

# **City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska**

**Monday, March 31, 2014**

**Regular Meeting**

## **Item Reports4**

**Council to receive the annual Fire Department Report.**

**Staff Contact: Chief Dana Miller**



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## **Year End Report Executive Summary**

- **Mission Statement**
- **Yearly response statistics**
- **Structure fire loss values**
- **Hours when building fires occurred**
- **Five year fire experience**
- **Calls by day of week**
- **Aid given and received**
- **Time spent on scenes**
- **ISO (Insurance Services Survey)**
- **Current apparatus inventory**
- **Special team trainings**
- **Fire prevention and safety trainings**
- **SFD department history**

# *Scottsbluff Fire Department*

## *2013 Annual Report*



*Dana Miller, Fire Chief*

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*308-630-6229*

# City of Scottsbluff

## Fire Department

### Mission Statement



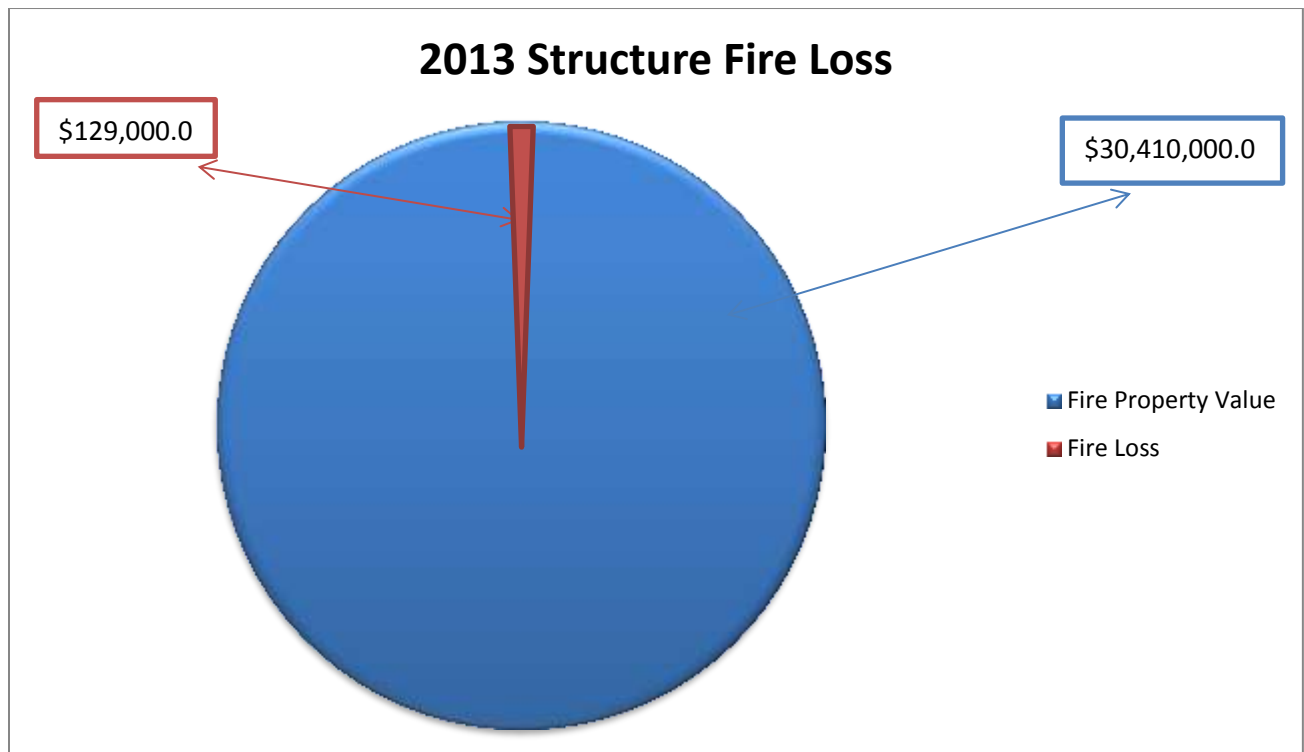
It shall be the mission of the men and women of the city of Scottsbluff Fire Department to as, one collective and cohesive team, provide for the life safety and community service needs of our service delivery area(s).

We shall reach out to our customers, both internal and external, and extend our collective hand to render whatever assistance we are able as we provide all of our customers with the most effective excellence in service delivery.

## Scottsbluff Fire Department responded to 1711 incidents in 2013.

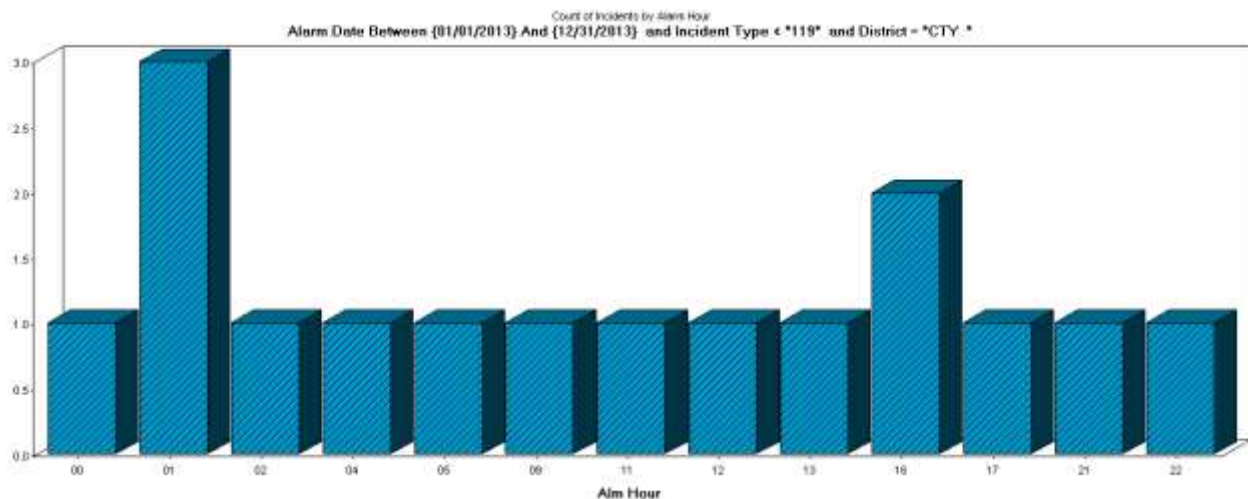


- 1022 Emergency Medical Calls
- 258 Motor vehicle collisions with no transportation of occupants required
- 174 Fire related incidents
- 73 Motor vehicle collisions with occupants transported to the hospital
- 59 Assist police or other government agencies
- 52 Assist the public
- 26 False alarms
- 19 Combustible gas or liquid leaks
- 9 Power Lines
- 8 Vehicle vs Pedestrian accidents
- 3 Lightning strikes
- 3 Trapped persons other than vehicle extrications
- 2 Explosive device removals
- 1 Dive team response
- 1 High angle rope rescue
- 1 Animal rescue



The Scottsbluff Fire Department is tasked with providing fire protection to the City of Scottsbluff. In 2013, the department responded to structure fires with a total property value of \$30,410,000.00. The total property loss of all structures in 2013 was \$129,000.00

## Looking at 24 hour clock when our 16 Building Fires Happened

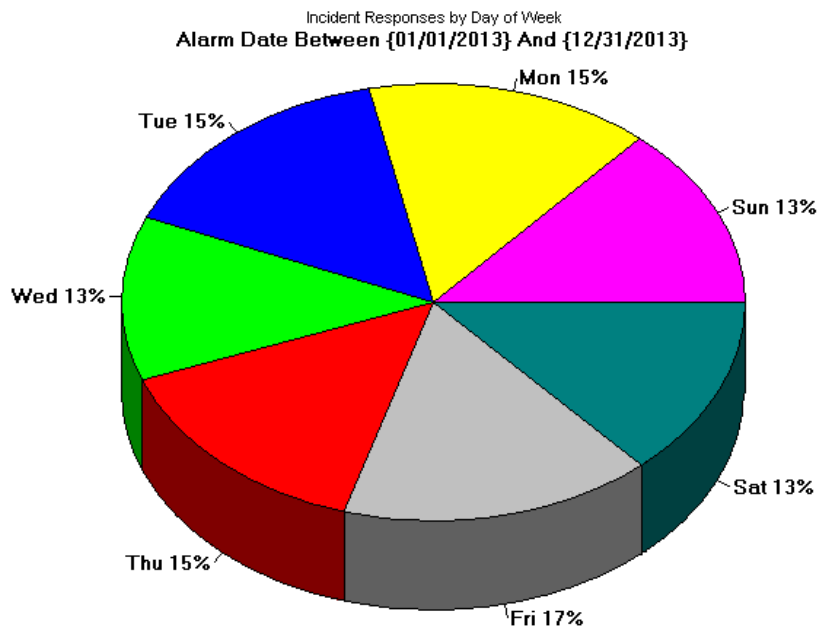


## Fire Experience over last five years

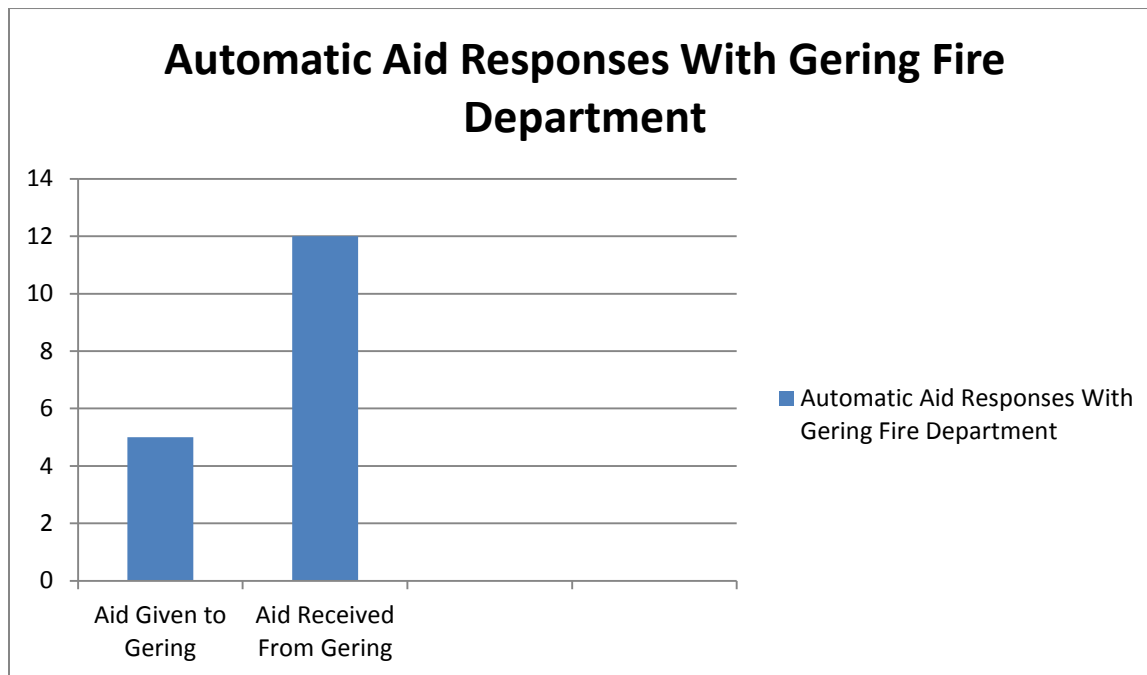
2009	1,840 total calls	84 fire calls	310,500.00 fire loss
2010	1,842 total calls	78 fire calls	452,093.00 fire loss
2011	1,777 total calls	60 fire calls	128,300.00 fire loss
2012	1,795 total calls	80 fire calls	460,200.00 fire loss
2013	1,711 total calls	56 fire calls	159,850.00 fire loss

## Responses by Day of Week

Figure 2:



As shown in figure 2, incident responses are very evenly disbursed by day of the week. Fridays exhibit the highest call volume at 17%, or 291 calls. There is no more than 4% deviation by day of the week.



In addition to automatic Aid, we have given and received mutual aid from the following departments during 2013:

Gering  
Bridgeport  
Lyman  
Minatare  
Mitchell  
Scottsbluff Rural Fire Protection District

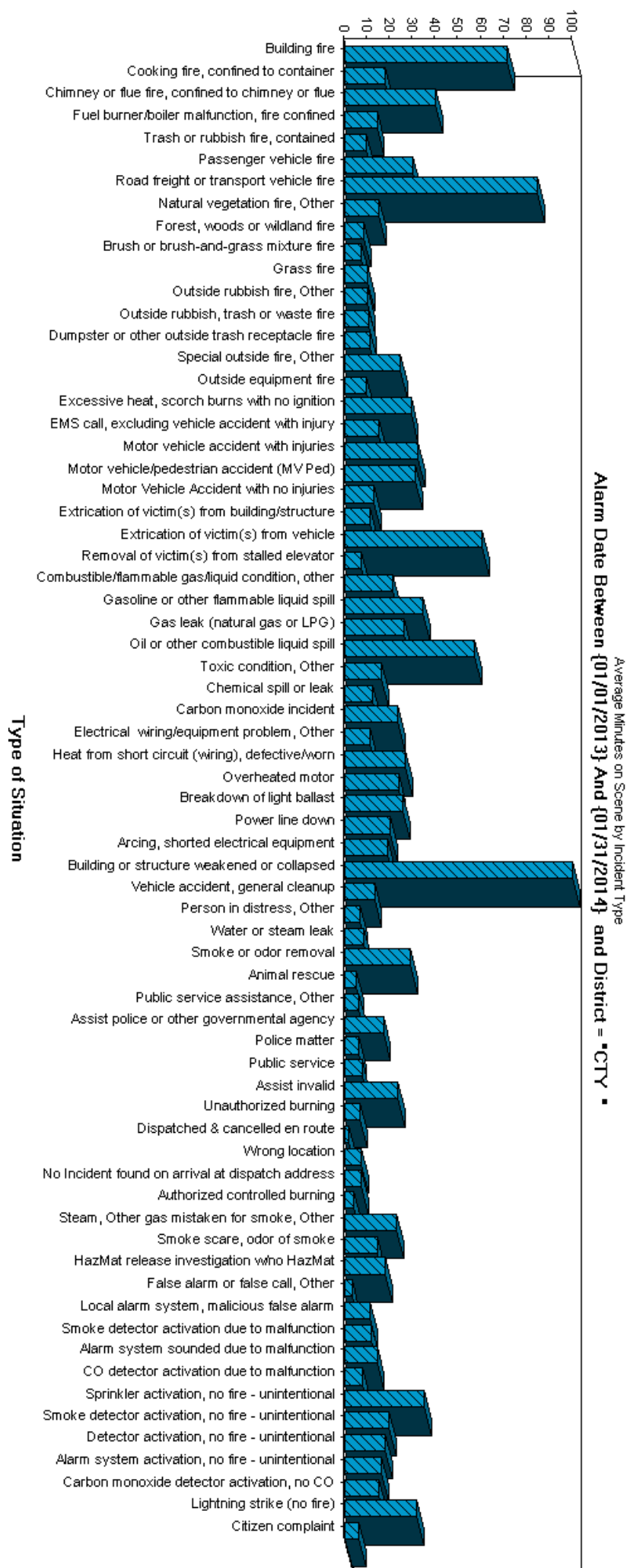
**Our top priorities at any scene are:**

- 1. Life Safety**
- 2. Incident Stabilization**
- 3. Property Conservation**

Our time spent on scene to accomplish these priorities vary by the type of call. Our shorter duration calls include: small or contained fires, non-injury accidents, and EMS calls. Incidents requiring our presence longest include: building fires, vehicle fires, injury accidents with extrication, hazardous materials spills, and building collapses.

The chart on the next page will help to illustrate the many type of calls we respond to, and their duration.





# ISO Survey

In January of 2013, we conducted our Insurance Services Office (ISO) survey. These surveys evaluate the fire prevention and fire suppression capabilities of individual communities. Each of these are broken down into detail, such as: size of water mains and how they are supplied, type fire hydrant connections, fire engines and the water they can provide, mutual and automatic aid agreements, etc... Each area is tabulated and scored into a final overall score between 1 and 10, with 1 being the highest score possible. This is the Public Protection Classification (PPC) number and is one of several elements used to develop the property insurance loss cost and underwriting information for an individual property. The scale used is as follows:

## Historical:

Our PPC of 4 was improved to 3, in 2001. The 2001 survey credited the City of Scottsbluff with 71.53 points, citing high scores in the areas of engine companies and equipment (two new engines had been purchased only 3-4 years prior), the distribution of personnel and equipment among 2 stations, and improvements to the water supply system. Areas they noted that could be improved were related to limited personnel and limited training facilities.

PPC	Points
1	90.00 or more
2	80.00 to 89.99
3	70.00 to 79.99
4	60.00 to 69.99
5	50.00 to 59.99
6	40.00 to 49.99
7	30.00 to 39.99
8	20.00 to 29.99
9	10.00 to 19.99
10	0.00 to 9.99

Feature	2001 Credit	2013 Credit	Credit Available
Receiving and handling fire alarms	7.07	8.3	10
Fire Department	32.29	32.52	50
Water Supply	38.51	33.39	40
Divergence	-6.34	-3.69	
<b>Total</b>	<b>71.53</b>	<b>70.52</b>	100

## Currently:

Our latest survey scored our Classification at 70.52, still a class 3, but a lower score. Once again we scored high on the areas of the communications center (receiving and handling alarms), and our overall water system. During these surveys, fire hydrants are selected at random and rated on their ability to protect the nearest structure. A few hydrants used for this evaluation fell below their requirements for gallons per minute, lowering our water supply score. Another area noted for improvement in our water supply system was increasing the frequency of hydrant flushing and inspection.

As in the 2001 survey, our areas that indicate the most need for improvement are in personnel and training. We received 4.78 out of 15 possible points for personnel. The report recognizes an average of 4.38 on-duty personnel and 5.82 volunteers/off-shift personnel responding on first-alarm structure fires. While we normally have more personnel than this respond, ISO divides the number of personnel/volunteers responding from home by 3 to reflect the additional time needed to assemble at the scene and the reduced ability to act as a team due to the various arrival times when compared to personnel on-duty at the time of the alarm.

We scored high in the areas of company training hours and classroom training facilities. Much of our classroom training is held in the Scotts Bluff County Emergency Operations Center, for which we received 10 of 10 points. We received 0 of 8 possible points for a drill tower, and 0 of 8 possible points for a burn building. While Gering Fire Department is building a training facility that will include both a tower and a burn cell, it will not be readily available to an on-duty crew within our jurisdiction while still meeting response times. There is potential to receive partial credit for training in their facility. Attendance will have to be limited at the Gering facility to off-duty and volunteer personnel.

## Current Apparatus



### Apparatus

### Years in Service

<b>2010</b> Pierce 105' Aerial Platform (Purchased with \$750,000 Homeland Security Grant)	3 years
<b>2008</b> Dodge 3500 Pickup Primary Utility Vehicle	6 years
<b>2000</b> Ford Explorer Inspectors/Investigations vehicle	4 years (PD)+10 years (FD)
<b>2000</b> Chevrolet 3500 Type 6 Grass Engine	14 years
<b>1999</b> Ford F-450 Rescue Truck	15 years
<b>1997</b> Freightliner FL70 1500gpm Engine/Pumper	17 years
<b>1996</b> Freightliner FL70 1500gpm Engine/Pumper	18 years
<b>1989</b> Ford F350 Heavy Rescue	16 years
<b>1977</b> Bluebird Bus Dive Rescue Response Vehicle	17 years
22' Incident Command Communications Trailer	19 years
28' Hazardous Materials and Decontamination Response Trailer	16 years
Zodiac Water Response Boat	16 years
Sea Doo Personal Watercraft	12 years
Polaris UTV	9 years

# Special Trainings

## Fire Ground Survival Training:

From June 17<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup>, we hosted a fire ground survival training at the Harms Advanced Technology center. The \$45,000 training was paid for by a 95/5 matching grant from FEMA. Trainers from the International Association of Fire Fighters traveled from Ontario, Toronto, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Austin to teach fire fighter survival. The class was a train-the-trainer, providing the means for us to teach this class to other area departments. Attending the class were fire department members from Scottsbluff Fire, Kansas City Fire, McCook Fire, McCook Community College, and Lincoln Fire. The class taught methods of self-survival to fire fighters caught in building collapses and other extreme dangers on the fire ground. The grant also purchased training props. Each prop is designed to prevent similar situations that occurred in past incidents where fire fighters lost their lives in the line of duty.





**Mass Casualty Training:**

Members of Scottsbluff Fire participated in a mass casualty training at Regional West Medical Center with several other agencies. Students from area schools played victims of a large accident. Fire and other medical personnel set up triage and a large decontamination tent. All participants simulated decontamination and various patient care and transports.

**Arson Investigation Training:**

Our department has a total of 5 fire/arson investigators. Each has received numerous hours of specialized training in origin and cause determination. In December, one of our investigators traveled to the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland via stipend reimbursement. The training was specific to electrical aspects of fire investigation and provided an in-depth review and hands-on exposure to several fires. This training counted toward continuing education and furthered the department's investigation capabilities.

**F1RST Due Fire School:**

In partnership with the Scotts Bluff County Mutual Aid Association, we have been hosting an annual training for area departments at the Harms Advanced Technology Center. This year we offered basic and advanced courses for all skill levels. Basic trainings included personal protective equipment, basic forcible entry, ladder use, and driving and pumping operations. The advanced track contained portions of our fire ground survival course that was retaught to other departments. The school was attended by dozens of local fire fighters from multiple departments.



### Fire Prevention Activities:

Fire prevention and safety is a priority to the Scottsbluff Fire Department. In 2013, firefighters visited every elementary school in the city. During these visits, firefighters spoke to students about the dangers of fire and what to do in an emergency. Students were taught “Stop, Drop & Roll”, how to plan and practice a fire escape plan in their home, what to do in the event of a fire, as well as the dangers of playing with lighters and matches. Firefighters dressed in full protective gear to demonstrate to the students what they will look like if they ever need to be rescued from a fire. This activity encourages children to not be afraid of firefighters and to teach them to come towards us in the event of a fire.

In addition to visiting the elementary schools, several pre-schools, youth groups and daycare centers visited the fire department for station tours and fire safety talks.

**In 2013, firefighters provided fire safety and prevention talks to 3213 children and 377 adults.**



## History

The Scottsbluff Fire Department has a long and proud past. During the late 1840s and 1850s, thousands of people migrated west through the Scottsbluff area. By 1874 the Mormon Trail was established along the north side of the North Platte River. The City of Scottsbluff was founded in 1900. At this time, the city was protected by volunteer firefighters.

In 1916, the City hired its first firefighter. This individual maintained and drove the City's first motorized fire truck. This one individual assisted the volunteer contingent by responding calls during the business week. At other times, the volunteers were responsible for responding with the City's fire truck.

This approach met the needs of the community until early 1926, at which time three fire department shifts were created, and one paid apparatus driver/operator was hired per shift. It appears that the department was adversely impacted by the Great Depression, becoming mostly volunteer again. The department returned to paid firefighters in the late 1930s. In the very early 1940s the department had evolved into a 24 hour paid coverage department, complete with several paid officers.

The City of Scottsbluff and the Scottsbluff Rural Fire Protection District entered into an automatic aid agreement by the late 1940s. This agreement was necessary due to a severe human resource pool shortage caused by World War II; healthy males were in short supply for the fire service.

In 1953 the City and the Scottsbluff Rural Fire Protection District entered into a formal agreement for joint operations. The 1953 contract called for the City to pay all necessary workers' compensation insurance fees for volunteer members. No other money exchanged hands with the implementation of the contract. This arrangement between the City and the Scottsbluff Rural Fire Protection District would continue until 1995.





The department continued to grow in the early to mid-1950s. However, in the late 1950s the City experienced an economic downturn and the department experienced a substantial reduction in the department's paid coverage. The department again increased its dependence on volunteer staffing to meet its human resource needs.

In 1965 the community suffered a tragic event, a structure fire took the lives of two young children. The initial apparatus had been delayed in responding to the fire by a train. Following the fire, the City Council rapidly approved the purchase of a new fire truck and fire station to be located on the south side of the railroad tracks. The City also approved paid staffing of the new unit. The late 1960s had paid staffing on the order of seven personnel per shift.

With the arrival of the 70s, staffing levels continued to fluctuate. The station south of the tracks was no longer maintained. Station One was staffed 24 hours a day with six personnel and the departments administrative staff began to grow. The administrative staff included a fire chief, assistant fire chief, fire marshal, training chief, and a secretary.

In the early 1980s the community suffered another economic downturn. The City laid off firefighters in order to trim operating costs and staffing dropped to five per shift. Budget cuts within the department continued into 1994. However, the department began running emergency medical calls which put additional burdens upon the department's personnel.

Escalation of workers' compensation insurance costs forced the deletion of the training officer's position in 1995. The secretary's position was deleted in 1996, and the fire marshal was transferred to Developmental Services. And, in 1995, the City and the Scottsbluff Rural Fire Protection District ceased joint operations.



The department began to experiment with part-time staff in late 1995, with the addition of two part time firefighters. In early 1996 another part-time firefighter was hired. Fiscal year 1996/1997 saw an increase in the number of part-time firefighters to six and the deletion of the Lieutenant rank.

Since the 1990s, the department has continued to see an increase in call volume with a disproportionate number of personnel. The cessation of joint operations with the Scottsbluff Rural Fire Protection District resulted in a split of the



volunteer fire fighting force; some remained with the City, while others seceded with Rural. In 2003 the remaining part-time firefighter positions were deleted. Also in 2003, the fire marshal position was moved back over to the fire department. This brought the total career force to 17, A chief, a fire marshal, 3 captains, and 12 firefighters.

In 2006, there were city-wide budget cuts which included losing one paid firefighter through attrition. This brought the total number of firefighters down to 11, plus 3 captains. In mid-2008, the shift schedule was changed to a 48/96 schedule to allow for more consistency and efficiency in workflow.

In February of 2009, the City of Scottsbluff Fire Department, Gering Fire Department, and Scottsbluff Rural Fire Protection District entered into an automatic aid agreement for all structure fires. This meant that on any confirmed structure fire, 1 fully-staffed engine would respond from each department. At least one crew would establish a Rapid Intervention Team to rescue any disoriented, injured, or trapped firefighters. Scottsbluff Rural seceded from the agreement in 2011, but Gering and Scottsbluff City remain in the agreement to this day.

In 2012, the need to change the volunteer-side of the department was evident. Nationally there was a trend of far fewer volunteers than in years past. Locally the number of active volunteers in the fire department had slowly declined to 4 personnel. After several months of planning, January of 2013 was the beginning of shift work for volunteers. They would now work 12 or 24 hour shifts with the paid firefighters. By the end of 2013, this brought the number of active volunteers back up to a total of 6, with a hope the upward trend would continue. As of early 2014, we remain at 11 fire fighters, 3 captains, a fire marshal, and a fire chief, along with a compliment of 6 volunteers.

