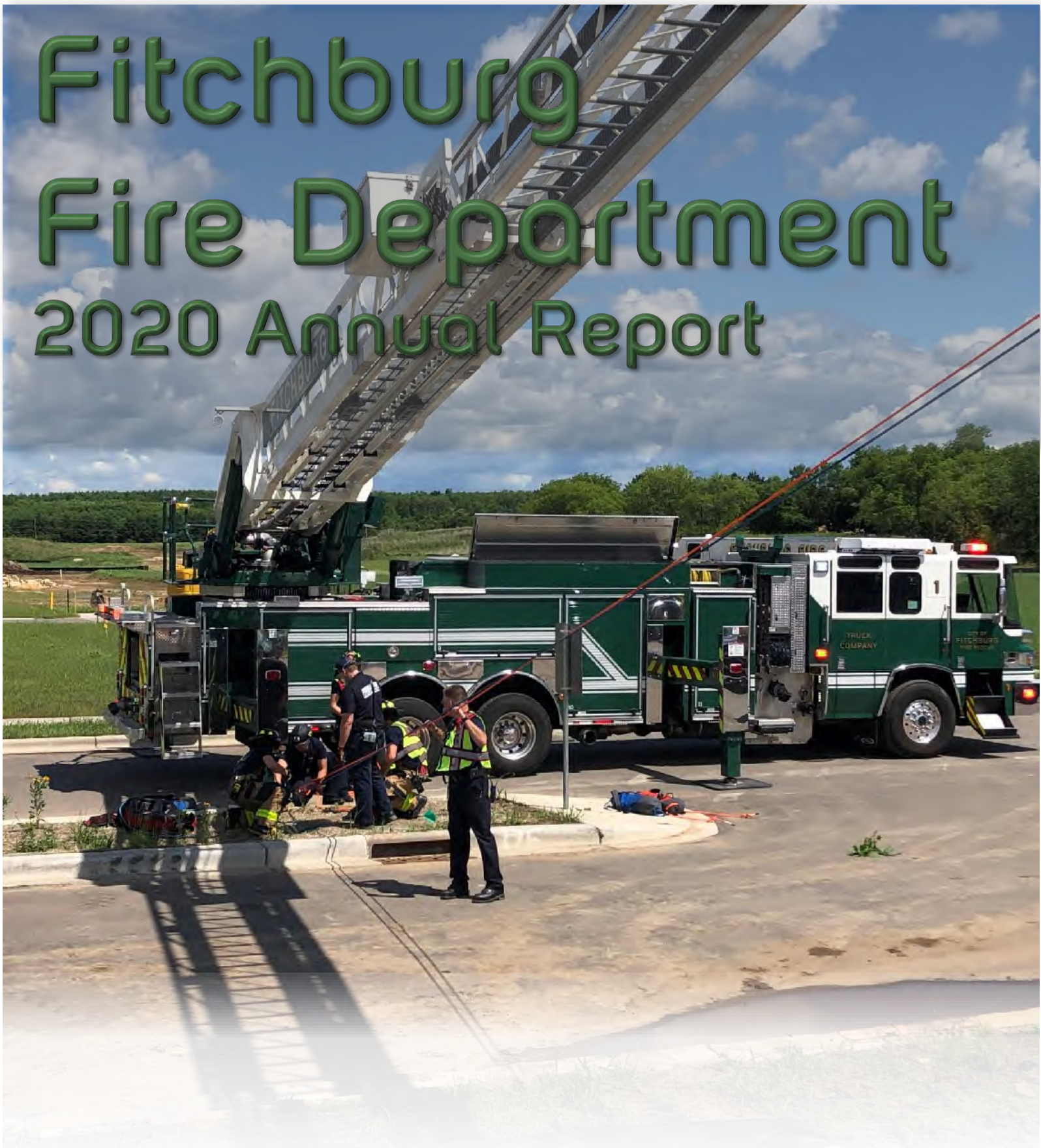


Fitchburg Fire Department 2020 Annual Report



City of Fitchburg

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Fitchburg, WI 53711





CHIEF'S MESSAGE

February 28, 2021

Citizens of Fitchburg
Mayor Richardson
City Council Members
Police and Fire Commission Members
Public Safety and Human Services Committee Members

To say that 2020 was a challenging year is an understatement. The traditional approach to readiness, response, and recovery needed ongoing evaluation and adjustment. Ongoing and new demands on service required constant communication and coordination with internal and external stakeholders. We knew about COVID-19 coming into the year. We had no idea the impact it would have on operations... on families... on community. Without compromising safety, code enforcement and risk reduction processes needed to consider the economic strain the pandemic placed on our corporate and commercial citizens.

2020 was about collaboration. We worked with other municipal departments and governmental agencies to better serve those who live, work, and enjoy the City of Fitchburg. A state of emergency was declared in order to work quickly on purchasing and procedural approvals that could not wait for typical processes. All in an effort to act quickly on information designed to reduce the risk of disease transmission and community spread.

In 2020, as part of a plan drafted in 2018 and 2019, we moved Fitchburg's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) from City Hall to Fire Station #1 (on Lacy Rd). The move introduced new partnerships and efficiencies. With the remodel of Station #1, and through the shared benefit of an intergovernmental agreement, Dane County Emergency Management provided the technology necessary to operate emergency management functions out of Fitchburg's EOC. In return, Fitchburg's EOC is the back-up for Dane County. Timing was perfect. The same week stay-at-home orders went into effect, Fitchburg's EOC was operational and put to use immediately.

The EOC was also activated in the summer - during events that involved protests over racial equity and police reform. Our partnership with Dane County Emergency Management offered us insight into activities that placed additional demands on service and readiness. As the Emergency Management Director for the City of Fitchburg, I appreciate the value of developing networks and professional relationships. 2020 proved the importance of planning, partnerships, playing to our strengths, and sharing the workload.

Emergency management is just one example of the Fire Department's role 2020. Daily responsibilities persisted as new challenges presented. The problem with a cover letter is trying to provide a sample of the organizations' overall effort – there is just not enough room for that. The work was difficult, schedules were full, and paradigms were shifted. 2020 was one, big operational pivot. Thankfully, we did not experience it alone. In the past, I discussed the importance of the Fitchburg Fire Department's mission: To Serve, Learn, Respect, and Lead. I am proud to say that we accomplished that with the assistance of other City Departments, County/State support, elected officials, and the ongoing support of friends and family.

We appreciate your continued support as we continue to serve. Please feel free to contact me if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Pulvermacher".

Joe Pulvermacher
Fire Chief



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CORE VALUES

Honesty & Integrity
Pride & Ownership
Passion & Professionalism

MISSION STATEMENT

The Fitchburg Fire Department strives:

To Serve

by providing care through a dedicated and dependable response

To Learn

by exercising readiness through repetition and vigilance. We will train to our limits... (not afraid of failure in a training environment) as we work toward competence and confidence

To Respect

by exhibiting teamwork, honor, and accountability at all levels – continually treating others in a way that we would want to be treated

To Lead

through initiative and service excellence, we are committed to be an example in our profession and in our community

VISION

For those we are sworn to protect... For those with whom we serve...

For all who live in, work in, or visit the City of Fitchburg,

We envision our optimal future:

We know our “Why,”

Regardless of our forward momentum, we will never forget why we do what we do... compassion, respect, professionalism.

We value our “What,”

Our accomplishments provide a significant amount of pride for active members and those who identify with our history

We will constantly strive to improve our “How,”

Through research, planning, training, and a progressive mindset.

While working toward our “WOW!”

We are standard bearers in our profession... an example for others to follow.



2020 WORK PLAN - Chief Pulvermacher

The 2020 work plan was used to coordinate schedules and project timelines. Due to the pandemic, many projects required the adjustment of expectation; however, project completion was experienced in a couple of significant areas:

Projects	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
SOG/SOG Reformat/Revision	Revision/Implementation												
Officer Develop. Training Adjustment	Evaluation												
Emergency Operations Plan	Finalize			Train/Familiarize/Implement									
Recruitment													
▪ Intern	Development			Selection		Residency/ On-boarding							
▪ Youth Development/ Outreach	Development			Event Promo		Program							
▪ POX			Open House		Orientation				Open House		Orientation		
Retention													
▪ Awards/ Pinning	Process/ Procedure			Selection									
▪ Promotion	Address Selection and Process (per ELA)												
Budget Assignments/Priorities	Intro	Implementation											
PTSD/CISD/Chaplaincy Initiative	Evaluation/Feedback and Reassessment												
Prevention/Inspection Ordinance	Draft Changes			Amend		Finalize			Implement				
Fire Inspections	First Half						Second Half						
CIP													
▪ Squad Re-Chassis (2020)	Present	Que						Rebuild					
▪ Staff Vehicle Spec (2021)	Spec/ Quote												
▪ Lacy Road Firehouse Remodel	Construction			Orient and Occupy									
▪ East Fire Station	Monitor for Warranty Issues												
Major Training Initiatives													
▪ RIT	Training and Roll Out									Implement			
▪ Rescue Task Force	Refresher and Training						Lg. Scale						
▪ EMR	Refresher/ Continuing Education												
▪ Rope Rescue/ Tech Rescue	Department and Battalion Training (Awareness & Ops Level)									Implementation			
▪ Vehicle Inspection	Implementation												

Project Status:

SOGs formatting and library methods were developed and recorded. 2021 will involve the evaluation of needed and existing policies, procedures and guidelines.

Emergency Operations Basic Plan was adopted by the Common Council at the beginning of the pandemic (urgency was influenced by the COVID state of emergency).

Recruitment processes were evaluated. Chief Pulvermacher conducted research as part of his Master's Thesis. Recruitment programs were evaluated and changes to outreach are imminent.

Peer Assistance continues to be a valuable resource to our firefighters. **Chaplaincy** roles have been identified and implemented. Secular organizations were consulted to insure that ALL firefighters have access to assistance without bias.

Squad Re-Chassis was budgeted in the 2020 CIP. We removed the squad from service and sent it to Pierce for fabrication. The squad's return is anticipated early first quarter 2021.

Lacy Road (Station #1) Remodel started in 2020. Phase I of the remodel is complete and the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) transitioned out of City Hall. Phase II is anticipated to wrap in by the summer of 2021. Phase II is the last phase of the remodel project.



PEER SUPPORT - Chief Joe Pulvermacher

The prevalence of mental and behavioral health concerns among first responders nationwide prompted us to prioritize first responder well-being in 2018. This need was addressed with the implementation of a Public Safety Wellness Initiative, including the integration of:

- Post-Traumatic Stress (PTSD) Awareness
- Critical Incident Stress Management/Debriefing (CISM/CISD)
- Peer Support Network
- Grief Support
- Employee Assistance Programming (EAP)
- Chaplaincy

Though this initiative was spear-headed by the fire department, it was important to involve our fellow first responders. This will encourage a stronger response- regardless of agency. The initiative includes individuals from:

- Fitchburg Fire
- Fitchburg Police
- Fitch-Rona EMS
- Agrace Grief Center
- UW Health & Clinics

Chaplains:

In 2020, we were able to formally welcome two volunteer Chaplains into the Wellness Team. These Chaplains are assigned to the fire department but are available to all emergency responders in the City of Fitchburg.



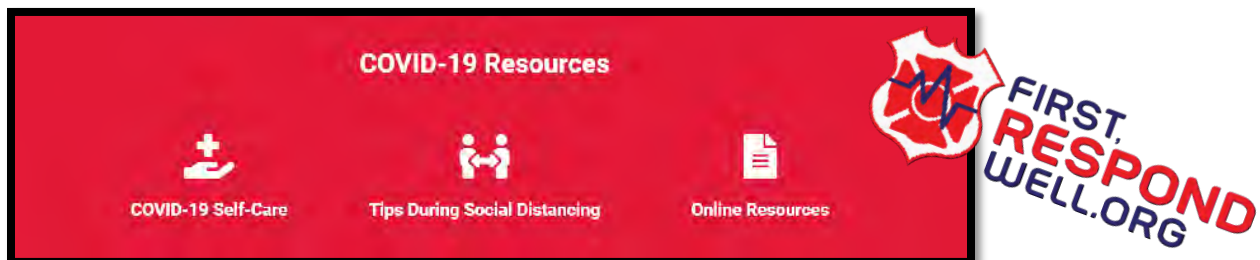
Suzie Genin



David Jacobson

COVID, Peer Support, and Mental Health

COVID introduced new mental health concerns associated with isolation, fear, uncertainty, work/home priorities, potential exposure, and illness (to name a few). Tools were added to our “Wellness Team” website in order to address the need for specific resources.

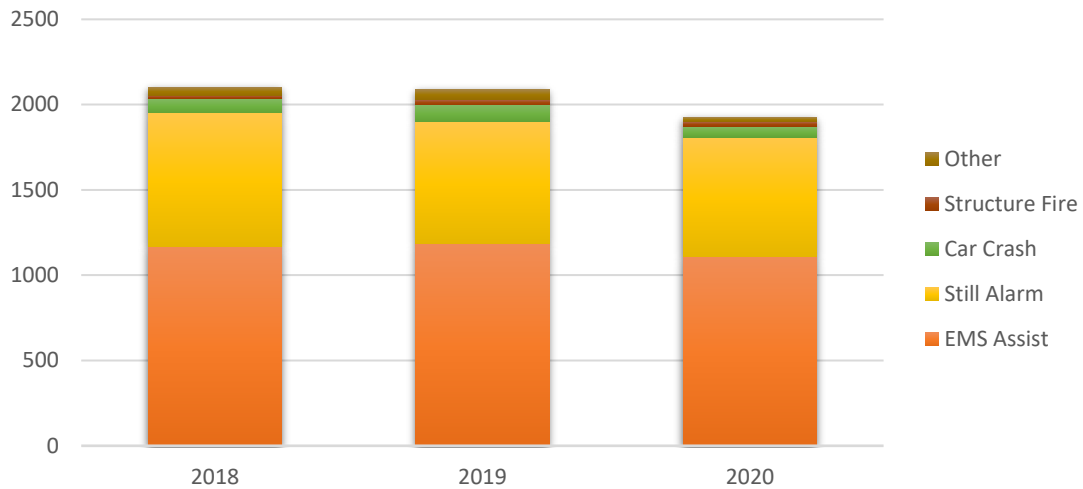


For more information about this initiative and to access resources, please visit: www.firstresponderswell.org.



OPERATIONS - Deputy Chief Chad Grossen

Requests for Service - Past 3 Years



Technical Rescue

Equipping and training a technical rescue response continued to be a focus in 2020. This addition effort paid off during multiple emergency responses. To include:

- Construction site rescues
- Off-road mountain bike trail rescues
- Vehicle water rescue



High Angle Rope Rescue



Mountain Bike Trail Rescue



Below Grade Rescue

With continued municipal development, the need for technical rescue in the City of Fitchburg increases. Response techniques for trench, confined space, and collapse rescue must be considered. Further, the State of Wisconsin is not currently funding a State-lead technical rescue resource. Mutual aid partnerships (and regional cost sharing) continue to develop in order to improve response capabilities.



PREVENTION & INSPECTION - Deputy Chief Chad Grossen

In 2020, 1,465 inspections were performed on 1,300 occupancies. The majority of the inspections were routine fire prevention inspections, but inspectors also conducted:

- occupancy inspections
- life safety system acceptance inspections
- follow-up or re-inspections



FIRE INVESTIGATION - Deputy Chief Richard Roth

Members of the City of Fitchburg Joint Police and Fire Investigation Team work to determine the cause of a fire: accidental, intentional, or undetermined. Once the investigation is completed, insurance companies may choose to investigate further; when we list the cause as intentional, an additional criminal investigation may begin. When we list the cause of a fire as “undetermined,” the investigators were unable to find definitive evidence pointing to any one specific cause.

In 2020 there was an estimated total fire loss of just under \$630,000.00



Cooking Fire, Breckenridge Court



Structure Fire, Norwich Street

Total fire damage and estimated dollar loss could have been significantly worse in 2020 if it hadn't been for a couple of sprinkler saves:

- Saturday, June 20 – New Fountains Apartments - The contents of a pan caught fire on a stovetop. The fire was quickly extinguished by the automatic sprinkler system. Because of the limited amount of damage, the tenants were able to stay in their apartment.
- Sunday, June 28 – Commerce Park Dr – A cooking fire in a kitchenette area was extinguished by the automatic sprinkler system, saving a majority of the cabinetry.

In both of these fires, the sprinkler system operated exactly as designed: only the sprinkler head closest to the fire or source of heat was activated; not every sprinkler head in the building or even every sprinkler head on that level.



PERSONNEL - Deputy Chief Richard Roth

Hired in 2020

Garrett Christian
Midou Gueye

Dana Collins
Jacob Roche

Peter Gander
David Jacobson

Austin Doberstein

Length of Service Milestones

40 Years

Support Services Robert Gessler

25 Years

Fire Investigator Jay Wilson

5 Years

Firefighter Andre Braun

Firefighter Brandon Reiter

PUBLIC EDUCATION - Firefighter Adam Dorn

Like many things in 2020, COVID-19 had a huge impact on how we interacted with the public. We weren't able to hold our annual Open House or even welcome members into our stations for tours. However, we did find a way that we could still bring joy to the community, along with Fitchburg Police and FitchRona EMS – Birthday Parades.

As time goes by, we hope this is a tradition we keep as way to engage with the community and help our residents celebrate milestones.





EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - Chief Joe Pulvermacher

Emergency management actions will provide for common defense to protect the public peace, health, safety, and to preserve the lives and property of the people of Fitchburg. It is necessary to:

- Plan and prepare for emergency government operations in times of disaster.
- Establish procedural powers during emergency declaration.
- Involve and inform political subdivisions with respect to carrying out emergency-preparedness functions.
- Work toward recovery by establishing constituent assistance.

Emergency Management in Action:

In 2020, Fitchburg Emergency Management was involved in training programs, emergency operations, situation status reporting, and event coordination:

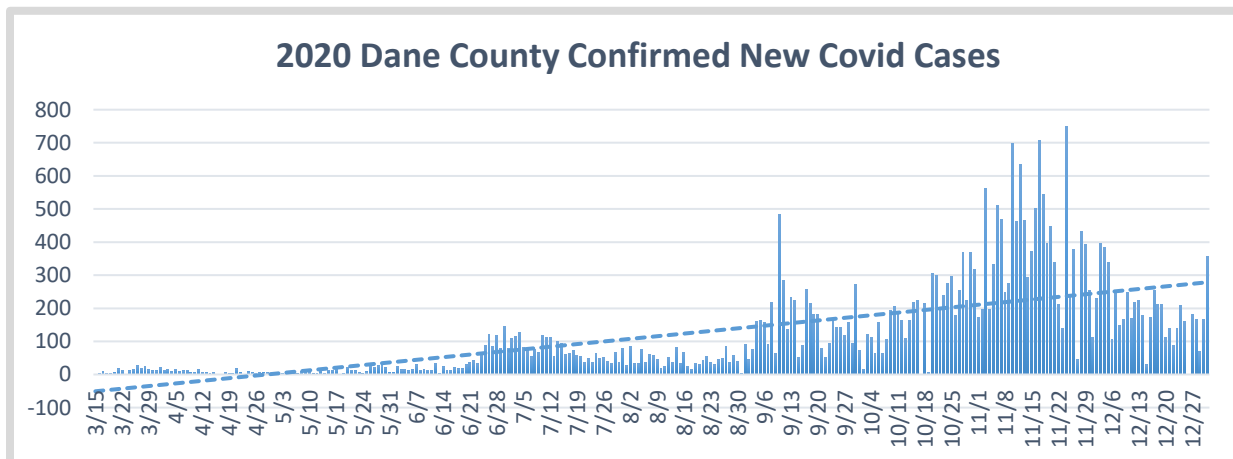
- Fitchburg hosted multiple Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) ICS courses.
- Opened and operated the Emergency Operations Center during initial COVID coordination and through civic unrest/protest events.
- Monitored pandemic progression and community impact.
- Coordinated local immunization efforts and hosted drive-through flu clinic



Emergency Operations Center Activation- COVID



Drive Through Flu Clinic





SUPPORT SERVICES - Division Chief Steven Wunsch

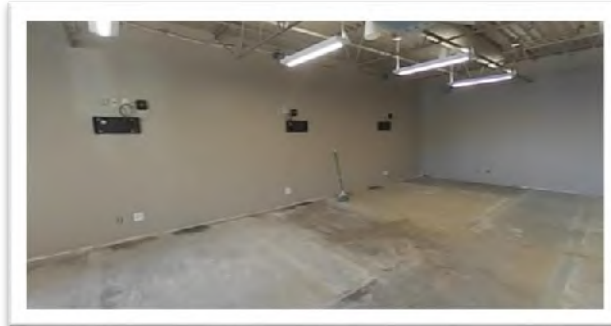
The Fire Department's Support Services Division is responsible for:

- New vehicle design and procurement
- Specification and purchasing of fire equipment and protective clothing
- Maintenance, repair, and disposal of existing vehicles and equipment
- Minor maintenance and repairs of the Firehouses and their ground



Squad Refurbishment

In mid-2020, we sent our Heavy Rescue Unit to Reliant Fire Apparatus to begin a full refurbishment. After 20 years of reliable service, the chassis was still in great shape but the cab and 'box' needed an overhaul. The completed apparatus, which will go back into service in mid-2021 will have been reconfigured to better accommodate our current operations and response protocols.



Before/During



After

Central Fire Station

When Fire Department Operations transitioned from Fire Station #1 (Lacy) to Fire Station #3 (S Syene), Administrative and Emergency Management function continued to operate out of the central station (Station #1). Phase I of the Station #1 remodel began in 2020. This project was important for the following reasons:

- Construction costs associated with moving admin to the new fire station were controlled.
- Emergency Management functions could be moved away from City Hall.
- Collaborative effort/ Partnership with Dane County and the City of Fitchburg.
- Operational costs are offset by leasing space to SafeKids/UW Health.



TRAINING – Deputy Chief Rich Roth / Lieutenant Rob Kunze

The Fire Department’s Training Division is responsible for developing and delivering a program to help ensure that:

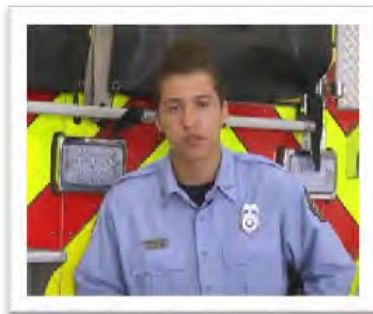
- New members are trained up to an the same skill and competency level
- Current members maintain and build on their existing skill and competency level
- Updates and additions to national standards are implemented as appropriate

In 2020, department members participated in nearly 5,000 hours of training. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, most of our large group training opportunities were canceled with many skills being covered through online training. We were able to hold a live propane fire training in partnership with the Wisconsin Propane Education & Research Council (WiPERC).



FIRE SCIENCE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Fire Science Internship Program has served the City of Fitchburg and promising firefighter candidates since 1975. The program is designed to blend education with experience. At the end of their 2 – 3 year internship, these firefighters have the skills necessary to highly function in the fire service. We hope to expand this program in our recruitment efforts – especially as we look to better serve our community through reflective, talent-driven outreach.





FITCHBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT



FITCHBURG, WI
Est. 2011



Established in September of 2011, the Fitchburg Fire Department's Honor Guard was formed to honor and remember firefighters.

The Honor Guard is a branch of the Fitchburg Fire & Rescue Association and is not an official element of the department or the City, but represents the department and our City at funerals, memorial services and any other function authorized/requested by the chief of the department.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions limiting public gatherings precluded the Honor Guard from participating in any funerals or memorial services during 2020. Members continue to be ready to provide assistance and support in order to honor and remember firefighters and other first responders who have answered their final alarm.

