

City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Monday, May 3, 2021

Regular Meeting

Item Reports1

Council to receive the Fire Department 2020 Annual Report.

Staff Contact: Thomas Schingle, Fire Chief

Agenda Statement

Item No.

For Meeting of: 3 May 2021

AGENDA TITLE: Council to receive the Fire Department 2020 Annual Report

SUBMITTED BY DEPARTMENT/ORGANIZATION: Fire

PRESENTATION BY: Tom Schingle

SUMMARY EXPLANATION: Council to receive the 2020 Annual Report of the fire department, to include a summary of statistics and events throughout last year.

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

EXHIBITS

Resolution ☐ Ordinance ☐ Contract ☐ Minutes ☐ Plan/Map ☐

Other (specify) 2020 Annual Report

NOTIFICATION LIST: Yes ☐ No ☐ Further Instructions ☐

Please list names and addresses required for notification.

APPROVAL FOR SUBMITTAL: _____
City Manager

Rev: 11/15/12 City Clerk



Scottsbluff Fire Department

2020 Annual Fire Report

Thomas Schingle, Fire Chief

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Scottsbluff Fire Department

Organized in 1900

Protecting 6.27 square
miles

Population 15,039 (2010
census)

9 Firefighters

3 Lieutenants

3 Captains

1 Fire Prevention
Officer

1 Fire Chief

Message from the Chief

This past year brought many challenges and opportunities to the Scottsbluff Fire Department. The worldwide pandemic with the SARSCoV2 (COVID-19) virus brought changes to daily operations and how Scottsbluff Fire approached providing services. As part of the pandemic, we were able to shift half of our resources to a secondary location (WNCC) for a temporary period. This kept an entire shift from becoming infected and allowed for data to be collected to better plan for the future of emergency services delivery. It also provided an opportunity for all fire and emergency services agencies in Scotts Bluff County to work together through mutual-aid. The development of a countywide team was utilized to cover the any gaps in service and to help alleviate some of the personnel hardships with quarantine and isolation. I give a heartfelt thank you to all of our mutual-aid partners, Valley Ambulance, Regional West Medical Center, Region 22 Emergency Management, Scotts Bluff County Combined Communications, and fellow emergency responders for making it a successful program.

At the conclusion of 2020, we answered 2,298 calls for service (CFS); an increase of 5.61 percent from 2019. Emergency medical and rescue responses increased by 72 CFS (4.53% increase) and fire responses increased by 50 CFS (8.55% increase). In the past five years, calls for service have increased nearly sixteen percent.

It is my pleasure to submit the Scottsbluff Fire Department's 2020 Annual Report. As we move into 2021, we will continue to seek new opportunities to provide the public safety services the community deserves. We are committed to doing our job, treating people right, having an all-in attitude and giving an all-out effort in the performance of our duties.

Stay safe,



Tom Schingle

Mission Statement and Core Values

“The Scottsbluff Fire Department is committed to doing our job, treating people right, having an all-in attitude, and giving an all-out effort in the performance of our duties.”

Excellence- We will achieve professional excellence in all aspects of our duties.

Compassion- We believe in empathy and kindness towards the needs of those we serve.

Courage- We will display the mental strength and moral character to do what is right for the protection of our coworkers and community.

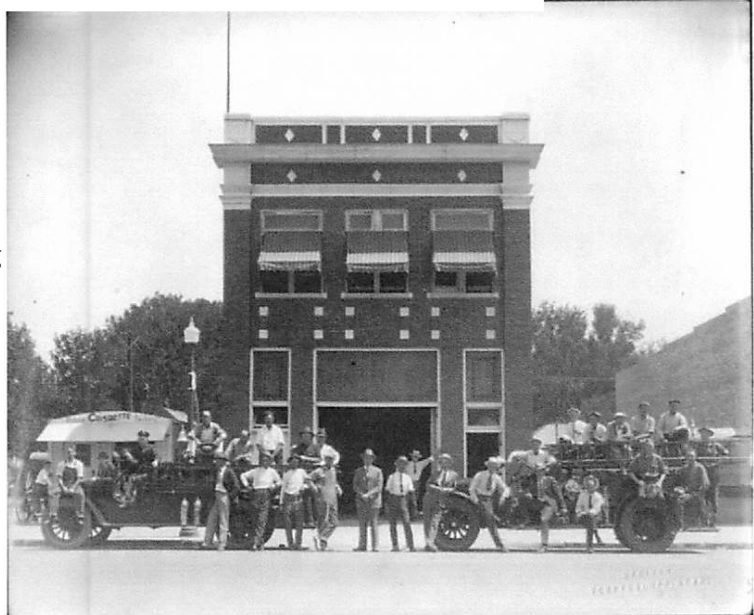
Respect- We will serve our community and each other with dignity, integrity, appreciation, and kindness.

Department 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 during the business week. At other times, the volunteers were responsible for responding with the fire truck.

This approach met the needs of the community until early 1926, at which time three fire department shifts were created with one paid apparatus driver/operator per shift. It appears that the department was adversely impacted by the Great Depression and became all-volunteer. The department returned to paid firefighters in the late 1930s and evolved into 24-hour, paid coverage in the early 1940s. This coverage was 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 shortage caused by World War II. In 1953, the City and the Scottsbluff Rural Fire Protection District entered into a formal agreement for joint operations. The contract called for the City to pay all necessary workers' compensation insurance fees for volunteer members, but no other money would be exchanged. This agreement continued until 1995, when the two separated.

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 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 by a train. Following the fire, the City Council rapidly approved the purchase of a new fire apparatus and fire station, located on the south side of the railroad tracks. The City also approved paid staffing of the new station. By the late 1960s, paid staffing was seven personnel per shift.

In the 1970s, staffing levels continued to fluctuate. The station south of the tracks was no longer maintained and Station 1 was staffed with six personnel. The administrative staff included a fire chief, assistant fire chief, fire marshal, training chief, and a secretary.

Escalation of costs forced the deletion of the training officer position in 1995; the same year the City and Rural departments ceased joint operations. The secretary position was eliminated in 1996 and the fire marshal was transferred to Developmental Services. The lieutenant rank was also deleted in 1996. During this same time, the department was experiencing an increase in call volume. The department experimented with part-time, paid firefighters in an attempt to maintain staffing. An attempt to maintain volunteer ranks was also tried, yet several left to continue with Scottsbluff Rural after the split.

In 2003, the part-time firefighter program ended and the fire marshal was moved back to the fire department. This brought the total career force to 17; a fire chief, a fire marshal, three captains, and twelve firefighters. However, in 2006, one career position was cut, bringing the total number of firefighters to eleven.

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 department had declined to four personnel. In January of 2013, shift-work began for volunteers where they would work a 12- or 24-hour shift with the paid firefighters.

Unfortunately, the volunteer ranks continued to dwindle and in 2018, the volunteer program was cancelled.



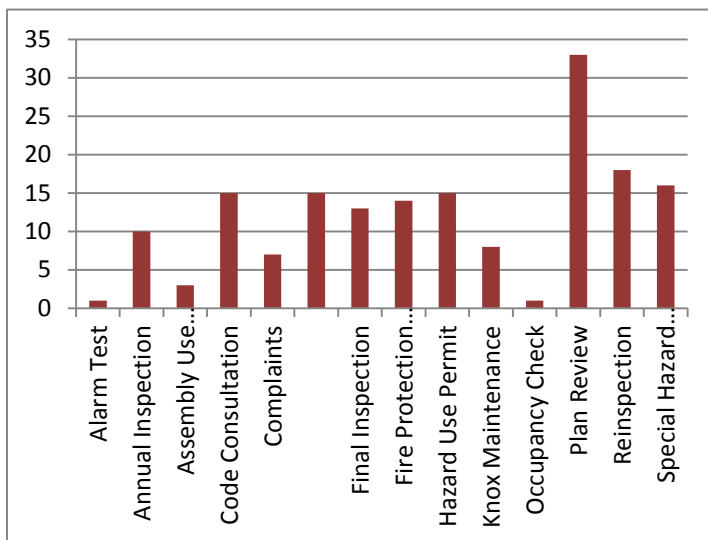
Photo courtesy of Andrew Smith, Adventure Photography

Today, the department is all-career, one of seven in the State of Nebraska (Bellevue, Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, Omaha Airport, and Scottsbluff). Staffing levels remain at 17, with a

fire chief, fire prevention officer, three captains, three lieutenants, and nine firefighters. Through an automatic-aid agreement established in 2009, the Gering Fire Department and the City respond to all structure fires in each of the respective response districts.

Fire Prevention and Life Safety Education

Firefighting begins with fire prevention, which is accomplished through public education, engineering controls and fire code enforcement. The City of Scottsbluff employs one Fire Prevention Officer who is tasked with fire inspections and re-inspections, plan review, research of environmental impacts, fire cause investigation, and fire prevention programs. Shift personnel assist in prevention and life safety efforts by providing the bulk of public education programs through tours, school and community relations, and local media messages. Additionally, we assist with car seat checks to ensure the safety of infants and children in vehicles.

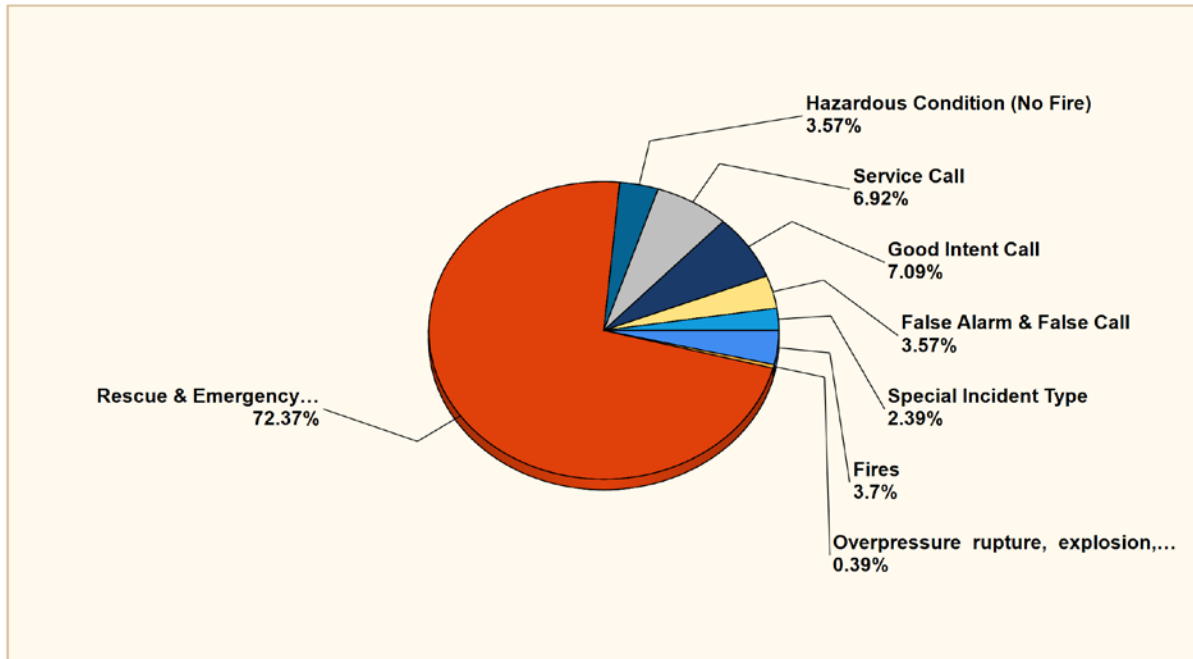


This chart shows the number of commercial occupancies inspected by type of inspection. Due to the pandemic, inspections were difficult to schedule and complete this past year. Many of the fire prevention activities were put on hold while some activities were able to be handled through electronic or telephonic communications. Completing occupancy vulnerability scores was one activity that was able to be mostly completed which assesses the frequency an occupancy will need to be inspected (annually, bi-annually, or tri-annually).

In 2020, Scottsbluff Fire Department received Delegated Authority from the State Fire Marshal. This authority allows for the Fire Prevention Officer to have direct oversight of the fire code enforcement and plan review within the City limits and the two-mile extra-territorial jurisdiction. This will help to streamline communications and provides for contractors, architects, and local business owners to have a single point of contact. This should help to increase efficiency and provide for a better service to those doing business in Scottsbluff. Additionally, we entered into an agreement with The Compliance Engine, which is a program to help compile third-party inspection reports and notify businesses of upcoming or overdue inspections for fire protection systems, such as fire alarms, suppressions systems, and hood systems.



Calls for Service: Responses by Category



MAJOR CATEGORIES	2020 # CFS	2020 % of TOTAL	2019 # CFS	2019 % of TOTAL
Fires	85	3.70%	78	3.58%
Overpressure rupture, explosion, overhear - no fire	9	0.39%	5	0.23%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	1663	72.37%	1591	73.12%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	82	3.57%	65	2.99%
Service Call	159	6.92%	170	7.81%
Good Intent Call	163	7.09%	156	7.17%
False Alarm & False Call	82	3.57%	98	4.50%
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0	0.00%	2	0.09%
Special Incident Type	55	2.39%	11	0.51%
TOTAL	2298	100%	2176	100%

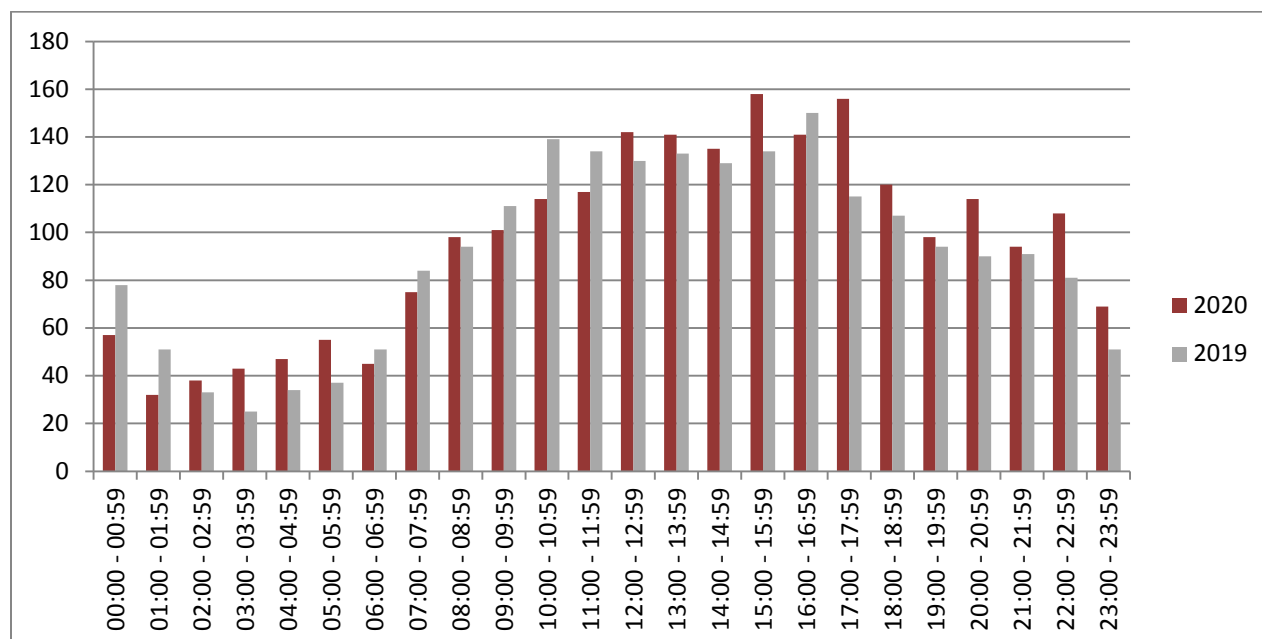
The nine major categories are established by the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), which are further broken down into sub-categories. The following page shows the CFS for each sub-category responded to for each month of 2020.

Calls for Service: Category (cont.)

INCIDENT TYPE	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Accident, potential accident	1		2	1		2				2		2
Chemical release, reaction, or toxic condition	1	3	2		1	3		2	1	2		1
Citizen complaint		2	1	1		22	22	1		1	3	2
Combustible/flammable spills & leaks	2	3	2	1	3	3	4	2	5	1	1	3
Controlled burning						1						
Dispatched and canceled en route	4	8	6	14	9	12	6	8	13	15	11	15
Electrical wiring/equipment problem		2	1	2	3	5	6	1		1	4	1
Emergency medical service (EMS) Incident	137	147	119	101	131	141	125	137	157	137	172	150
Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition		3						1		2	1	
Extrication, rescue								1				
Good intent call, other		1					1		2	1		
HazMat release investigation w/no HazMat					1			1				
Malicious, mischievous false alarm	3	1	1		1		1					
Medical assist						1					1	
Mobile property (vehicle) fire						2	2		1			
Natural vegetation fire						2	8	5	2			
Outside rubbish fire				3		1	5	2	1	1		1
Overpressure rupture from steam (no fire)		1										1
Public service assistance	9	6	10	11	12	11	16	11	12	11	20	23
Rescue or EMS standby									2			
Search for lost person			1			1		1	1			
Service call, other					1				1			
Smoke, odor problem										1		
Special outside fire		1					1					
Steam, other gas mistaken for smoke	1	1	2	1		3	1	2	1	1	2	2
Structure Fire	4	2	3	9	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	7
System or detector malfunction	3		2			1	1	4	2	4	4	1
Unauthorized burning				1					1			
Unintentional system/detector operation (no fire)	5	4	2	6	5	4	4	9	3	1	3	7
Water problem							1	1				
Wrong location, no emergency found		2	3	2		2	2	1		1	1	3
Total	170	187	157	153	170	220	209	194	209	183	227	219

There were forty-seven (47) structure fires in 2020 as compared to forty-eight (48) structure fires in 2019. Thirty-one (31) of these fires were buildings within Scottsbluff and the remaining sixteen (16) fires were responded to under automatic or mutual aid requests to other fire jurisdictions.

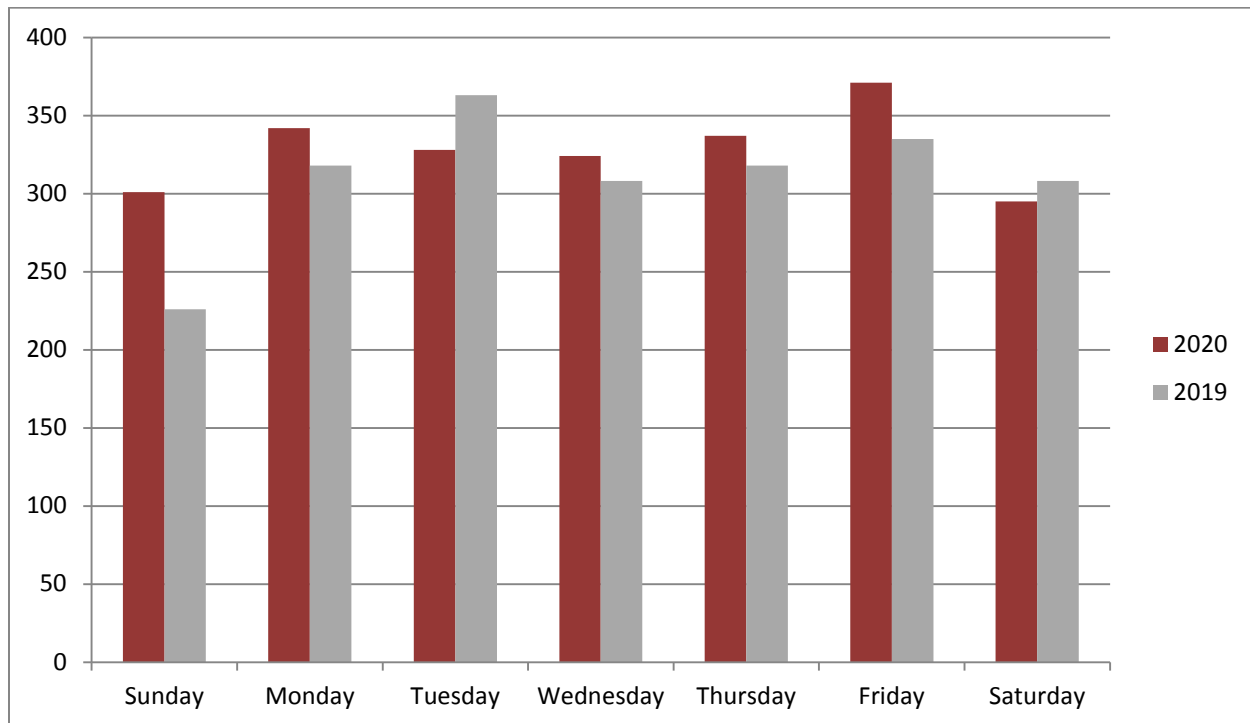
Calls for Service: Time of Day



2020				2019			
HOUR (A.M.)	#CFS	HOUR (P.M.)	#CFS	HOUR (A.M.)	#CFS	HOUR (P.M.)	#CFS
12:00 a.m.	57	12:00 p.m.	142	12:00 a.m.	78	12:00 p.m.	130
1:00 a.m.	32	1:00 p.m.	141	1:00 a.m.	51	1:00 p.m.	133
2:00 a.m.	38	2:00 p.m.	135	2:00 a.m.	33	2:00 p.m.	129
3:00 a.m.	43	3:00 p.m.	158	3:00 a.m.	25	3:00 p.m.	134
4:00 a.m.	47	4:00 p.m.	141	4:00 a.m.	34	4:00 p.m.	150
5:00 a.m.	55	5:00 p.m.	156	5:00 a.m.	37	5:00 p.m.	115
6:00 a.m.	45	6:00 p.m.	120	6:00 a.m.	51	6:00 p.m.	107
7:00 a.m.	75	7:00 p.m.	98	7:00 a.m.	84	7:00 p.m.	94
8:00 a.m.	98	8:00 p.m.	114	8:00 a.m.	94	8:00 p.m.	90
9:00 a.m.	101	9:00 p.m.	94	9:00 a.m.	111	9:00 p.m.	91
10:00 a.m.	114	10:00 p.m.	108	10:00 a.m.	139	10:00 p.m.	81
11:00 a.m.	117	11:00 p.m.	69	11:00 a.m.	134	11:00 p.m.	51

In 2020, Scottsbluff Fire was busiest at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (compared to 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. in 2019). The peak hours for response occur between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., which is a slightly larger span than previous years. Peak hours are determined by the total calls for service per hour over the average in a twenty-four hour period, which is greater than 92 calls, in 2020.

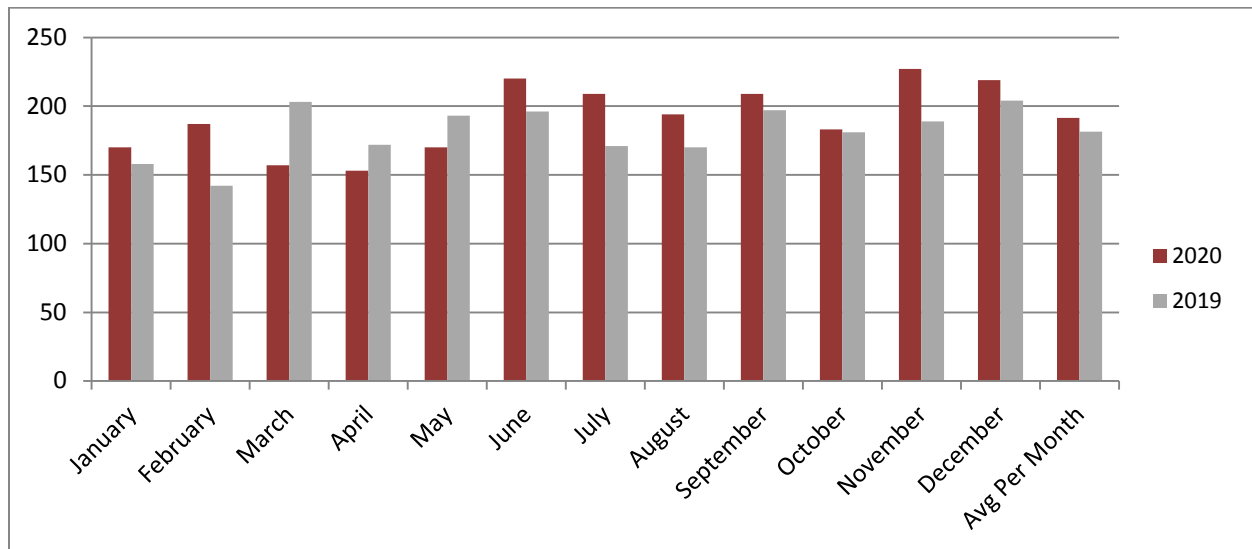
Calls for Service: Day of Week



DAY OF THE WEEK	2020 #CFS	2019 #CFS
Sunday	301	226
Monday	342	318
Tuesday	328	363
Wednesday	324	308
Thursday	337	318
Friday	371	335
Saturday	295	308

In 2020, Scottsbluff Fire responded to more calls for service on Friday, followed by Monday, Thursday, and Sunday, respectively. In 2019, Tuesday, Friday, Thursday and Monday were the busiest days. Saturday was the least busy day for calls for service in 2020, compared to Sunday in 2019.

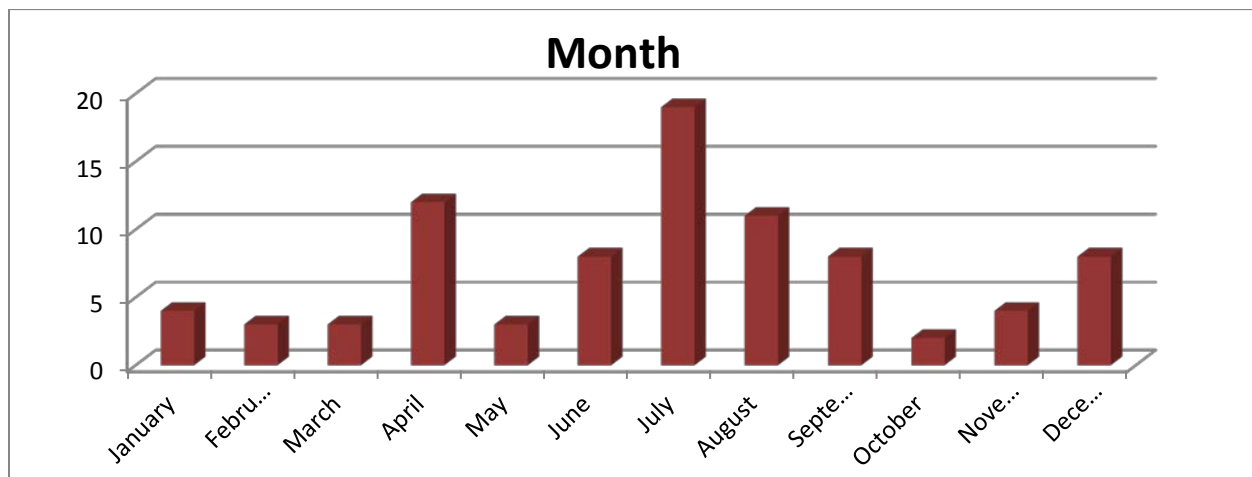
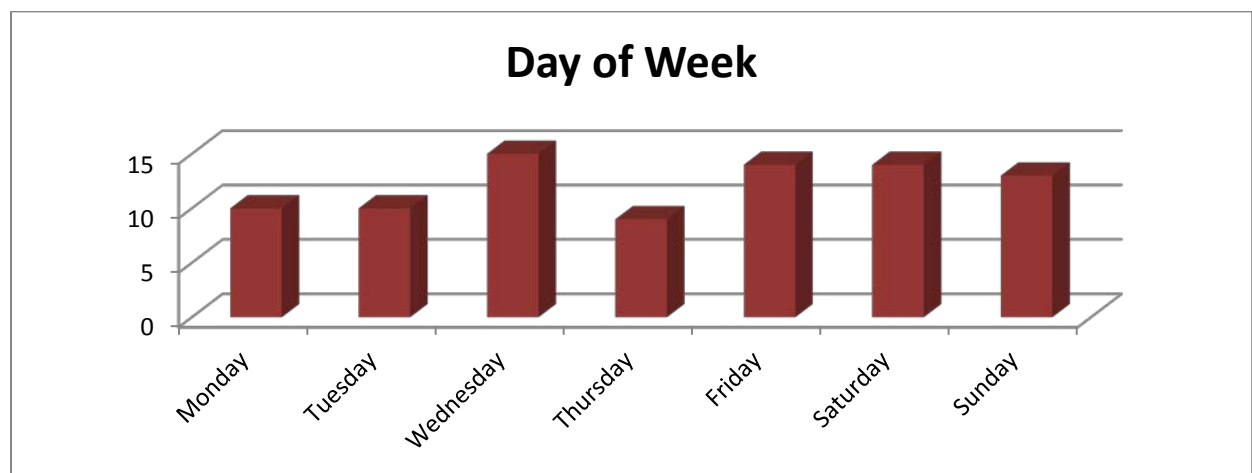
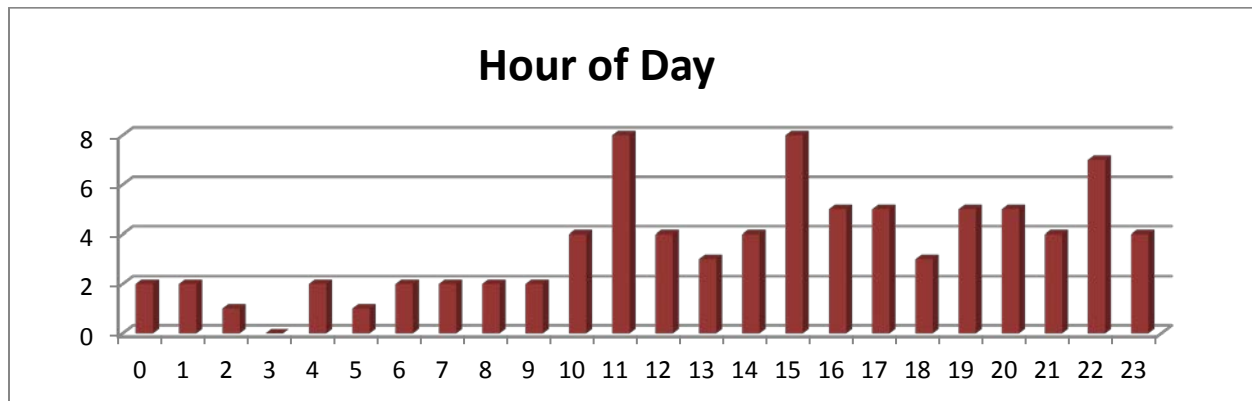
Calls for Service: Month



MONTH	2020 #CFS	2019 #CFS
January	170	158
February	187	142
March	157	203
April	153	172
May	170	193
June	220	196
July	209	171
August	194	170
September	209	197
October	183	181
November	227	189
December	219	204

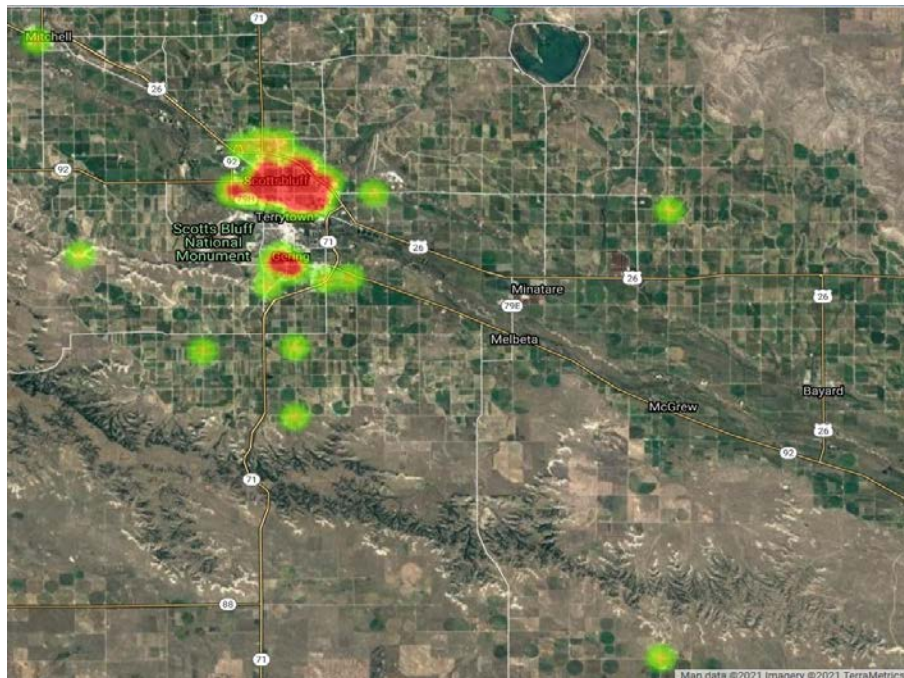
The busiest month in 2020 was November, compared to December in 2019. November was the month where Scotts Bluff County saw the largest number of COVID-19 cases at any one time. March, April and May were the slowest months, likely due to the beginning of the pandemic. On average, there were 4 structure fires per month with the majority in April (9) followed by December (7).

Calls for Service: When Fires Occured

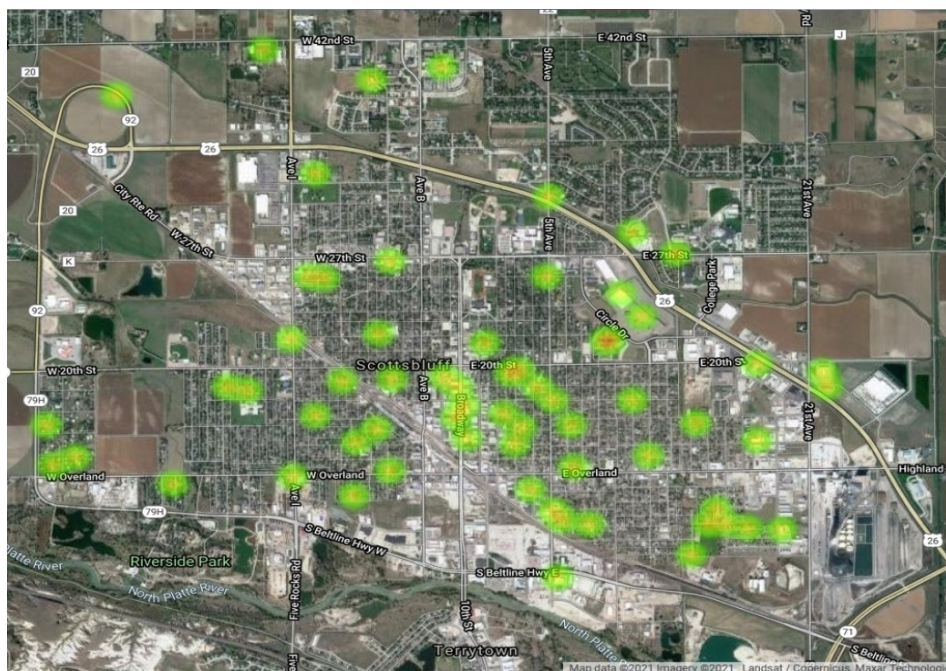


In 2020, 17.6% of all fires (structure, grass, cooking, etc.) occurred on Tuesday, 43.5% of all fires occurred between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., and 22.4% of all fires occurred in July. No fires occurred during the 3 a.m. hour.

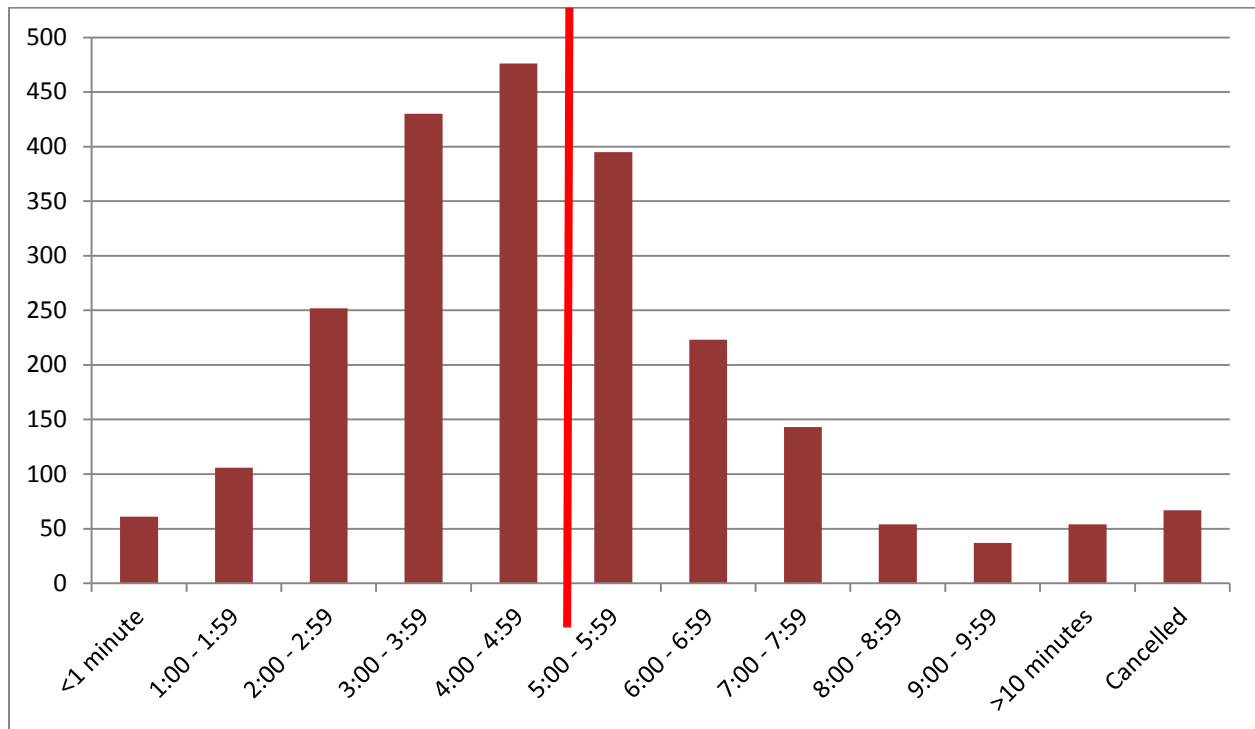
Calls for Service: Where Fires Occurred



The upper map shows the general location where fires occurred, to which SFD responded, in 2020. The lower map shows the City of Scottsbluff general fire locations. The green indicates at least one response and gradually increases to red, indicating multiple responses to that general area. These include all types of fires including, but not limited to, structure, grass, rubbish, cooking, and vehicle.



Calls for Service: Response Times



The Scottsbluff Fire Department strives to respond to all calls for service in less than five minutes. Last year, we were able to respond to the majority of calls for service (57.7%) within four minutes and fifty-nine (4:59) seconds, with an average response time of four minutes and fifty-seven seconds (4:57). Approximately thirty-nine percent (39.4%), of CFS responded to, had a response time of five minutes or more and approximately three percent (2.9%) of CFS resulted in cancellation.

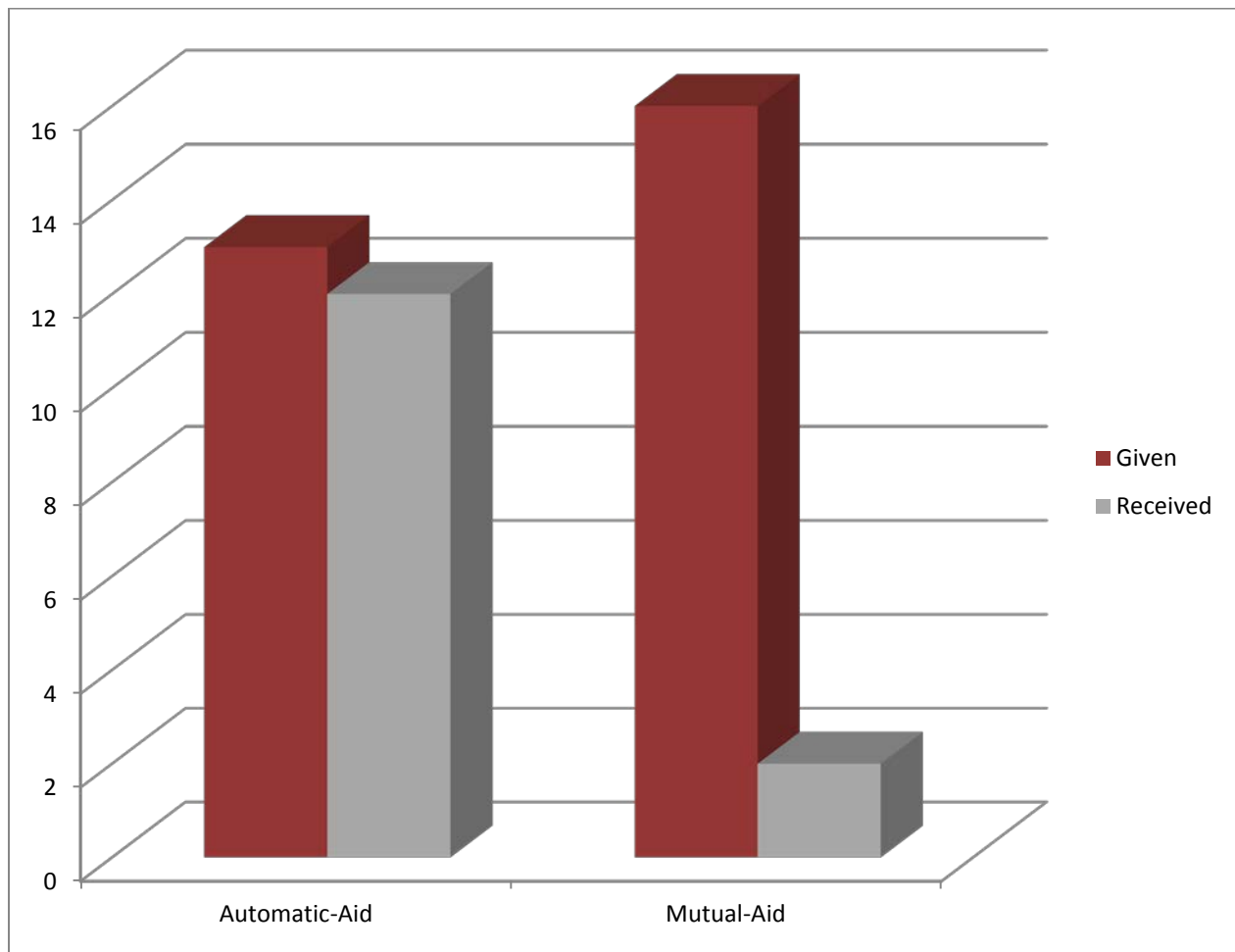
The average response time to medical incidents is four minutes, forty-five seconds (4:45), and the average response time to fire incidents is five minutes, one second (5:01). The National Fire Protection Association standard for response time is five minutes (5:00) for EMS and five minutes, twenty seconds (5:20) for fires ninety percent (90%) of the time. The standard was determined by providing a turnout time (ability to receive the call and get to the truck) of 60 seconds for EMS and 80 seconds for fire and a drive time of four minutes (determined as driving 30 mph from the station to the incident). The significance of quick response times relates to patient survivability, for EMS, and exponential fire growth, for fires.

There are a few conditions that prevent meeting the five minute response goal such as overlapping incidents, in which we could not respond timely due to being engaged with another incident. Overlap occurred 22.15 percent of the time. Other factors include distance to the scene (edges of or outside City limits), incorrect location, train delays, and inclement weather.

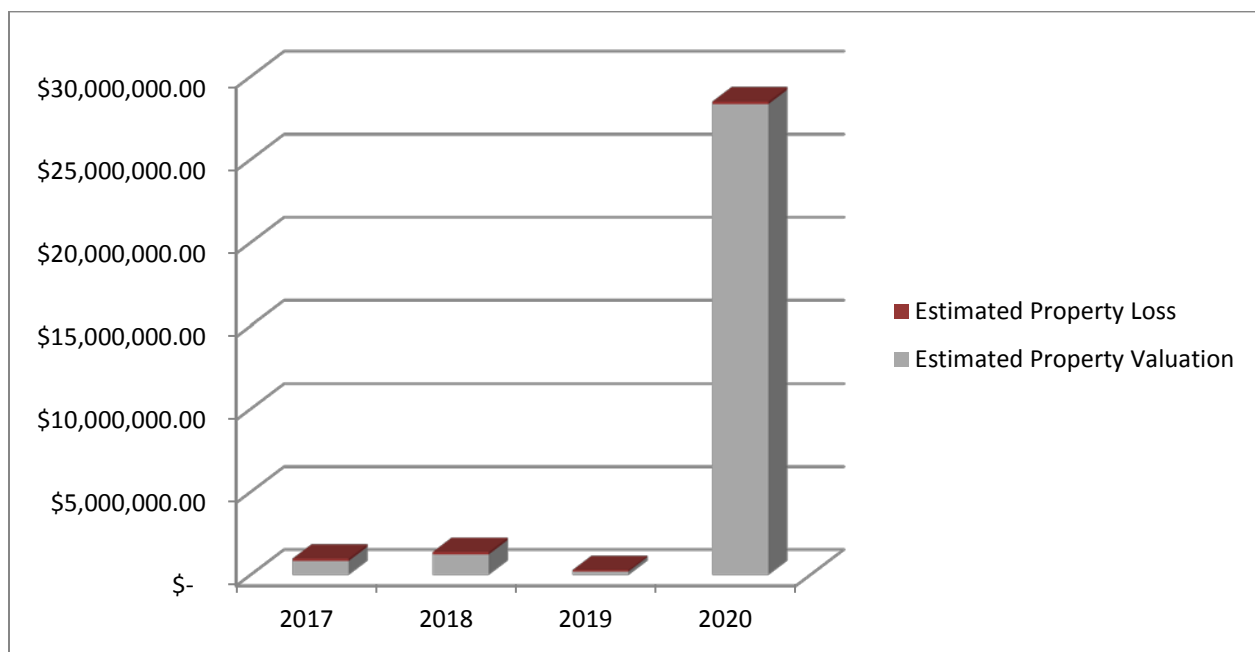
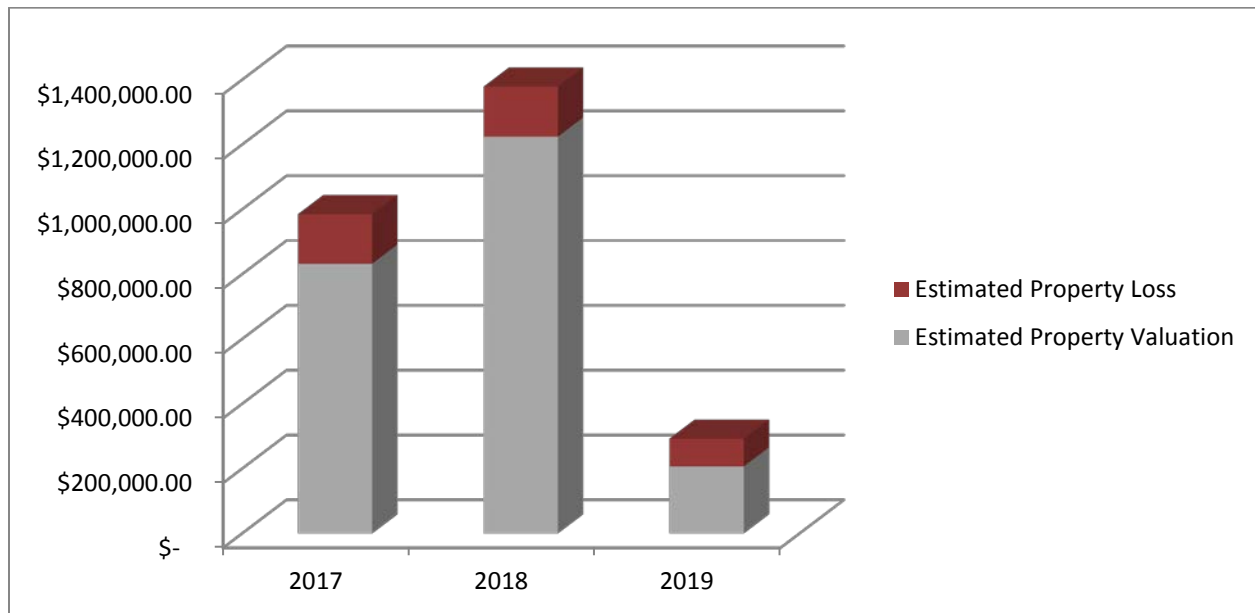
*Response time is calculated from time of alarm (when the fire department is notified) to time of arrival.

Calls for Service: Aid Given and Received

Scottsbluff Fire Department has an automatic-aid agreement with Gering Fire Department in which both agencies are simultaneously dispatched (automatically) for all structure fires. Agencies in Scotts Bluff County, Banner County, Sioux County, and Torrington, WY, have a mutual-aid agreement in which resources may be requested and sent, if available. As part of our mutual-aid, we were able to deploy physical and personnel resources around the County during the pandemic. We thank our fellow agencies for the assistance we provide each other and our great working relationships.

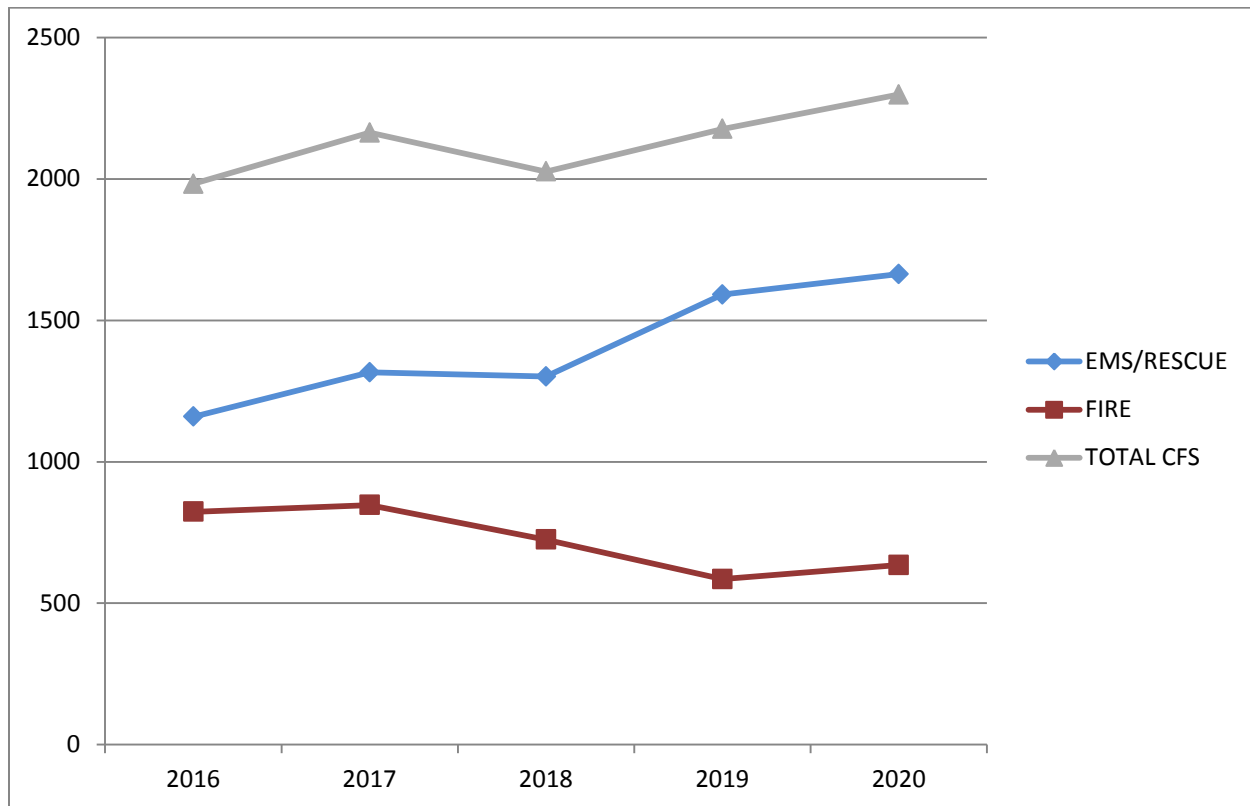


Calls for Service: Estimated Fire Loss



Estimated fire loss in 2020 was \$162,970, similar to 2017 (\$152,725) and 2018 (\$154,160). Due to the high estimated property value of three of the structure fires, the chart represents an extremely small property loss last year (0.5% loss, 99.5% saved). The upper chart is representative of 2017 to 2019 and the lower chart shows those years in comparison to 2020. The three fires had not only high property valuation, but also had an extreme danger of loss of life, being that each was a healthcare facility. While saving property is important, we cannot emphasize enough that no lives were lost due to fire in Scottsbluff last year.

Calls for Service: Five Year Comparison



A comparison of the past five years indicates a steady increase in emergency medical services (EMS) and rescue calls for service. Fires, fire alarms and other hazardous situations have seen a slight decline in the previous two years. This past year experienced a slight increase (8.55%) in fire response with 635 and a slight increase (4.53%) in EMS response with 1,663. This past year was also the highest total number of responses in the Department's history, with 2,298 CFS, breaking last year's record by 122 CFS.

Apparatus

Apparatus	Year/Make/Model	Features/Use
Engine 1	2016 KME Pumper	Primary pumper, 1500 GPM pump, 750 gallons of water, extrication equipment
Engine 2	1996 Becker/Freightliner Pumper	Reserve pumper, 1500 GPM pump, 750 gallons of water
Rescue 1	2017 SVI/Freightliner	Basic Life Support, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, extrication equipment
Tower 1	2010 Pierce Arrow XT	Aerial platform (100 foot), 1500 GPM pump, 300 gallons of water
Brush 1	2008 Dodge 3500	Type 6 engine, 300 gallons of water, forestry hose, 250 GPM pump,
Unit 1	2017 Ford F150	Chief's vehicle/utility vehicle
Unit 2	2020 Chevy 1500	Fire Investigation/Inspection vehicle
Unit 11	2000 Chevrolet G30	Passenger Van/Personnel Carrier
Dive Bus	2000 Bluebird	Dive Rescue equipment, breathing air cascade
Zodiac	1998 Zodiac Rubber Inflatable Boat	Used to get divers to dive areas and negotiate waters
SeaDoo	2002 Sea Doo, personal watercraft	Used to clear dive areas and support divers
Hazmat Trailer	1998 Pace, 28 foot enclosed trailer	Hazmat response, decontamination equipment, breathing air cascade
UTV	2005 Polaris UTV	Utility vehicle with snow plow



Department Statistics

Average Years of Service: 11.1 years

Average age of members: 39.98 years

Average time on-scene of incident: 16 minutes, 51 seconds

Average CFS per person: 349

Average number of responding personnel to structure fires: 5.28

Average number of responding personnel to all CFS: 2.67

Activity Hours

Activity	Total Hours
Calls For Service	2131 hours, 34 minutes
Training	1381 hours, 50 minutes
Car Seat Check	14 hours*
EMT Student Ride-along	132 hours*
Paramedic Student Ride-along	48 hours*
Youth Fire Setter Prevention	6 hours
Station Tours/Safety Presentations	18 hours*
Routine Apparatus Checks	391 hours, 26 minutes
Physical Fitness	296 hours, 15 minutes*
Pre-Incident Fire Planning	24 hours, 30 minutes*

*Lower hours due to pandemic. Regarding daily fitness, still occurred, just not at fitness center

Special Operations Teams

The Scottsbluff Fire Department is equipped to handle a variety of specialized operations which include hazardous materials, technical and dive rescue emergencies, and brush/wild fires.

Scottsbluff Fire performed a technical rescue from the top of one of the City's water towers. At 125 feet, an individual was rescued by being lowered by rope, approximately 25 feet, into the basket of Tower 1 and then lowered to the ground. The operation was a combined effort by Scottsbluff Police and Fire. The individual was taken to Regional West Medical Center by Valley Ambulance for evaluation due to the cold temperatures. Other agencies involved included the Scottsbluff Water Department, Valley Ambulance and Nebraska Public Power District.



Scottsbluff Fire is one of ten State Emergency Response Teams (SERT) that handle hazardous materials response in the State of Nebraska. The Scottsbluff Fire Department, when requested and authorized, covers the 11 counties of the Panhandle to mitigate hazardous materials releases. In 2020, the Nebraska Hazmat Incident Team and the SERTs came together as a governance group by which all the teams will work together with training, equipment and funding opportunities.

In late August of 2020, SFD provided mutual-aid to an approximate 4,000-acre wildfire at Hubbard's Gap in southeast Scotts Bluff County and northeast Banner County. The fire utilized 47 different agencies and included air support dropping fire retardant to slow the growth. This photo shows a single-engine air-tanker (SEAT) plane dropping retardant near Brush 1.



Public Protection Classification

Throughout 2020, we had been working toward gaining points to decrease our PPC rating. The past couple of years we have been able to complete hose and hydrant testing and started pre-fire incident planning. A goal for 2020 was to complete pre-fire incident planning, but the pandemic did not allow for that goal to be met. In 2021, we will continue to focus on maintaining hose and hydrant testing, get back into pre-fire planning and increase our training. Training is an important component, and records were not well kept. We were able to overhaul our records management system to provide for better tracking of training hours. This overhaul included adding specific training standards.



The City of Scottsbluff has a Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating of 3; a rating maintained since 2001. This rating is established through an assessment performed by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO), who determines the level of fire protection services in a community. The last assessment was performed in 2017. The Scottsbluff Fire Department will continue to seek opportunities to maintain and improve the rating. A lower rating potentially lowers insurance rates for the community. The following is the historical trend of the PPC rating for the City of Scottsbluff (Community Risk Reduction was not part of the assessment in 2013 and 2001; it only became an assessment in recent years).

	2017	2013	2001	Total Possible	PPC	Points
Emergency Communications	8.59	8.3	7.07	10	1	90.00 +
Fire Department	33.74	32.52	32.29	50	2	80.00 to 89.99
Water Supply	32.75	33.39	38.51	40	3	70.00 to 79.99
Community Risk Reduction	3.45	-	-	5.5	4	60.00 to 69.99
Divergence	-2.88	-3.69	-6.34	-	5	50.00 to 59.99
Total	75.65	70.52	71.53	105.5	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