accountable to State and Federal rules and statues, including compliance with new safety and training regulations. River Falls Fire is not exempt from the requirement to meet these new standards and has undertaken an in-depth review of department operations to look for ways to improve service to our Community.

In July and August 2018, the Chief met with each member of the department to discuss several issues that faced the department. These one-on-one sessions shed light on a variety of issues within the department and became the rationale for making changes in the future.

In October 2018, the Chief's Advisory Group was formed. Rather than a top-down approach, a more integrated approach was used. The committee was comprised of a cross-section of the entire department to represent age, gender and occupation, including one with full-time status as a firefighter with another department.

The committee reviewed the results of the one-on-ones and focused on a complete review of positions and responsibilities. To that end, they began work on four areas:

- Review of Organizational Structure
- Creation of Job Descriptions
- Review Stipend Amounts
- Set up Application Process for Positions

The Committee worked with City Administration to ensure their recommendations were in line with the City's Vision, Mission and Values. The application process for any new or revised appointed positions would begin immediately following approval by the Police and Fire Commission.

Some additional recommendations after this organizational structure is approved and new positions are filled include:

- Three-year term limit for appointed positions
- Annual performance review of all members
- Chief to hold all members accountable for positions they hold
- Complete review of organizational structure after 12 months of implementation

The intention is to keep the Chief's Advisory Group in place and move forward in 2019 with more initiatives for the fire department. Some include:

- Create job description and request for FTE position of Deputy Chief
- Updating our operating guidelines to ensure they are in line with the new organizational structure.
- Creating a list of duties and responsibilities that can be assigned to members.
- Work on standardized performance review system for members.



The Fire Department is comprised of a group of dedicated members who have pride and ownership in the organization. Many have pushed for a review of our organization and are ready for change to occur. As with any change, it comes with some unknowns and the department is prepared to handle them as they come up.

The Fire Department is confident that once implemented, this structure will help build a better department for the present and prepare the department for the future.

Future Department Goals

The Fire Department has identified several 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**
 - Implementation of administrative rules and guidelines
 - Develop self-inspection program for commercial properties
 - Training on Standard Operating Guidelines
 - Officer training/succession planning
 - Volunteer recruitment & retention
 - Prepare bid specifications for new fire engine
 - Evaluate long-term facility needs

- **Research funding opportunities**
 - Grants, public & private
 - Community partnerships
 - Charges for service

Thank you for your continued support of the River Falls Fire Department.

