

# 2015 Fargo Fire Department Annual Report



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# Message from the Chief



On behalf of the men and women of the Fargo Fire Department, I want to say what a privilege and honor it is to serve our Great Community. We continue to respond to the changing demands of the community to provide all who live and visit Fargo with a safe place to live, work, and play.

The fire department is a fundamental public service, which is built into the foundation of our community. In our community's younger years fire was an ever present threat and in 1893, Fargo experienced the devastating effects of fire during the Great Fargo Fire where a large portion of the city was destroyed. The services provided today by the Fargo Fire Department are essential in preventing fires like this from starting, and in responding quickly and effectively to those incidents that do occur. Over the last number of decades, the role of the Fargo Fire Department has changed. Our role now involves taking on new threats; hazardous materials releases, technical rescue, active shooter, and natural and manmade disasters are a few examples.

The Fargo Fire Department is dedicated to improving all services while at the same time providing the best possible value for the community's ongoing investment in the Fargo Fire Department. The FFD prepares to meet the new challenges that we face by recognizing that change is essential as we work to meet these challenges. We continually look at how we can effectively and efficiently deliver high quality public service by examining the structure, the institutions, and the practice and procedures currently utilized.

The FFD continues to place additional emphasis on Community Risk Reduction (CRR) as well as the effective and efficient allocation of resources. I have instructed department leadership to work with all staff to deliver the most effective service that will improve and promote public safety.

2015 has been another productive year providing all hazard/all risk prevention and response to our community. Major accomplishments this past year were:

- Awarded Accredited Agency Status for the second time by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.
- Joint training with the Fargo Police Department and FM Ambulance on Active Shooter incidents.
- Transitioning from a paper based inspection program to a digital program.
- Began the remodel and update of the Fire Headquarters Station.
- A full scale disaster exercise with the Hector International Airport Fire Department.
- Assisted Hydrants and Mains department with flushing all 6,900+ fire hydrants in the City.
- Completed nearly 5,500 commercial building inspections.
- Participated in Regional Response Training Exercises.
- Co-sponsored "Save a Life Saturday" where nearly 500 people received training in Hands-Only CPR.
- Provided Fire Safety Programs to 3,000+ Kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade children in Fargo schools.

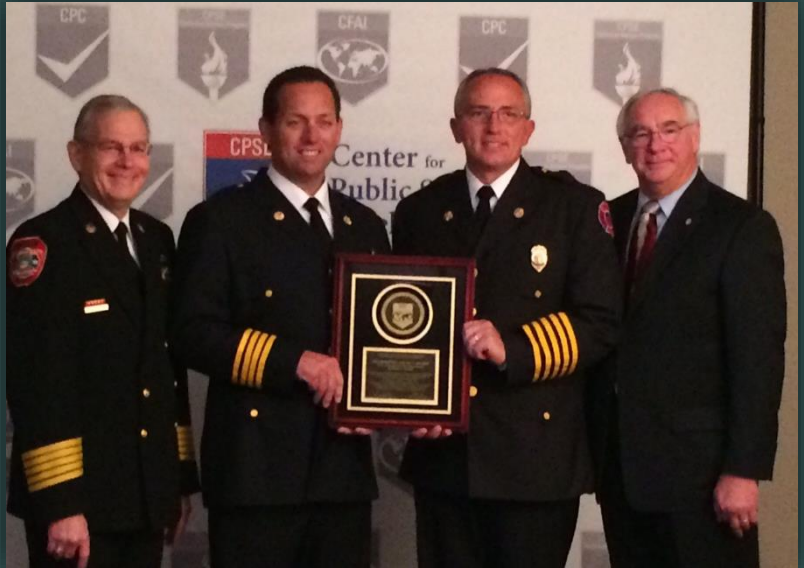
The following report provides greater detail of all the accomplishments of the Fargo Fire Department in 2015. I am confident that you will share my pride in the outstanding service provided to our community.

Thank you for the privilege to lead such an outstanding group of men and women.

Steven J. Dirksen, Fire Chief



# Accreditation



In August of 2015, the Fargo Fire Department was awarded accredited agency status for the second time through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI); making the FFD one of only 220 accredited fire departments. The FFD was first accredited in 2010, and accreditation cycles are for five year increments. To demonstrate continued compliance, agencies are required to submit annual compliance reports for each of the four intervening years.

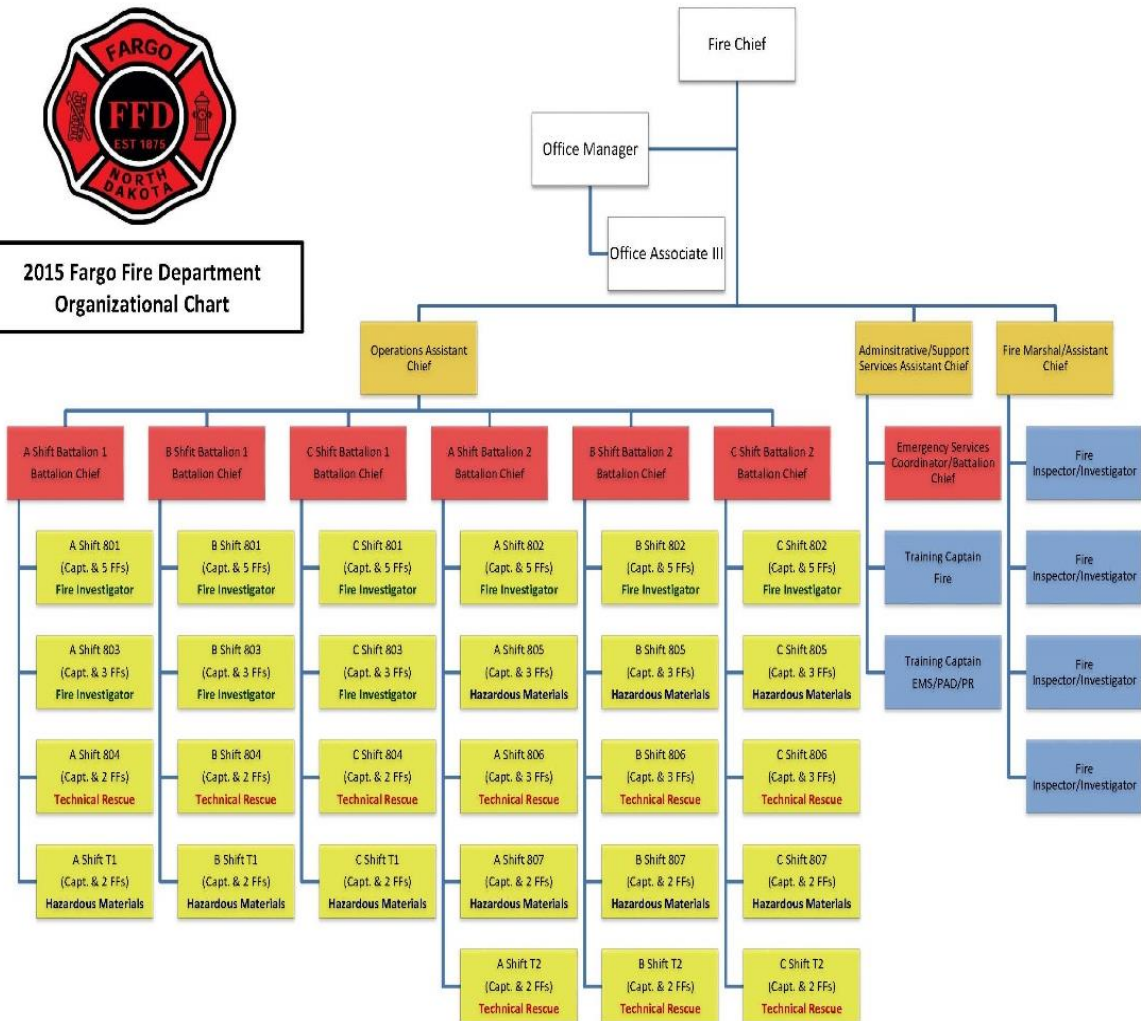
To obtain accreditation, the FFD submitted written documentation addressing over 250 performance indicators as outlined in the Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Manual. In addition, the department's Standards of Response Coverage and Strategic Plan documents were updated and submitted. A four-person panel appointed by the CFAI then reviewed information submitted within the documents. Following document approval, a four-member peer review team traveled to Fargo to conduct a four day on site review to verify and validate the information that was provided in the documentation. At the conclusion of the site visit, a presentation was held where the peer review team verbally presented their findings. In addition to fire department personnel, the city administrator and elected officials were invited to attend this presentation. During this presentation, the peer review team indicated their intent to recommend the Fargo Fire Department for accredited status during the CFAI commission hearings occurring in August. The peer review team leader compiled and submitted a final report to CFAI commission members for review.

In August Chief Dirksen and Assistant Chief Lorenz attended the CFAI Commission hearings, which were held in conjunction with Fire Rescue International Conference in Atlanta. Interim City Administrator Bruce Grubb and City Commissioner Mike Williams participate via teleconference. During the hearing, Chiefs Dirksen and Lorenz along with the peer review team leader, sat before the CFAI panel to field questions from the commissioners based on their review of the final report. After all questions were answered, the panel members voted unanimously to award Accredited Agency Status to the Fargo Fire Department

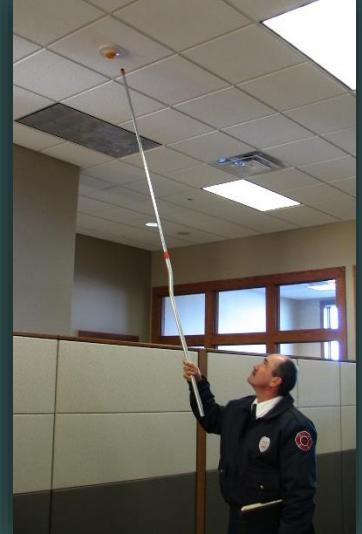
# Fargo Fire Department Organizational Chart 2015



2015 Fargo Fire Department  
Organizational Chart



# Fargo Fire Department Divisions



The Fargo Fire Department Operations Division responds to all fires, fire alarm notifications, emergency medical calls, hazardous materials responses, and technical rescues. The operations members also perform company level inspections in all businesses within the city. This division also works in conjunction with the City of Fargo Hydrants and Mains Division to flush over 6,900 fire hydrants in the city.

The Support Services Division is staffed with an Assistant Fire Chief, one Emergency Manager/Battalion Chief, and 2 Training Captains. This division is responsible for all training conducted within the department. This division also oversees all equipment, maintenance, and training records for the department. The Support Services Division coordinates all public relations activities, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), and the HeartSafe Fargo Public Access Defibrillation Program (PAD).

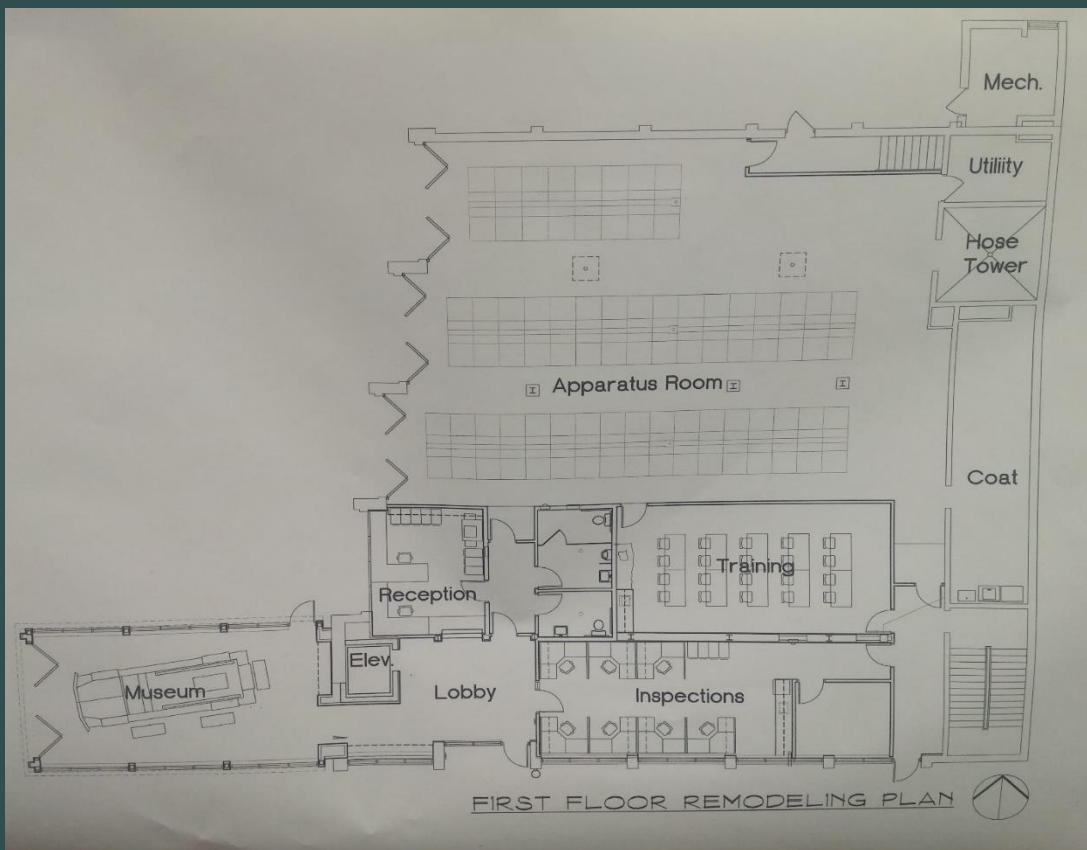
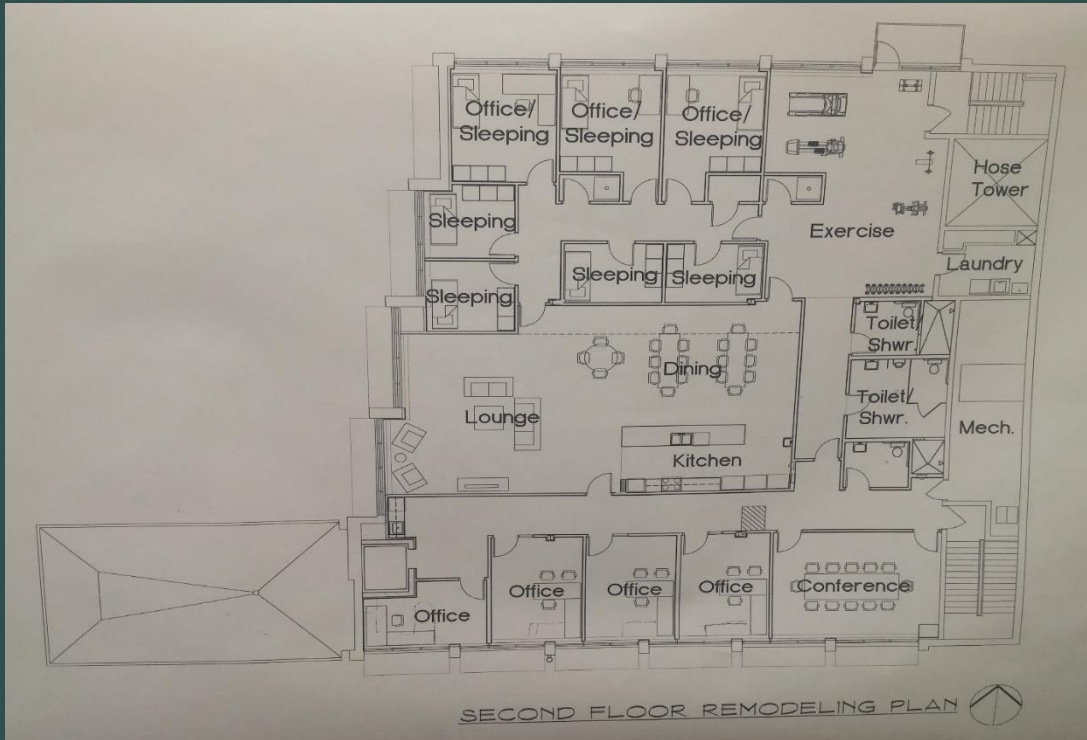
The Fire Prevention Bureau is staffed with five Fire Inspector/Investigators and an Assistant Chief who serves as the Fire Marshal. The FPB annually inspects all schools, churches, gas stations, medical facilities, bars and restaurants. They oversee the permitting and approval of new construction projects. The FPB also provides the "Learn Not to Burn Program" in all schools in the city.

# Facilities

In 2015 the FFD began the major undertaking of remodeling Fire Station 1 located in downtown Fargo. The planning began early in the year by meeting with architectural firms and coming up with a plan that would fit the departments expanding needs and carry us into the future. Image Group was chosen as the architectural firm to develop the plans for the Station 1 project. Once the plans were completed, bids for the project were solicited and the City Commission approved the remodel late in 2015. Demolition and asbestos removal started immediately and work has continued into 2016 with an anticipated completion date of August 2016. During the remodeling process, FFD administration offices have been moved to 401 3 Ave N., which is the old Public Health building. Engine Company 801 and Battalion 1 have been operating out of Centennial Hall, which was minimally renovated to function as a fire station for the interim.



# Station 1 Remodel Project





# Facilities Continued

Station 2 was reshingled.

The heating system at Station 4 had reached it's end of life and was no longer repairable. As a result, it was necessary to install a new heating system. The old boiler and all associated piping were removed and replaced by unit heaters for the apparatus bays and residential furnaces for the living quarters. It is anticipated that there will be a substantial energy cost savings because of the new systems. The new space created by removing the boiler was repurposed into a firefighting gear/ laundry room. The space created by moving the gear room was used to make a classroom for the training division, which has been a vast improvement as a teaching environment for recruit classes as well as fire suppression personnel. New concrete was added around the burn building on the training ground to eliminate mud holes caused by fire suppression training and to better facilitate training during yearly evolutions.

An upgrade to the truck exhaust removal systems was made at all fire stations. The upgrades will reduce costs in replacement and maintenance as well as providing for a safer workplace for all firefighters.

Normal routine maintenance continued at all fire stations to make sure facilities are in a constant state of readiness to serve the citizens of Fargo at the highest level.



# Apparatus and Equipment

Because of the rapid increase in population and the height of new buildings being added in the south side of Fargo, in 2015 a second aerial apparatus was acquired to better protect the south end of the city. This vehicle replaced the current Truck 2, which did not have an aerial ladder or a water pump. The new truck is a 103-foot ladder built by Spartan ERV in South Dakota and was delivered in December of 2015. This truck was designed to be used for both its reach capabilities, up to nine stories, and also to pump over 1500 gallons of water per minute. With this addition, the fire department is able to get an aerial apparatus to the scene of an emergency in an acceptable amount of time anywhere in the city.

Much of the equipment for the new ladder was repurposed from the previous truck. It was necessary to purchase some new equipment to ensure firefighters would be able to use all capabilities of the truck. To increase versatility, new battery powered auto extrication tools were acquired. A new style thermal imager was purchased, reducing the weight that the firefighters are required to carry with them into a fire. To allow for safer and more efficient high angle rescues, some of the high angle rope rescue equipment was also upgraded.

Operating from Fire Station 7 located at 3989 Village Lane South, this apparatus is staffed with three firefighters and primarily responds to emergencies occurring South of Interstate 94. However, the personnel and equipment provide the ability to respond to any emergency, or non-emergency, occurring within the City.



# New Employees



Fire Fighter  
Joe Fuller



Fire Fighter  
Casey Gibson



Fire Fighter  
Gavin Pollert



Fire Fighter  
Nate Adams



Fire Fighter  
Justin Martin



Fire Fighter  
Patrick Williams



Office Associate III  
Andi Bullinger

# 2015 Promotion & Retirements

There was only one promotion in 2015. Brandon Wehner was promoted to the rank of Fire Captain from Firefighter on July 28<sup>th</sup> of 2015.



Captain Brandon Wehner

2015 saw the retirements of two employees. Captain John Speral retired on Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> after 27 years of service. Captain Randy Weiss retired on July 9<sup>th</sup> after 30 years of service.



Captain John Speral



Captain Randy Weiss

# Notable Fires in 2015 and the associated Fire Loss

2526 15 St S- \$150,000

717 8 ST N - \$175,000

1431 16 ½ St S- \$25,000

5018 Amber Valley Pkwy - \$15,000

814 25 St N- \$30,000

2641 15 St S- \$20,000

1418 17 St S – \$20,000

823 9 St N– \$30,000



1235 11 ½ St N- \$25,000

1408 5 St N- \$70,000

1411 1 Ave N- \$35,000

727 University Drive N- \$20,000

1418 17 St S- \$20,000



# Fire Prevention Bureau



Fire Marshal  
Ryan Erickson

The Fire Prevention Bureau continues to reduce risk through public education, fire prevention inspections, and fire investigations.

Here are a few of the significant events that occurred during 2015:

The Fargo Fire Department in cooperation with the North Dakota chapter of the International Association Arson Investigators hosted an Expert Witness Courtroom Testimony course in June. This class is an intense experience that involves significant prep work and a chance to experience courtroom testimony. Six of FFD's fire investigators successfully completed the course.

Inspections are done to determine compliance with the Fire code. The fire prevention bureau along with suppression personnel inspects commercial and residential occupancies. In 2015 over 5,000 businesses and 860 apartment buildings were inspected. Nearly 700 inspections for new construction were completed by the fire prevention bureau in 2015 to ensure fire protection systems are in place and reliable.



# Fire Prevention

The department continues to reach out to the children in the community through the “Learn not to burn” program. This year 3,714 children were taught “Stay Low and Go” and “Exits”.

Our adult education system gave safety talks, presentations, and fire extinguisher training to over 660 individuals. The audience includes apartment building managers, building safety professionals, and childcare providers.

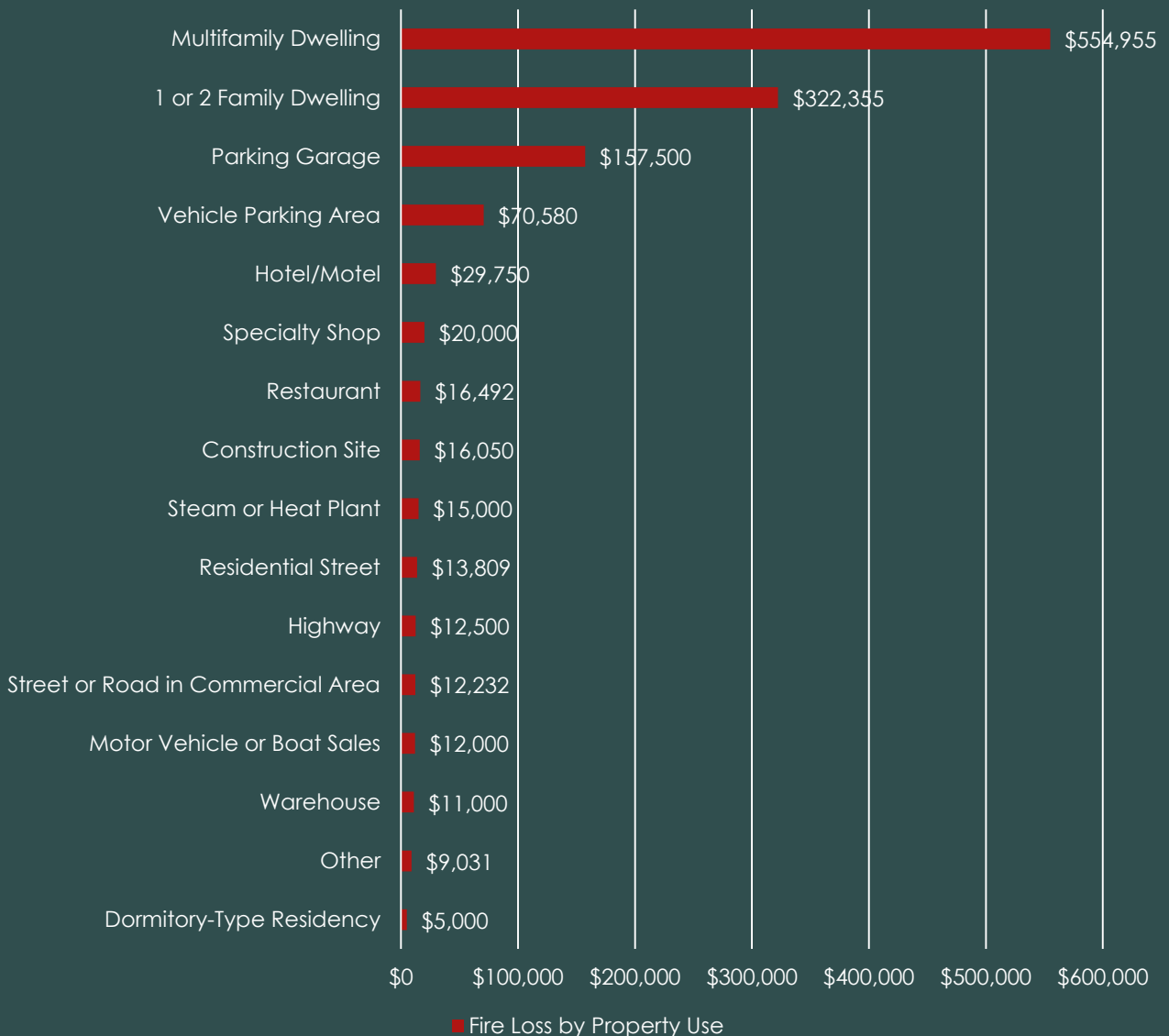
Annually, in October the FFD participates in the National Fire Prevention Association fire prevention week. Fargo Fire Department along with the American Red Cross kicked off fire prevention week by installing 51 smoke detectors in the Jefferson Neighborhood.



# Total Fire Loss

2015 saw a total fire loss of \$1,278,379 in structures and vehicles whose estimated total value was \$171,730,592. This number is down from 2014 when the total fire loss was \$2,140,995.

## Fire Loss by Property Use





# Fire Investigations

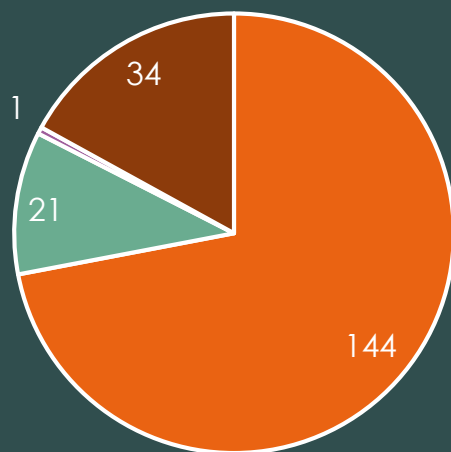
Fargo Fire Department has four Fire Prevention Bureau investigators and six shift investigators that have achieved Fire Investigation Technician (FIT) Certification through the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI).

Investigations are conducted to determine origin and cause of a fire. The results of 2015's fire investigations are below. Fargo's fire problem is consistent with national trends. Cooking fires and smoking material fires are the most common cause of fires in the City of Fargo.



Accidental	144
Incendiary	21
Natural	1
Undetermined	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>

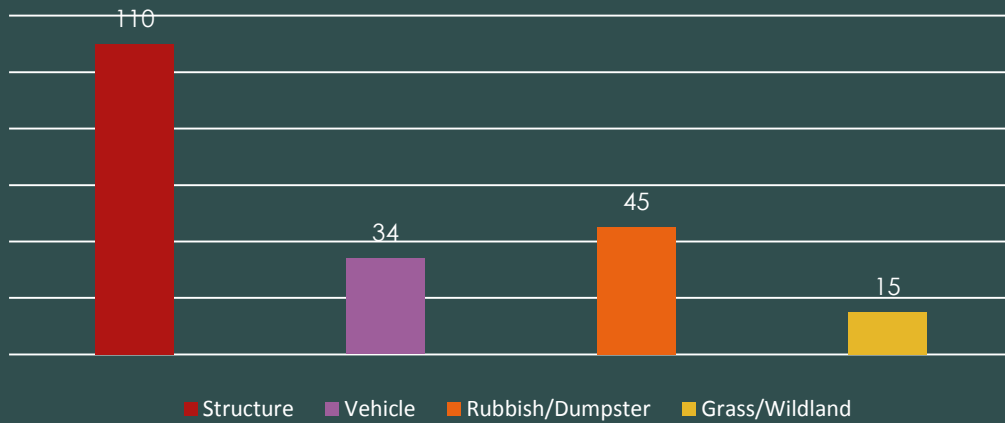
Classification of fire cause



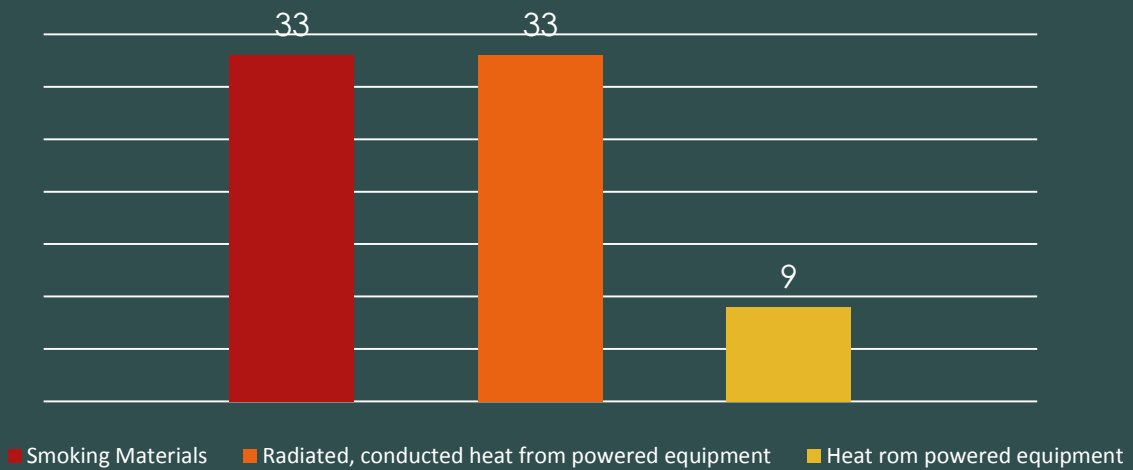
■ Accidental ■ Incendiary ■ Natural ■ Undetermined

# Fire Investigation Statistics

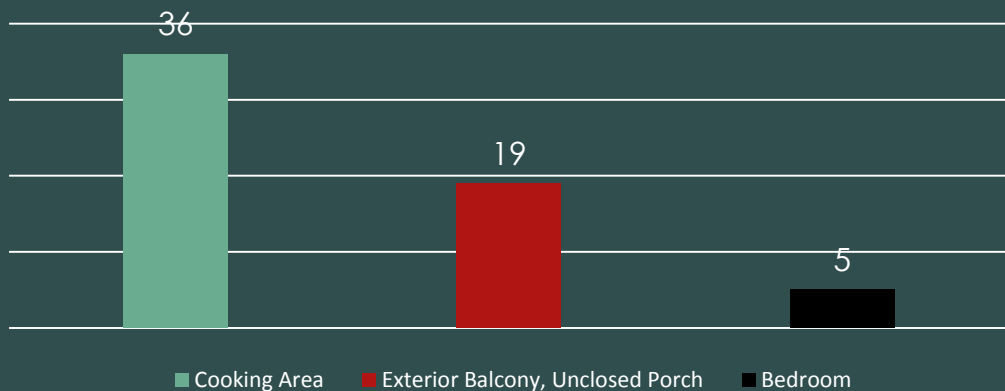
## Types of Fires



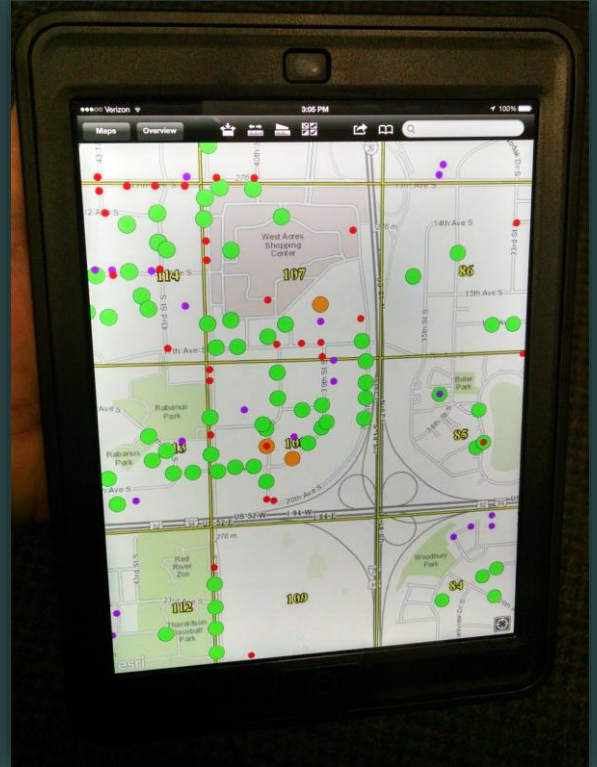
## Causes of Structure Fires



## Area of Origin of Structure Fires



# Hydrant Inspection, Testing and Flushing



## Hydrant Inspection, Testing and Flushing

FFD works diligently to ensure that the City of Fargo has a reliable fire hydrant system through testing and flushing of over 6,900 hydrants annually. Currently less than 1% of Hydrants are Out of Service in the City of Fargo.

# Emergency Services Coordinator



Battalion Chief  
Leon Schlafmann

Meetings, Training, Exercises, Preparedness planning and Operational plan reviews, is what took up the year of 2015. The FFD met with a number of groups and organizations to discuss emergency operations and plans. The meetings also provided us with contacts and partnerships to work with in the event of a disaster or an emergency if it were to develop. Groups that the FFD worked with this past year included:

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)  
Fargo Emergency Planning Committee (FEPC)  
Southeast North Dakota Regional Emergency managers (Richland, Dickey, Sargent, Ransom, Barnes, Stutsman, Lamoure,)  
North Dakota Incident Management Assist Team (IMAT)

Along with these partners:

All City of Fargo Departments  
Cass County Emergency Management  
Clay County Emergency Management  
Moorhead Emergency Management  
State of North Dakota Dept. of EM Services  
State of ND Department of Health  
NDSU  
Hector International Airport  
North Dakota National Guard  
North Dakota CST  
American Red Cross  
Salvation Army  
First Link  
Red River Fair grounds  
Convention Visitor Bureau  
Sanford Health  
Essentia Health  
VA hospital

Wenck Associates  
Fargo Parks  
Fargo Public Schools  
Oak Grove schools  
Catholic schools  
West Acres Mall  
Border States Electric  
West Fargo Schools  
BNSF  
RRRDC – Red River Regional  
Dispatch  
Red River Radio Amateurs  
Fargo Marathon  
FM Ambulance  
Weather Service (Grand Forks)  
Cass County Electric  
Xcel Energy

# Emergency Services Continued

Training and simulated exercises were the next major undertaking.

A number of different training sessions were conducted or attended throughout the year:

- Hosted ICS 300 & 400
- ND Search and Rescue Conference
- ND Emergency Management Conference
- ND Pipeline Operators
- Metro Area Breakfast Club

Full Scale Exercises:

- Hector Airport
- Davies High School Active Shooter



# Fire Training

2015 was a busy year for training. In 2015 six new firefighters completed the FFD recruit academy. During this academy, the firefighters receive training on how to respond to incidents involving: fire, EMS, vehicle extrication and hazardous materials. Once a firefighter leaves the FFD academy, they are assigned to a fire suppression crew. They continue the training process at the crew level for a probationary period of one year.



Jason Ness  
Fire Captain



# Fire Training Continued



All firefighters complete a minimum of 240 hours of training annually. This training focuses on preparing firefighters to respond to a wide assortment of emergencies including: Fires, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, responses to hazardous materials events and incidents requiring technical rescue.

Each year firefighters complete drill training provided with the use of the Fargo Training Facility. In 2015, the FFD was also able to take advantage of multiple training opportunities by gaining access to structures made available through flood mitigation projects.



# Emergency Medical Training



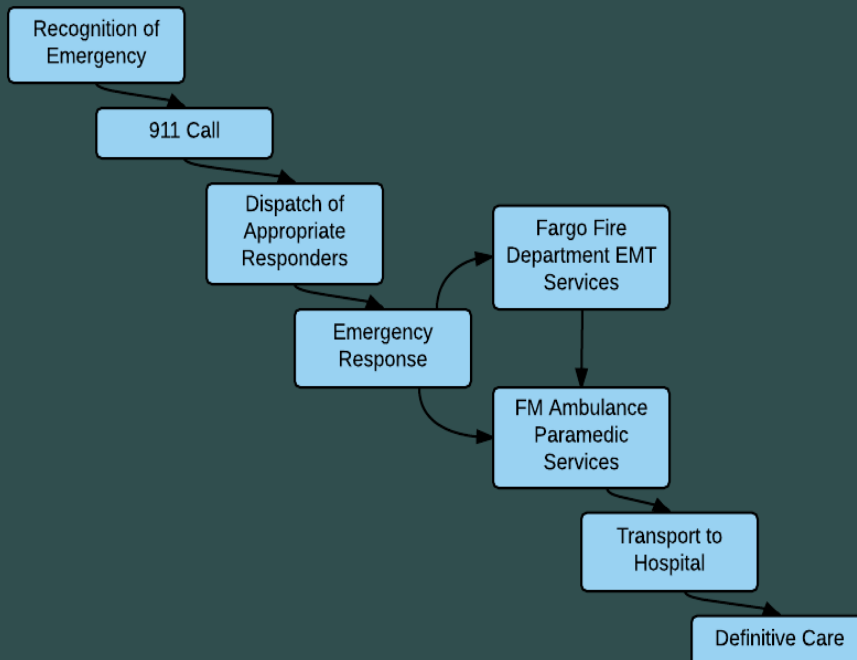
Ron Guggisberg  
Fire Captain

The Fargo Fire Department is part of a tiered Emergency Medical Response System. This system allows public safety resources to respond quickly and reliably to emergencies in the community.

Fargo's Firefighters and Fire Officers are trained to respond as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). In 2016, the Fargo Fire Department will complete the transition to the new NREMT Standard for EMTs.

The scope of practice for EMTs includes:

- Patient Assessment of Trauma and Medical Emergencies
- Treatment for Traumatic Injuries in the Out of Hospital Environment
- Oxygen Administration and Advanced Airway Management
- Resuscitation of Cardiac Arrest Patients with Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)
- Assisted Delivery (Childbirth)
- Assistance with Medications



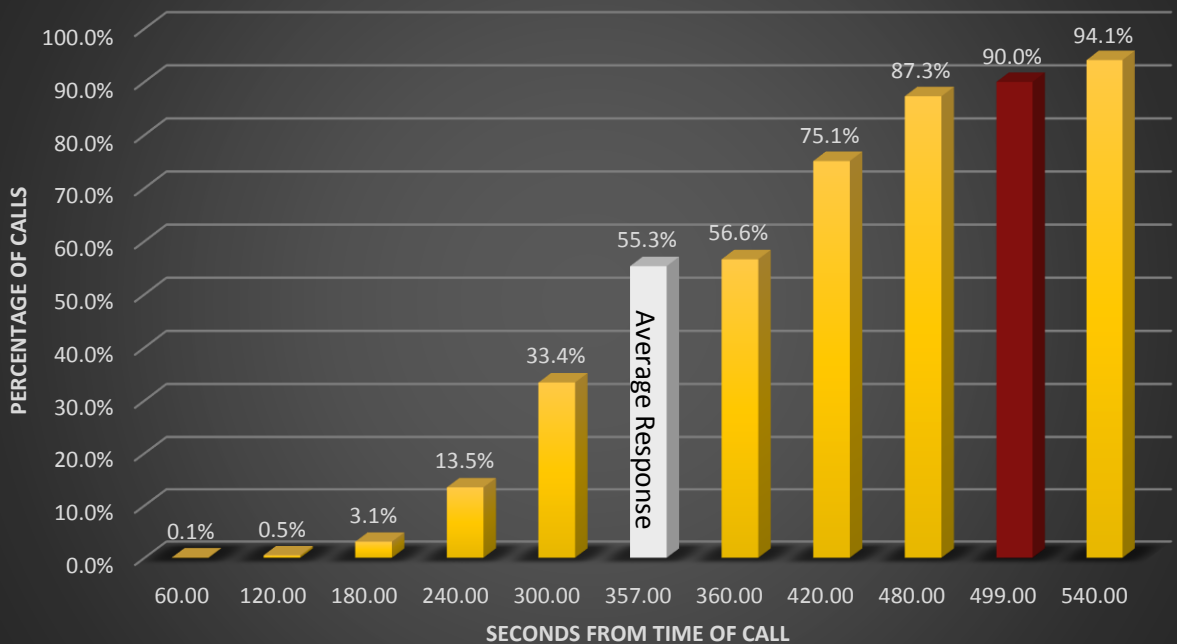


# Emergency Medical Training Continued



In 2015, 60.51% of the Fargo Fire Department's emergency responses were medical in nature. When responding with lights and sirens, the average fire department response time was 357 seconds. This time reflects when the 911 dispatcher answered the phone call until the fire department arrived on scene. For 90 percent of emergent medical responses the fire department was on scene within 499 seconds. For accreditation purposes, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is the statistic the FFD is measured against.

**FIRST FIRE DEPARTMENT APPARATUS ON SCENE FROM TIME OF CALL**



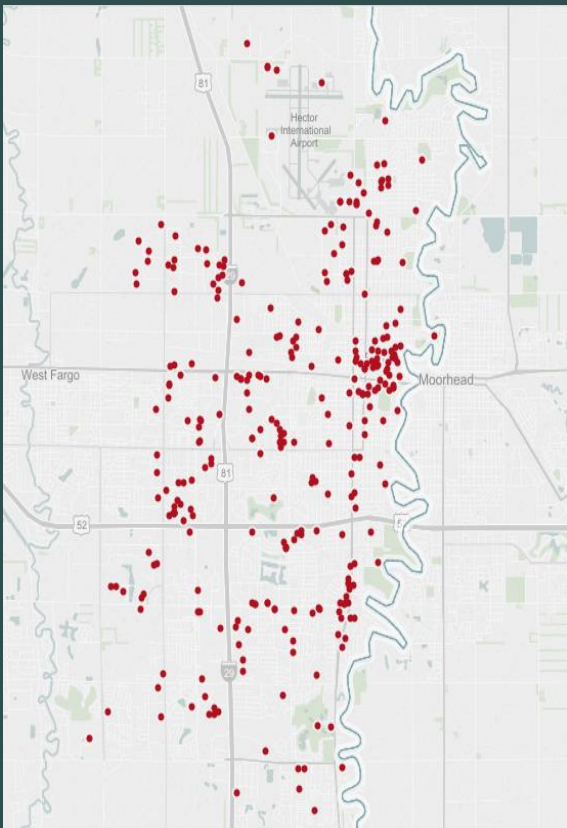
# PulsePoint AED

## PulsePoint AED

The Fargo Fire Department continues to look for opportunities for citizens to contribute to our efforts to reduce risk and loss in the community. During fire prevention inspections, firefighters continue to improve on our Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) database. Now citizens can help us find them as well. The PulsePoint AED application allows smart phone users to add Public Access AEDs to the FFD system. Just download the app from iTunes or Google Apps and follow the directions.

## The PulsePoint Responder

There are now 3588 users of the PulsePoint Responder app in our community. Citizens willing and able to perform CPR can download the app to participate. If CPR is needed in a public location nearby, they will be called upon to assist.



*City of Fargo AED Locations*



# Hazardous Materials Team



The Fargo Fire Department maintains a Hazardous Materials Response Team based out of Fire Station 7. The team is comprised of 30 members divided between three shifts. They respond to Haz Mat calls in the City of Fargo and are contracted as the Southeast Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team for the state of North Dakota. As the regional team, the FFD responds to Haz Mat incidents in Barnes, Cass, Dickey, Kidder, LaMoure, Logan, McIntosh, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, and Stutsman Counties.

The primary funding of the Haz Mat Team comes from grants distributed by the ND Department of Emergency Services.



# Hazardous Materials Continued



The Haz Mat Team trains on a monthly basis to maintain competency in a skill set derived from national standards and local needs. During the past year, Fargo Fire Department members logged 3825 hours of Haz Mat training. Our monthly training was supplemented with several special classes and drills.

In March, the FFD participated alongside the ND Civil Support Team to provide air monitoring services at the NCAA Regional Hockey Tournament at the Scheels Arena. The Civil Support Team is a group of 22 ND National Guard Soldiers with extensive Haz Mat training and advanced equipment. Monitoring took place over several days.

In May, four team members were able to attend the International Association of Fire Chiefs Haz Mat Conference in Baltimore, MD. They were able to take classes from instructors who wrote the textbooks and national standards used by all haz mat teams.

In August, a training trailer was purchased and equipped for the team. The trailer and equipment were purchased with ND Dept. of Emergency Services grant funds. The trailer allows the team to complete skill specific training needed to perform on scene mitigation of hazardous materials events. The skills are also part of the required knowledge base on standard tests

In November, one team member attended the Center for Radiological Nuclear Training at the Nevada National Security Site. This is the premier radiation training school in the United States where receive hands on training in radiation detection and response.



# Technical Rescue Team



The Fargo Fire Department has 30 personnel with specialized training in four areas of Technical Rescue:

- Rope Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue
- Trench Rescue
- Structural Collapse

In 2015, these team members logged 2960 total hours of training in the four specialized areas. Along with training at our own facilities, members were able to use Park East Apartments building to hone their structural collapse skills in a more realistic environment before it was demolished. The team also participated in a high angle rescue exercise at the new Sanford Hospital site. This exercise offered a very realistic scenario and was coordinated with construction personnel on site.

Two of our members attended a week long advanced trench rescue course in Bismarck. Three of our members attend the Search and Rescue Conference in Jamestown. At this conference, one member taught a wide area search class while the other members reviewed equipment and capabilities of our Regional Response Team with other attendees.

# Technical Rescue Team Continued



The Fargo Technical Rescue Team (TRT) is also a North Dakota Regional Response Team and remains available to assist on technical rescue incidents in the southeast corner of the state. They could also be asked to respond anywhere in the state if needed on a large scale incident.

Members train and test to standards dictated by the Pro Board, an international certification organization. Our TRT members are Pro Board certified in Ropes I & II, Confined Space I & II, and Trench I. In 2015, all members tested and received certification for the Trench Rescue II standard. Members are currently training in structural collapse skills for with the intent of Pro Board certification.

## Trench Rescue Training

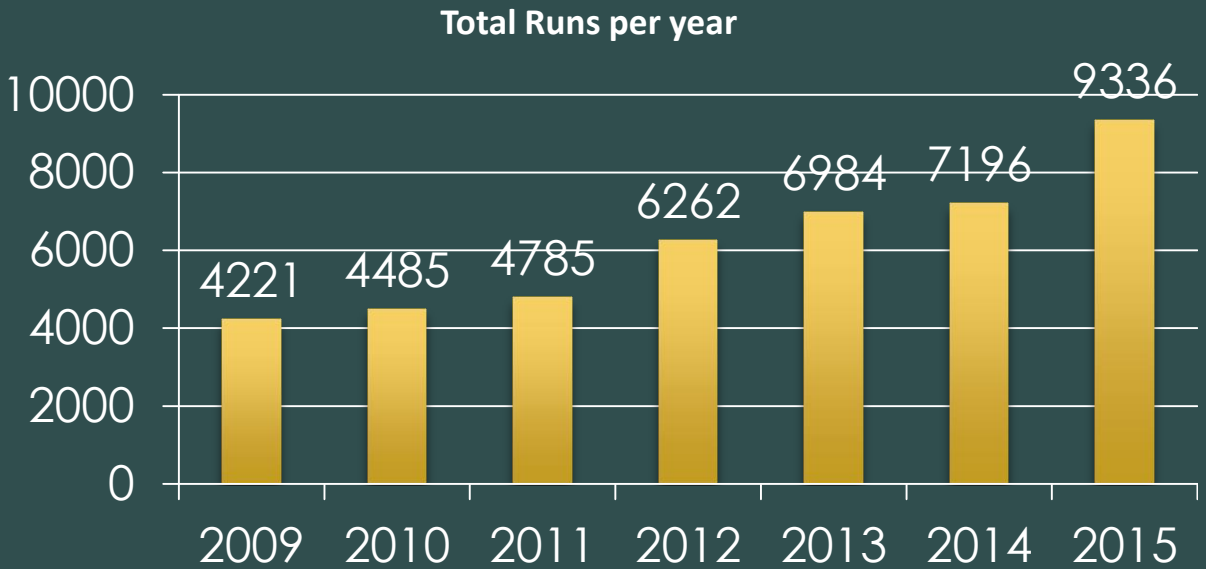


## Structural Collapse Training

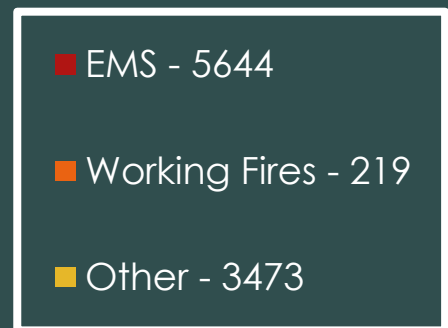


# Operations

As the City of Fargo continues to grow, so do the number of emergency calls that the FFD responds to. In 2015, the FFD responded to 9,336 calls for service, an increase of 2,140 from 2014. The average number of calls per day is 25.58.



### Nature of the calls in 2015



# Stations & Apparatus Responses



## Station 1

Engine 801  
3515 Responses

Batt. 1  
1273 Responses



## Station 2

Engine 802  
2376 Responses



# Stations & Apparatus Calls for Service



## Station 3

Engine 803  
1716 Responses



## Station 4

Engine 804  
2806 Responses

Truck 1  
1649 Responses

# Stations & Apparatus Calls for Service



## Station 5

Engine 805  
2677 Responses



## Station 6

Engine 806  
1211 Responses

# Stations & Apparatus Calls for Service



## Station 7

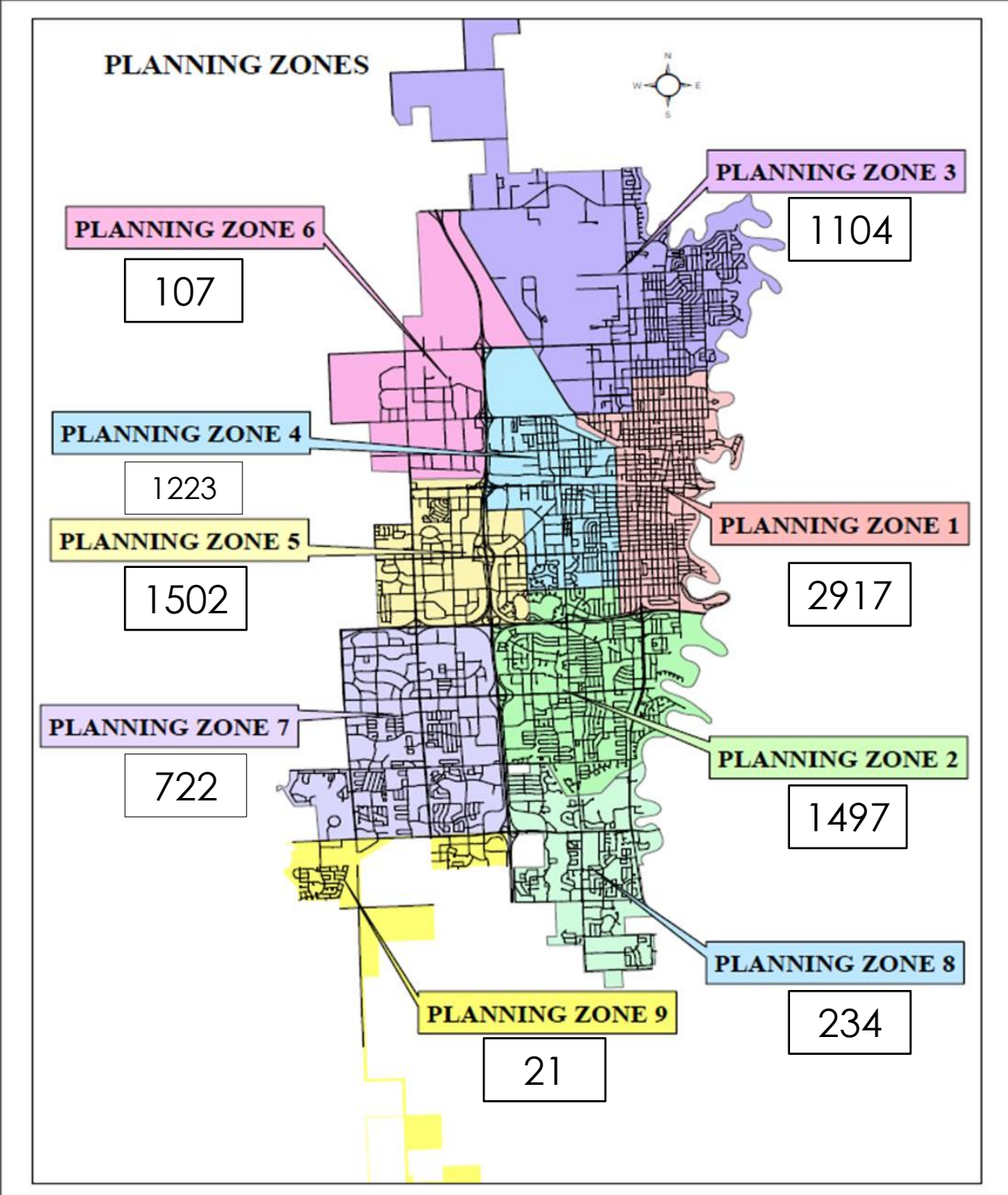
Engine 807      1474 Responses

Truck 2      1016 Responses

857(Hazmat)      11 Responses

Batt. 2      1204 Responses

# Responses per Planning Zone



# Activity Hours of Crews

Category	A-Shift	B-Shift	C-Shift	Total
Fire	5,690	5,095	5,942	16,727
Medical	3,506	2,904	3,297	9,707
Inspections	1,636	1,931	1,828	5,395
Hydrants	826	769	707	2,302
Emergency Training	7,603	7,473	7,735	22,812
Medical Training	381	588	212	1,181
Routine Maintenance	2,947	2,326	2,980	8,253
Emergency Equipment Maintenance	4,603	3,807	4,573	12,983
Equipment & Building Maintenance	983	843	1,022	2,848
Personal Health & Safety	1,274	878	1,077	3,229
Data Entry	2,165	1,995	1,868	6,028
Public Relations	534	457	377	1,368
Special Inspections	43	17	16	76
Administrative	540	447	814	1,801
Misc. Duties	1,185	1,046	570	2,801
Total	33,921	30,576	33,017	97,514

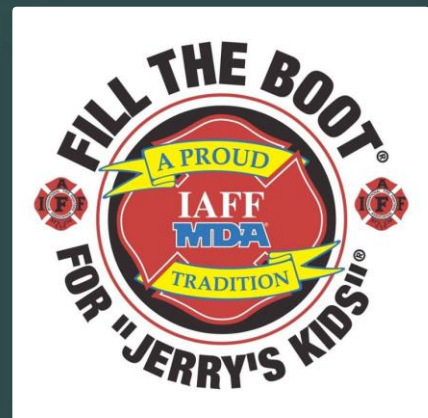
# F A R G O F I R E F I G H T E R S

IAFF LOCAL 642



In 2015 Local 642 Members donated their time and \$8,175 to various organizations and causes in the community.

During the annual MDA Fill the Boot campaign, members of the Local 642 raised \$21,161. This money is used to send children to a week long summer camp free of charge.



# F A R G O F I R E F I G H T E R S

IAFF LOCAL 642



Local 642 members give Christmas presents to all the children in the area hospitals every Christmas.

In 2015, the Local 642 helped raise \$27,557 for the Salvation Army during their Red Kettle Campaign.



# Fargo Fire Department Explorer Post 259



The explorer post advisors ran a strong recruitment process that increased the number of young adults in the Fargo Fire Department's explorer post from three to 18. Because of this growth, four advisors were added to bring the total number of advisors for the post to seven. The new explorers are currently working on gaining basic firefighting and emergency medical knowledge. Once the explorers complete a certain level of training, they are allowed to ride on engines and participate on responses according to the department's guidelines.

The explorers participate in events that help the community. These events are organized by the Fargo Firefighter's Local 642 of the International Association of Fire Fighters. The members of the Local include the explorers to help the explorers learn how important it is for firefighters to support their community off duty as well as on duty.



**Be Involved In The  
Community**



# PRIDE

- Professionalism** Commitment to quality, pride in your work.
- Responsibility** Accountability, maturity, ability to respond.
- Integrity** Moral and intellectual honesty.
- Dependability** Worthy of trust, communication, team effort, working together.
- Empathy** Ability to understand, fairness, straightforwardness, sincerity.

