

# DANVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL  
REPORT

2023



@DANVILLEVAFIRE





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THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

2023, quite simply, was a **YEAR OF CHANGE**. The Danville Fire Department welcomed seven new firefighters as they graduated from a 22 Week In-House Recruit Academy. We also saw nine firefighters resign to pursue other interests, as well as seeing four of our senior firefighters retire. In all, we lost over 170 years of experience! Turning over 11% of your workforce in a single year is significant by any account. Currently, half of our department has less than 10 years on the job.

With the flux in our staffing, the Danville Fire Department focused on training and succession planning in 2023. The department hosted several classes that enabled our firefighters to receive required certifications locally. In the past, these certifications were only obtained by traveling

to outside agencies, taking time away from family and the department. We also sent several other firefighters away to obtain instructor certifications which will enable them to teach even more of our firefighters in house, again enabling them to obtain required certifications here at home.

We were fortunate in 2023 to receive a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to purchase three turnout gear extractors and dryers, which is just a fancy way of saying heavy duty washers and dryers that clean our protective firefighting outerwear. We also purchased a gear washer that is used to wash all the ancillary gear such as boots, helmets, and self-contained breathing apparatus. Additionally, we added a designated Safety vehicle to our fleet. Previously, we had been using a Hazardous Material response vehicle to respond to incidents to provide safety support.

Given the opportunity, I am always quick to point out that the Danville Fire Department is among a select few, nationwide, that has the distinction of being internationally accredited and holding the highest rating from the Insurance Service Office, an ISO-1! This year our department was re-evaluated, a process that every rated fire department undergoes every five years. We have yet to receive the results of the evaluation, however we feel confident we will once again receive the top rating.

I am so proud of the men and women of our department. On the fire side, we were short-staffed for the better half of the year, which required our firefighters to work additional hours, and additional job requirements were put in place that required additional time and training. To make matters even worse, 2023 was quite our busiest year yet. The DFD responded to **9,923 CALLS FOR SERVICE**, averaging just over 27 calls per day.

Our Telecommunicators experienced much of the same, short staffed, additional training requirements and the busiest year to date! The men and women in the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) are truly our unsung heroes that make everything that our law enforcement officers, and fire fighters do possible. In 2023 our ECC staff averaged 372 calls per day, 186 calls per 12-hour shift, and a call every four minutes. In a nutshell, they are very busy!

Through all the changes and increased workload that came in 2023, the men and women that serve the City of Danville as either Telecommunicator, Firefighter, or the ever-important support staff, never missed a beat. I am proud to be counted among this collection of amazing individuals and the opportunity I have to serve in the capacity as your Fire Chief. **THE FUTURE OF DANVILLE IS BRIGHT**, and I consider myself very fortunate to be a part of it!

Yours in service,



Fire Chief David Coffey



# OUR MISSION, VISION, & VALUES



## MISSION

The Danville Fire Department reduces the risk to life and property through professional response and community engagement.

## VISION

The Danville Fire Department is dedicated to continuous improvement through innovation, inclusion, and fostering a safe community.

## VALUES



**Diversity and Inclusion**



**Professionalism**



**Integrity**



**Safety**



**Accountability**



**Customer Service**

# OUR HISTORY

## 1884

Danville instituted the community's first paid (professional) fire department on January 1, 1884. Records indicate the first apparatus inventory consisted of one Button fire engine, two Ainsleys, one hose reel, and four horses. Prior to 1884, services were provided by two private fire companies.

At right:  
"Little Mary"



## 1896

The annexation of Neapolis in 1896 prompted construction of a headquarters on Patton Street, where the Municipal Building stands today, as well as a second station just north of the Main Street Bridge which came to be known as the North Main Station.



## 1903

Of historical note, the "Wreck of Old 97" occurred on September 27, 1903. The southbound Southern Railway passenger train No. 97 derailed and plunged into a ravine below the Stillhouse Trestle, killing eleven persons according to some accounts.

## 1924

In 1924, a Seagrave ladder truck was added to the department's inventory, equipped with solid rubber tires, a tiller, and a 75-foot hand-operated ladder. This replaced the hook and ladder, the last piece of horse-drawn equipment in the city.

## 1926

1926 saw the Patton Street station relocated to a new building on Bridge Street. This served as the fire headquarters until the construction of the new station on Lynn Street in 2014. A third "West End" station, designed for horse-drawn apparatus, was also constructed in the early 1900s less than one block off Main Street.

## 1950

A two-way radio communication system was installed in 1950, which allowed the Station One telephone switchboard to centrally receive fire calls and dispatch suppression services. The chiefs' vehicles had two-way radios installed, but radios were not required in the engines.

## 1951

A 1951 annexation required an additional station to serve the Schoolfield community around Dan River Mills. Station Four was initially located at the West Main Street and Augusta Avenue intersection and was rented from the textile company. The same annexation prompted construction of a northside station on Third Avenue.

## 1957

Station Five opened in 1957 and came to serve as the agency's training center with a five story training tower and drafting pit.



*Above: A major fire occurred in Danville on June 30, 1927, as the Main Street Iron Bridge burned. The wooden floor of the bridge caught fire when a tar wagon overturned. The steel girders buckled from the intense heat and finally collapsed, separating the north and south sides of Danville.*

# OUR HISTORY



## 1971

In 1971, the station on North Main Street was relocated to its current home on Piney Forest Road to provide better response to the western portions of the city.

*At right: In 1971, a lightning strike hit Moffett Memorial Baptist Church on North Main Street which sparked a large fire that destroyed the sanctuary.*

## 1978

In the summer of 1978, Station Three was relocated to Industrial Avenue near the intersection of South Main Street.

## 1988

Danville's annexation of approximately 27 square miles of Pittsylvania County in January 1988 more than doubled the department's area of responsibility. As a result, Station Four was relocated to its current home on West Main Street, plans were made to add two stations, and six engine companies were added.

## 1990

August 1990 saw completion of Station Seven on Airport Drive, adjacent to the city's regional airport and within sight of US Highway 58. Around this time, OSHA's endorsement of the Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) Standard prompted the state of Virginia to establish, fund, and train 12 regional Hazardous Material Response Teams. This resulted in an agreement with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and ultimately the creation of a Regional Level III Response Team, which became operational in December 1990.

## 1991

Station Six was opened in August 1991 on the corner of Westover Drive and Beech Avenue to service the north and west end of the city.

## 1997

Beginning in 1997, the department began training personnel to the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level of certification. City Council authorized formation of a Fire Marshal's Office in 1998. This led to the creation of a Fire Prevention and Education Bureau and sworn officers with legal authority to investigate fires and enforce city fire code.

## 2014

The Danville Fire Department Headquarters and Emergency Communications center relocated to the new facilities on Lynn Street.

## 2000

In 2000, Danville Fire Department (DFD) teamed up with Pittsylvania County Firefighter's Association and applied for a grant from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. The award served as the primary funding for a burn building, which is now the centerpiece of the area's Regional Training Center at 658 Stinson Drive.

## 2015

The Danville Fire Department earned International Accredited Status from the Center for Public Safety Excellence.

## 2018

The department's ISO rating improved to be a 1 rating.

## 2020

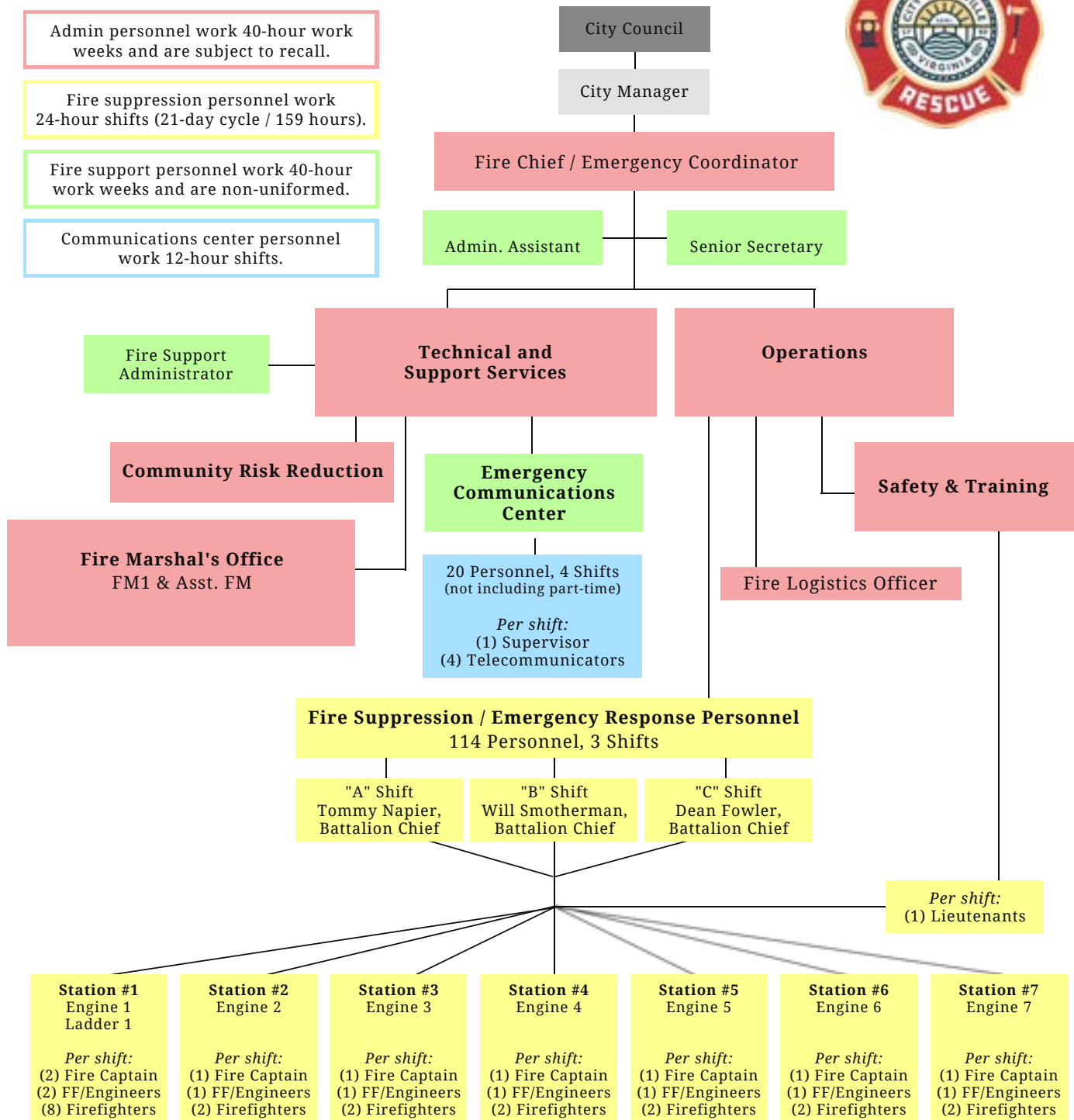
In 2020, the department successfully became accredited again.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## DANVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

### Organizational Chart

146 Personnel (122 Uniformed)



eff. 9/2023

# PROMOTIONS/SPECIAL TEAM 2023

## Engineers



Bryan Alderson



Bradley Harris



Adam Brown



Joe Simpson



Will Stephens

## Lieutenant



Taylor Vernon



David Brooks



Patrick Haymore



Daryl Reaves



Scott Burke

## Captain

## Logistics



Eric Minter

## Fire Marshal



Richie Guill

## Senior Telecommunicator



Tristian Smith



Beverly Hayes

# NEW HIRES

## Lateral Firefighters

Alex Hayes

JT Watson

## ECC Manager

Jacob Bliss

## Telecommunicator

Harrison McMilliam

Leanna Coderre

## Recruits

Brandon Howell

Caleb Redd

Edward Wimmer

Ernest Yoder

Chaze Ellis

Jason Marston

Tristan Estep



# RETIREEES



Kevin "Ralph"  
Strader



Ken Jones



James Harper



Thomas  
Thompson



James "Jimmy"  
Adkins

**We'd like to extend a special thank you to our retirees for their years of bravery and dedication to keeping the community safe. We appreciate you and all your hard work.**

# ACHIEVEMENTS 2023

## VA Fire Chief Academy

Jamie Satterfield  
Travis Poteat

## Tech Rescue

Dawson Poteat  
Matt Hines  
Dylan Alvis  
Aaron Turner

## Fire Officer I

Zach Griffin  
Taylor Vernon  
Chance Barte  
Bryan Alderson  
John Epps  
Josh White  
Neil Bailey

## Fire Investigation

Eric Minter  
Alan Harless

## Associate Degree

Neil Bailey  
Delano Goad

## Firefighter of the Year

Tony Mills

## Telecommunicator of the Year

Beverly Hayes



Tony Mills  
*Firefighter of the Year*



Beverly Hayes  
*Telecommunicator of the Year*



Josh Stowe  
*Completed Fire Officer Academy*



# 2023 SNAPSHOT

TOTAL CALLS IN 2023

**9,923**

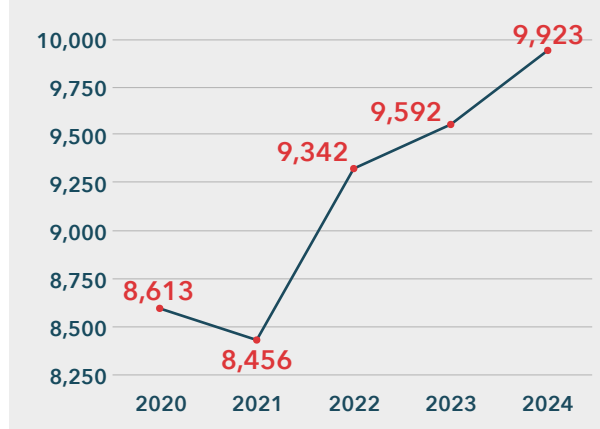
SUBCATEGORIES OF CALLS



**27.2**

AVG. CALLS PER DAY

CALLS THROUGH THE YEARS



CALLS PER SHIFT

**A Shift 3,329**

**B Shift 3,183**

**C Shift 3,411**

HIGHEST  
CALL COUNT

**E1  
C Shift**

TOTAL PROPERTY VALUE SAVED

**\$18,236,356**

= Total Property Value -  
Total Property and Content Loss

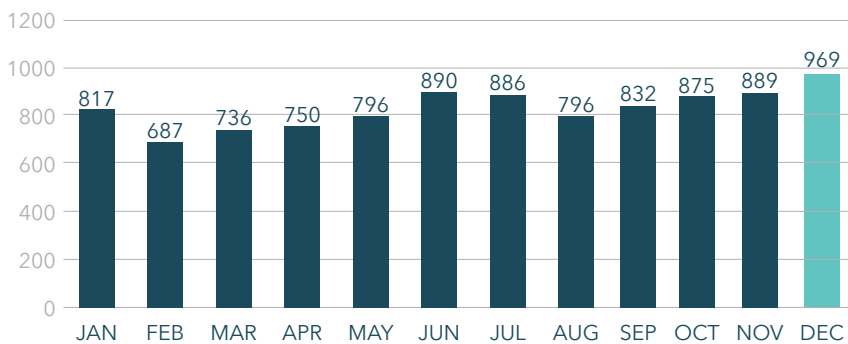
TOTAL VALUE

**\$19,452,501**

TOTAL LOSS

**\$1,216,415**

2023 INCIDENTS BY MONTH



**December** of 2023 marked the  
highest month incidents total in DFD History.

Working Fires Per Shift

**A  
Shift  
5**

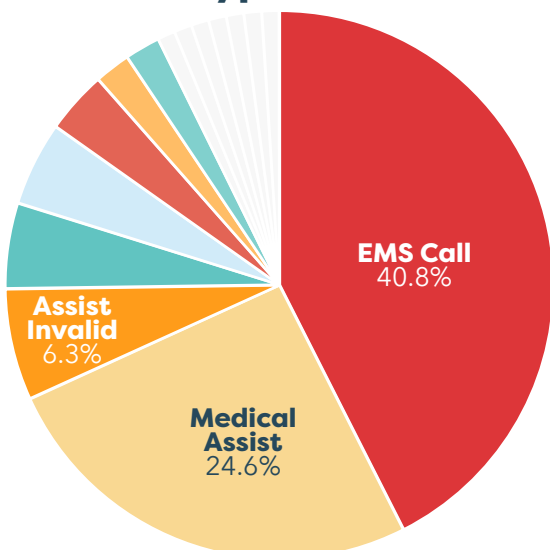
**B  
Shift  
12**

**C  
Shift  
13**

TOTAL  
WORKING  
FIRES

**30**

Incident Types



Top 8

**EMS Call**  
40.8%

**Medical Assist/Assist EMS**  
24.6%

**Assist Invalid**  
6.3%

**Alarm System Activation  
- No Fire/ Unintentional**  
4.9%

**Dispatched & Canceled**  
4.8%

**Vehicle Accident/  
General Cleanup**  
3.5%

**Motor Vehicle Accident  
w/ No Injuries**  
2.03%

**Public Service**  
2%

Least Busiest Hour

**0400**

(5 years in a row)

Busiest Hour of the Day

**1200**

Busiest Day of the Week

**Friday**

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT





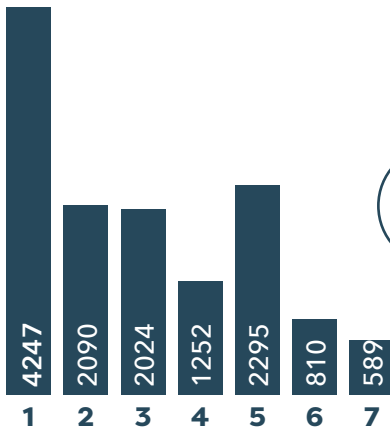
# OPERATIONS DIVISION SUMMARY

## Deputy Chief Brandyn Smith

During the 2023 calendar year, Danville Fire Department responded to a record 9,923 calls for service. This represents 9,923 times that the men and women of the ISO Class I, CFAI Accredited department impacted the lives of City of Danville citizens and visitors through the application and embodiment of superior customer service, integrity, professionalism, and dedication.

With continual growth and development of the city comes the inevitable need for growth and development of the Danville Fire Department, our personnel, equipment, training, and the specialized services that we can provide to any person in need, at a moment's notice. At the very core of every Danville Fire Fighter is the desire to serve and to do so with the most efficiency, proficiency, and professionalism imaginable.

### CALL VOLUME BY STATION



**5 OF THE 7 DFD STATIONS SAW AN INCREASE IN CALL VOLUME DURING THE YEAR. STATION 1, LOCATED IN THE RIVER DISTRICT AND HOUSING ENGINE 1, LADDER 1, BATTALION 1, AND SAFETY 1 EXPERIENCED THE HIGHEST CALL VOLUME.**

### CALL VOLUME BY COMPANY

**Engine 1 2324**

**Engine 5 2279**

**Engine 2 2090**

**Engine 3 2024**

**Ladder 1 1751**

**Engine 4 1238**

**Engine 6 810**

**Engine 7 589**

WHILE THE CALL VOLUME FOR STATION 1 WAS THE **HIGHEST** DUE TO HOUSING MULTIPLE COMPANIES, THE CALL VOLUME BY COMPANY WAS **HIGHEST** WITH **ENGINE 1**, RESPONDING TO

**2,324 calls**

FOR SERVICE THROUGHOUT 2023. **THIS FIGURE IS UP** FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S RESPONSES OF 2,162 CALLS.

Despite the department's numerous accomplishments in 2023, our commitment to continue improvement highlights the need for unparalleled service provision that evolves and remains ever present in our profession. 2023 brought about challenges and opportunities for better service delivery, better training opportunities, better strategies and tactics, and better avenues for servitude to any member of our customer base that may find themselves in need.

With the goal of superior quality of service at the forefront of 2024, a comprehensive overview of 2023 must first be observed and lead to adjustments in operations that will render effective changes for better delivery of the numerous services that the Danville Fire Department provides. At left is the 2023 Danville Fire Department Operations Year in Review.



# OPERATIONS DIVISION SUMMARY

As is the case nationally, most calls responded to by the Danville Fire Department were medical in nature. 61.3% of the overall calls during 2023 were EMS-related with those in need receiving top-notch care from certified firefighter - emergency medical technicians 100% of the time. 19.2% of calls were categorized as "fire" and 19.5% as "other".



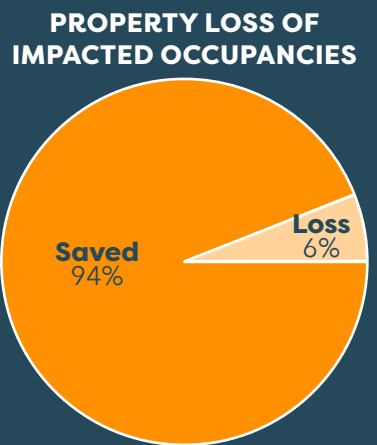
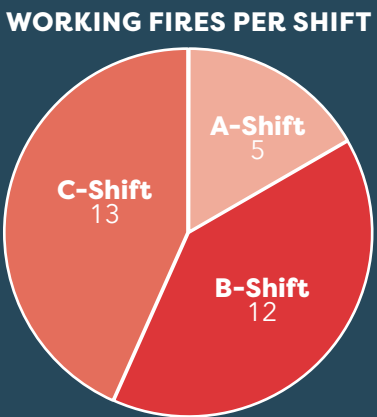
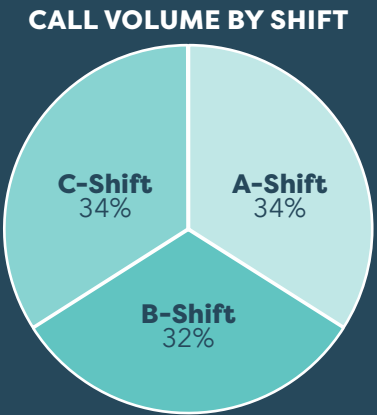
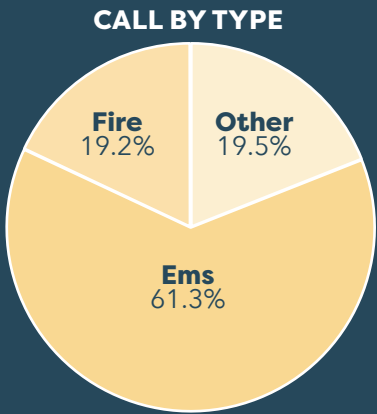
**CALL VOLUME DISTRIBUTION DURING 2023 PLACED EACH OF THE THREE SHIFTS WITHIN 250 CALLS OF ONE ANOTHER. C-SHIFT ANSWERED THE MOST CALLS FOR SERVICE WITH 3,411 RESPONSES OR 34% OF THE TOTAL CALL VOLUME (TCV).**

2023 saw a decrease in the number of working structure fires with a total of 30, predominately on B and C Shifts. This equates to a fire every 12-days in the City of Danville and impacted more than \$19.5 million worth of property. Danville Firefighters prevented more than \$18 million in loss of the \$19.5 million valuation. This figure translates to 94% property value saved by the men and women of the department through aggressive tactics, proficient operations, and quality service delivery.

As the Danville Fire Department moves into the new year, operational goals will focus on implementing adjustments that will provide for better tactics, continuous performance improvement, and acquisition of modernized equipment to serve the department well into the future. The men and women of the DFD will be provided with every advantage reasonably possible to assist in the performance of their duties, all in a concerted effort to better serve our customers – the citizens and visitors of The River City.



Hiring Task Team





# “A” SHIFT YEAR IN REVIEW

## Battalion Chief Thomas Napier

The Danville Fire Department continues to be extremely busy on a daily basis. 2023 proved once again to set new records for the department with the most calls for service in our history. “A” shift responded to **3,329 calls** for service and responded to **5 working fires**. “A” shift celebrated the retirements of Captain Ken Jones, Firefighter Kevin Strader, and Engineer Jimmy Adkins. These great men provided the city and the department with a total of 95 years of dedicated service. Their experience and friendship will be greatly missed. ENJOY, because it is well deserved!!! With these retirements, it opens up chances for promotion. This year, Will Stephens and Scott Burke were promoted and will do a great job at their new assignments.

Captain Minter has taken the Logistics Captain assignment with the recent retirement of Captain Thompson. I hate to lose him and his experience from the shift, but he will do well in his new position. Congratulations! The Engineers of “A” shift have also conducted “pivot training” to all companies and the feedback that I am receiving has been very positive and everyone seems to enjoy the hands-on training. Department personnel conducted “bail-out kit demos with the latest and greatest devices from CMC. These units have arrived and distributed to all personnel. In July, companies participated in the Active Attack drills alongside the Danville PD and the Danville Life Saving Crew. This training provided live situational scenarios inside of an actual school and focused on the responder roles in the event of an actual incident.

Personnel have also been attending numerous training classes such as AEMT, NIMS 300, Fire Officer 1, Confined Space, Trench, and Smithfield Truck School just to name a few. Captain Satterfield and Captain Poteat attended the Chief Officer Academy, Lieutenant Stowe attended the Fire Officer Academy. Engineer Farris and Lieutenant Stowe completed the National Honor Guard Academy. FF Alvis, Hines, Lewis, Wiles, Alderson completed the relief driver’s program and provide a great resource for staffing the apparatus with qualified relief drivers. Thank you all for your dedication and willingness to learn and further your knowledge, skills, and abilities to make us all better at our jobs.

The DFD has also welcomed some new personnel throughout the year with many “babies” being born to our members and their families. Congratulations!! “A” shift would also like to welcome **new hires, Brandon Howell and Jason Marston**. We also acquired **Engineer Adam Brown to station 4 and Engineer Tyler Shields to station 3**. As usual, “A” shift personnel have responded to many calls for service, both emergency and non-emergency. Our most recent structure fire on Schoolfield Dr. tragically resulted in one fatality. This incident is a poignant reminder to always prepare and expect victims until the scene has been thoroughly searched and cleared. Thank you for your hard work, bravery and commitment to our community’s safety. THANK YOU!

# “B” SHIFT YEAR IN REVIEW

## Battalion Chief William C. Smotherman

This has been an adventurous year for B Shifters. Per usual, we had many ups and downs. We are driving forward and not looking in the rearview mirror. We have made many steps to improve the department, one of those steps is bringing in classes and training to the firefighters. We have improved to be a much more progressive department from where we were just a few years ago. I want to personally thank all of those involved.

In 2023, the department smashed training record hours. There was training and classes offered and available for any to attend, one of these courses was the Advanced EMT. We partnered with the Danville Life Saving Crew to offer this course to firefighters willing to improve upon themselves. This is just one example of how we have progressed and improved on the training available to all members of the DFD.

Moving onto new hires, B Shifters welcomed **new firefighters to the shift, Jacob Thomas, Tristan Estep, Ernie Yoder, and Caleb Redd**. Congratulations on the recent promotions within our fire department! It's a moment of pride as we celebrate the career advancements of our colleagues! However, it's also a time of reflection and gratitude as we bid farewell to mentors and friends who have played significant roles in our journey.

We had some more good news, there were several promotions made through the year, and we want to send a huge congratulations to all of those moving up in rank and moving forward with their careers. With promotions, comes a price to pay for all of those moving up, somebody had to leave to make those empty spots available for promotion. It is always a sad thing to see your mentors and friends leave the fire department. We want to congratulate all of those that have retired and are moving on to the next big adventure. We wish them farewell and happy sailing.

Rolling into the calls that B Shift responded to. B Shift had a total of **3183 calls**. The call type we ran the most of was EMS calls, excluding vehicle accident. Engine 1 was the busiest engine on B Shift, with a total of **775 calls**.

As you can see, we had a busy year! We will diligently maintain our training and personal effectiveness. By working hard and pushing ourselves in training, we make real life challenges much easier to handle.



# “C” SHIFT YEAR IN REVIEW

## Battalion Chief F.D. Fowler

Charlie shift has had a very productive year. The year consisted of **3,411 emergency responses**, **7 working extrications** and **13 working fires** on shift. Most of these fires occurred in residential structures.

One major vehicle extrication that we responded to was located at South Boston Rd. and the US 29 Expressway. Upon arrival crews encountered an overturned tractor trailer. The truck was resting on its left side on top of a guardrail. The driver was entangled in the steering and dash components. Temperatures were extreme and crews had to work extremely hard to free the driver. Great job by all involved.

Another notable incident involved a structure fire in a residential structure on Arlington Drive. Upon arrival crews encountered a large amount of fire with fire showing through the roof. Crews were able to search part of the structure. The ladder truck was used to control the fire. Crews had to work in close proximity to trees and power lines where they did an excellent job.

Crews also responded to a structure fire on Garland St. Upon arrival they found a residential structure with the front of the structure heavily involved in fire. Crews entered the structure to search for a victim reported to be inside. They were able to locate the victim and bring them to safety, uninjured.

We have been able to get 2 firefighters through the relief driver program and have them relief driving on an engine. We also had 3 complete the Aerial operator relief driver program. We were also fortunate to gain three **new members** to the C-Shift team - **Firefighter Chaze Ellis, J.T. Watson, and Edward Wimmer**. We want to welcome these guys and look forward to working with them as advance in their careers. We've had two members join the **Tech Rescue Team – Zane Elder and Josh White**. Three members accepted to the **Swift Water Rescue Team – Zane Elder, Daryl Reaves, and Josh White**. Training Accomplishments on the Haz-Mat Team side include: Zane Elder - Chemistry of Hazardous Materials and Specialist Certification and Josh White - Chemistry of Hazardous Materials and Specialist Certification. Other notable accomplishment was **Daryl Reaves promoted to Fire Captain, Scott Burke promoted to Fire Captain, Taylor Vernon promoted to Fire Lieutenant, Adam Brown promoted to Engineer, Bradley Harris promoted to Engineer, and Trey Woodson promoted to Engineer**.

Special thanks to all personnel on C-shift. Your hard work and dedication to the citizens of the City of Danville is truly appreciated. You have touched lives and made a difference!



# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## Deputy Chief Tim Duffer

**City Growth and Development:** In 2023, the City of Danville witnessed substantial growth, marking a significant departure from previous years of decline. This resurgence is evident in various initiatives and milestones achieved throughout the year.

**Economic Progress:** The opening of the temporary casino stands as a testament to the city's expanding economic energy. Additionally, the Fire Marshal's office experienced an unprecedented surge in plan reviews, indicating a robust development landscape.

**Infrastructure Reinforcement:** Recognizing the need to accommodate the city's expansion, the Fire Department is proactively addressing infrastructure requirements. Plans are underway to rebuild Station 2 and Station 6, involving comprehensive studies and collaboration with public works partners. These efforts aim to ensure that our department remains agile and responsive amidst dynamic urban changes.

**Strategic Investments:** Securing an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), the department is poised to enhance its operational capabilities. The acquisition of a new cascade system and fit test system underscores our commitment to safety, benefiting not only the Fire Department but also the City Police Department and Water Treatment facilities.

**Technological Advancements:** The selection and signing of a contract for a Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system mark a pivotal moment in emergency communication infrastructure. Anticipated implementation by spring 2024 promises enhanced efficiency and coordination across multiple

departments. Furthermore, the establishment of a backup 911 center reinforces our preparedness for any contingencies, ensuring uninterrupted service during emergencies.



**Haz-Mat Team Excellence:** The Danville Haz-Mat team demonstrated commendable proficiency through rigorous training initiatives and equipment upgrades. Regional collaborations and outreach efforts underscore our commitment to supporting neighboring localities and fostering community resilience.





# COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

## Division Chief Shelby Irving

In 2023, the Community Risk Reduction Division (CRRD) became a full-time position in the Danville Fire Department. The focus of this position is aimed at **reducing risk through targeted, data-driven projects.**

In 2023, the CRR Division reached out to other city departments and agencies to extend a hand in prevention activities, education, and volunteerism to promote safety, and residential needs for the residents of Danville. This includes projects to provide food, shelter for the homeless, and resources for those in poverty.

The biggest wins of the year came with an additional tool for public education. A **portable fire safety house** was purchased to be used indoors or out. This piece of equipment will allow for programs to be taught when weather conditions are unfavorable and will eliminate cancellations due to weather. The partnerships with the Danville Police Department, God's Storehouse a local food pantry, and God's Pit Crew are favorable with donations, and volunteers. Through this partnership, food was provided to residents through donations from Tyson Food Company, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, and other entities. Christmas toys were provided to children, including gifts for the single mothers group. Donations were raised for God's Storehouse by organizing the first Bats and Badges softball game between the City and Pittsylvania County Public Safety employees. The Fire Department held food drives, participated in numerous public education programs, while volunteering at God's Pit Crew preparing "Blessing Buckets" for hurricane and flood victims across the country.

Community Engagements increased in 2023 canvassing neighborhoods educating residents about our programs while **offering home inspections and installing alarms.** This Community Safety Neighborhood Street Canvass became mandatory after a 2023 fatal fire occurred in a neighborhood where many of the residents are elderly. This program gives the DFD the opportunity to reach out to the community to address their needs during a time when an incident has occurred and an opportunity for the residents to ask questions about the city. The CRRD visits homes in the community that call the 911 system and the department for assistance such as lift assistance, residential electrical problems, food shortage, housing repairs and senior services.

Additionally, our long-standing programs continues to succeed in supporting the residents of Danville. These programs are designed to educate homeowners, renters, parents, business owners, our faith-based community, and those visiting the City of Danville. These programs include smoke alarm, battery, and fire stop installations, child safety seat installs, and public education programs. The programs have increased to address anything that may cause harm to someone such as slips and falls, medical assistance, senior needs, and homelessness.

The American Red Cross became a partner to support our **smoke alarm program** by providing the alarms for installation, especially the hearing-impaired alarms. This partnership saves the department thousands of dollars annually.

The CRR Director also facilitated numerous educational programs to hundreds of public contacts, including churches, radio programs, television, schools, clubs, social media outlets, and public events.



# TRAINING & SAFETY

**Division Chief Jon Yeaman**

2023 began with the Training Division working to wrap up the 2022 self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) mask fit testing and emergency medical services (EMS) training. This training also included our **company-based skill scenarios**. These company-based skills allowed companies to arrive at the training center and proceed through two real-world evolutions with very little input from the Training Division. This training although possibly very physical was a tremendous hit with the department members. It is very common for this training to bleed over from one year to the next because this is one of only a couple of training activities that require 100% attendance by all members including administrative positions because of the fit testing. March 1st the Training Division started another recruit academy comprised of eight men. These men endured an intensive academy lasting just over five months certifying them in all aspects of the fire service including but not limited to **emergency medical technician (EMT), firefighter level I & II, hazardous materials operations, National Incident Management System (NIMS), Traffic Incident Management System (TIMS), Mass Casualty Incident Management, rope rescue, surface water rescue technician, vehicle rescue**, and many more. All eight of the recruits were able to successfully complete the academy with seven of them still on the job today.

During the recruit academy, department-wide training did not stop. The Training Division was actively teaching several in-house classes including the newly developed "Casino Class." This class was a combination of all types of training including construction awareness, technical rescue awareness, mass-casualty training, etc. This class was in preparation for the construction beginning at the new casino site on the southwest side of the city. Also during the academy, the Training Division was able to offer and host numerous other classes to benefit the members of the organization. These courses included **Fire Officer I, NIMS 300, Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) Watercraft Operations, Trench Rescue Operations**, and we were again a host site for the Danville Area Training Center's Super Continuing Education (CE) Weekend. The Super CE Weekend allows EMS providers to obtain up to 24 hours of category one recertification hours for their EMS certification. Also during the academy, the department conducted our annual ability testing at the fire training center. The shift battalion chiefs organized this testing and with the help of the Division Chief of Training were able to successfully test every member of the organization. The agility times were again some of the **best in the history** of the ability testing. This continues to prove the physical fitness level of the organization is improving.

There were two very important first of their kind trainings that took place department wide during the recruit academy with the first being live fire training in an acquired structure. In the past we have offered this training to the recruits, but for the first time we rotated every company within the department to the acquired structure and offered them the opportunity to participate in live fire training. This training gave members the ability to see and feel actual fire and

heat in a somewhat controlled environment. Crews were instructed on **fire behavior, extinguishing techniques using water cans, hydraulic ventilation**, and more. The second of these unique trainings was an integrated Active Attack training with the Danville Police Department (DPD) and the Danville Life Saving Crew (DLSC). This **Active Attack training** prepared our responders for mass casualty incidents because of an act of violence. The first part of the training was classroom-based covering topics ranging from law enforcement terminology and techniques to mass casualty patient treatments. The second half of the Active Attack training involved our engine companies pairing up with members from the DLSC and DPD to form Rescue Task Force Teams. These teams were tasked with moving into an environment where a mass-shooting had occurred, perform rapid treatment of victims, and remove them to a casualty collection point. This training was also in conjunction with Danville City Schools as the training was held at Westwood Middle School.

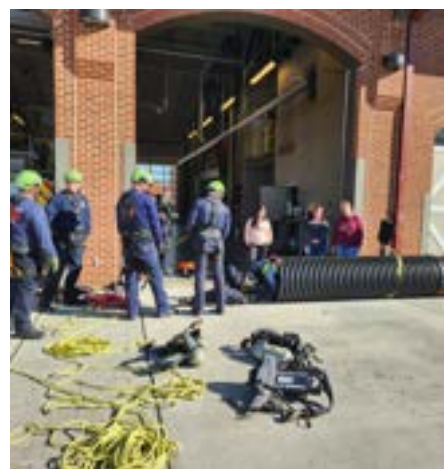
During the recruit academy and reoccurring throughout the year the department participated in a new form of training known as **"pivot training."** The idea of pivot training was brought to us by Deputy Chief Smith and consisted of one member of one company teaching a 45-minute training. The training was taught at our regional training center with all eight companies on duty rotating to the training center throughout the day. This training allowed for some great topics ranging from mobile water supplies to advancing downstairs to attack a fire. In addition to the great topics covered each member was able to **boost** their number of **facility training hours to 18** as required annually by the Insurance Services Office (ISO).

At the conclusion of the recruit academy the pivot training continued for the next couple months pushing out great classes and boosting facility training hours throughout the organization. In addition to the pivot training the Training Division was able to offer and host the following classes for the membership as well as others from across the Commonwealth of Virginia: Fire Instructor II, Confined Space Rescue Technician, Trench Rescue Technician, and Virginia State Police Fusion Center Liaison Officer course. The organization was also able to offer with the help of Deputy Chief Smith's contacts two great classes taught by outside instructors with one based on **"The Art of Reading Smoke"** and the other **"Building Your Leadership Resume."**

With the help of our in-house VDFP adjunct instructors the Training Division was able to conduct some very important mentorship and preparation of future instructors within the organization. We were able to secure and add three individuals to our in-house technical rescue instructor cadre by getting their train-the-trainer qualification in Passenger Vehicle Rescue Operations / Technician, Rope Rescue Operations, and Surface Water Operations / Technician.

2023 ended with the Training Division conducting the annual fit testing / EMS training. This year's EMS training included a review of "Red Dot" skills selected by the Western Virginia EMS Council. These skills are selected because of their extreme importance to patient care, knowledge / skill required to perform the skill, and assurance everyone is equally trained. Also included in this training was the incorporation of MAY-DAY / Rapid Intervention training. This training involved several skills using props and smoked filled rooms at our secondary training facility referred to as station eight.

The Training Division plans to keep moving forward in the year 2024 with the start of department wide CPR recertification training February 1st and another recruit academy also starting February 1st. In addition to this, we are **continuing to develop new in-house training courses** along with building upon our training facilities and mobile equipment.





# SPECIAL TEAMS

## Hazmat



## Honor Guard

Twenty twenty-three flew by and here we are starting off another new year. In 2023, the Fire Department's Honor Guard Team continued its rebuilding from uniforms to training. The honor guard participated in multiple ceremonies for 9/11. The team had the privilege of honoring retired members of our department along with their families in their passing.

In September, the team had 5 members to attend the National Honor Guard Academy in Winston Salem N.C. This weeklong training covered team dynamics, marching, Color guard, and how to honor a fallen brother or sister in the line of duty.

In October, the team conducted its first team training for all members allowing our newly trained members to pass along their training. In closing, 2024 is going to be a great year of training, learning new skills for all members, and remembering to always show everyone honor, dignity, and respect.

## Swift Water

In 2023, the Danville Regional Flood/Swiftwater Team completed its first full year of existence. The team consists of 31 highly trained members from all three shifts and day staff. This is to ensure that the citizens and visitors of the city of Danville have highly trained water rescue professionals working and ready to respond at a moment's notice each and every day!

Notable team accomplishments for 2023 include:

- Nine new members were added to the team.
- Over \$60,000 in grant funding from the Virginia Department of Emergency





Management (VDEM), along with local funding, was used to purchase two additional boats, motors, and a trailer.

- All boats were outfitted with toolboxes, first aid kits, victim life jackets, and lighting.
- New personal protective equipment, such as personal flotation devices and drysuit thermal layering, was purchased for the swimmers.
- Eight team members participated in a 72-hour Overnight Readiness Exercise in Richmond. This was the first of its kind EVER for the state of Virginia. We worked alongside teams from Virginia Beach and Newport



News. The mock deployment provided the members with a plethora of knowledge and experience that will continue to pay dividends to our team for years to come.

- We hosted two boat operator classes in Danville on the Dan River, with students from all around Virginia attending.
- For the first time in our department's history, we hosted a joint training with the Lynchburg Fire Department on the Dan River.
- Members were provided training from VDEM on the use of GPS units used to search for missing victims.

Our team members are required to obtain several stringent certifications through the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, including Surface and Swiftwater Rescue, Boat Operator, and Rope Operations and Technician. We are pleased to have 100% of our team certified at the Surface Water level and 81% at the Swiftwater level. Currently, we

have 12 boat operators, with the goal of adding six additional operators in the spring of 2024. While it may go unknown that rope rescue skills apply in the water, they are some of the most critical skills our swimmers learn. Rope rescue plays a vital role in water operations because we cannot always safely swim or get a boat to victims. Thankfully, 100% of our team is trained to the operations level in rope and 84% to the technician level.

In 2023, the team held four quarterly drills, which included the annual swim test for team members. We are happy to announce that 100% of the team passed the test and are in compliance with the requirements set forth to be a swimmer in our system. The drills also included a review of core water rescue skills, accessing a patient in the river by using a rope system, boat operator training with Lynchburg Fire Department, and GPS training with land navigation mapping.

Several of our team leaders are active on state committees through VDEM, influencing the direction of the water rescue program in Danville and across the Commonwealth. This includes training and development and recommendation, equipment research and testing, and creating standards for response. We are also thankful for our great partnership with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. We currently have an instructor cadre who can teach all the required certification classes for our members, and our locality has hosted several programs throughout 2023.

Lastly, this team would not be as successful as it is without the partnerships between some great organizations to help us gain our proper training. We would like to thank the Danville YMCA and Hargrave Military Academy for allowing us to use their pools and facilities for training. Also, a huge shout out to Danville Parks and Recreation for granting us the ease of access to the boat ramp at Angler's Park and maintaining clean bathrooms for us and the public to use. It is partnerships like these that make this team flourish like we do!



# SPECIAL TEAMS (CONT'D)

## Tech Rescue

### Members

Members Added to the Team: Aaron Turner, Joshua White, Zane Elder, Sean Gunter, John Whitlow

### Team Day Trainings

Heavy Vehicle, April 19, 2023, A-Shift: The team trained at JJ Hogan's wrecker lot. Two scenarios included a school bus lying on a car and a heavy truck on a car.

Trench Training, August 25, 2023, B-shift: Conducted next to Fire town. Included shoring an advanced T-shaped trench

Building Collapse Shoring, December 13, 2023, C-shift: Conducted at Station 8. Included using Paratech shores and wooden shores to stabilize the entire building.

### Rescue Challenge

Alexandria, VA, May 1-4; A statewide scenario-based training week. Danville and Lynchburg formed a team and participated in 8 different scenarios that required technical rescue skills to complete. The scenarios were trenches, confined spaces, high angle, wilderness rescues, Tower rescues, rope access, and even a rescue of a horse.

### Calls

Numerous calls including: Passenger Vehicle Extrications, 1 Heavy Vehicle extrication - July 2023 on 29 Bypass, 1 Confined Space Rescue - 1600 block of Franklin Tpk, 2 Rope related rescues - 600 Main Street, July 2023 and 5665 Riverside Drive, numerous building collapse by cars and trees,

### Equipment

Rope Rigging Bags - 2 New rope rigging bags with updated hardware

Rope Harness Bags - 4 New harness bags with top-of-the-line harnesses and rope hardware,

Milwaukee Battery tools - Used in fires, vehicle rescues, and building collapse shoring in 2023

Jet Pullers - Used in vehicle rescues and building collapses in 2023



## WHAT'S NEW? New Items/Updates/Systems

**New  
Safety  
Vehicle**

**New Physical  
Fitness  
Equipment for  
Focus on Wellness**

**New Go  
Bags and  
IFAK Kits**

**New  
Department-  
wide Spanish  
Course**

**New Gear  
Washer,  
Extractors,  
and Dryers**

**ISO  
Inspection**

**New City  
Mass Alert  
System**

**Training  
Room  
Renovations**



# EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

**Jacob Bliss**

The Danville Fire Department's Emergency Communications Center (ECC) processed 45,583 incoming 9-1-1 calls, 51,217 incoming administrative calls, and 34,879 outgoing administrative calls for a total of 131,679 phone calls in 2023.

## Top Call Taker by Shift

**A**  
Shift

**Heather Eakin**  
**9,648**

**B**  
Shift

**Steve Sutton**  
**4,868**

**C**  
Shift

**Pepper Travis**  
**9,098**

**D**  
Shift

**Steni Clarke**  
**3,553**



## Staffing

We were very fortunate to only have two employees resign in 2023. With those resignations we welcomed two new Telecommunicators to our team. Harrison McMillan joined us in March and Leanna Coderre joined us in December. Harrison was assigned to D-Shift and Leanna was assigned to C-Shift. Jacob Bliss re-joined the department in March as the 911 Emergency Communications Manager. Staffing levels were critical during the spring and summer for various reasons, but employees did an excellent job stepping up to make sure all shifts were staffed accordingly.

## Promotions

Telecommunicators Tristan Smith and Beverly Hayes were promoted to Senior Telecommunicator. Several other employees are continuing to work to obtain the required training and are expected to be promoted in 2024.

## Training

Our agency once again received the PEP grant and Steve Sutton and Jacob Bliss attended the spring conference that was held in Williamsburg, VA. Steve Sutton, Heather Eakin, and Jacob Bliss also attended the fall conference held at Hotel Roanoke, in Roanoke, VA. Steve and Heather both taught a session at the fall conference. Both the spring and fall conferences are hosted by the Virginia Chapters of APCO and NENA which offer a variety of educational sessions as well as networking with others from across the state. In June, Beverly Hayes and Brian Cochran attended the NENA National Conference in Grapevine, Texas. In May, Teresa Plummer and Jacob Bliss attended the FEMA NIMS 300 course that was hosted at Station 1. Multiple other employees took online training classes to go towards their promotion to Senior Telecommunicator, or to just further their knowledge of their role. Those classes include, but are not limited to, Communications Training Officer, Law Enforcement Communications, Fundamentals of Tactical Dispatch, Fire Service Communications, Comprehensive Quality, Disaster Operations and the Communications Center, Crisis Negotiations, Active Shooter Incidents, Instructor Techniques, and Cybersecurity Fundamentals. Teresa Plummer, Heather Eakin, Steni Clarke, and Rhonda Saunders also completed CIT Training offered through Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services. Throughout the year, all employees are required to complete different trainings to ensure they stay abreast on any new changes in the 911 industry.

## Telecommunicator Week

The second full week of April each year is set aside as a time to express thanks and appreciation for public



safety telecommunicators around the country. Telecommunicator Week was held April 9 – 15, 2023. This year's theme was a tropical paradise. Snacks were provided throughout the week for all employees. Multiple outside organizations also dropped off various treats and meals. The command staff of the fire department also cooked and served breakfast to all 4 shifts during the week. Each telecommunicator was adopted by a shift from the fire department, and received some of their favorite foods, snacks, and drinks.



### Awards

Steve Sutton was presented with the Life Saving Award. On the evening of March 5, 2023, Steve walked a caller through CPR instructions until responders could arrive on scene and take over. Because of his quick actions and instructions responders were able to get a pulse back and the patient made a successful recovery. Steve was also presented with the Telecommunicator of the year award.

In September, Jacob received an email from a citizen praising Latrice Garland-Stamps for going above and beyond to help her co-worker that was stranded in Georgia during Hurricane Idalia. Latrice was quickly able to determine which jurisdiction the stranded female was in and transferred her to the correct jurisdiction in Georgia. Latrice remained on the line to let the communications center in Georgia know her location and give them the details of what was happening. Latrice was presented a certificate for going above and beyond to help a citizen in their time of need.



In August, the department was recognized as an Accredited Emergency Medical Dispatch Communications Center, through the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS). Currently, there are only 17 accredited PSAPs out of 124 total PSAPs in Virginia.

### Information Technology

Throughout the year, the department along with our partners were presented several different public safety systems as the city prepares to replace its current public safety systems. In July, Teresa Plummer, Jamie Doss, Stephen Williamson, and Jacob Bliss traveled to Dinwiddie, VA to see one of our options for the public safety systems live. Work on the new public safety systems is projected to begin in early 2024. Work continued the backup ECC, located in the basement of the police department. Additionally, we added two additional television screens in the dispatch center. One screen displays the CCTV system around the building, while the other displays the weather, including live radars. The department also switched from using paper Daily Observation Reports to a more modern electronic version. In July, the department switched our recording software vendor to Carolina Recording Systems, as they offer more technologically advanced programs.

### On a Fun Note

Teresa Plummer, Steve Sutton, and Shannon Hudson helped the fire department with several community engagement events throughout the year. Pepper Travis assisted the police department with their annual National Night Out event, as well as community engagements walks. Heather Eakin also assisted the police department on community engagement walks, as well as volunteering at the PEACE Center. Several members also participated with our partners in the Active Threat Drill that was held in July.

Overall, 2023 was an excellent year for the Emergency Communications Center. We are very eager to see what 2024 brings.

# FIRE MARSHAL OFFICE

## Richard Guill Fire Marshal

2023 was a busy year with many changes within the Fire Marshals Office (FMO). The year started off with **two personnel completing the Law Enforcement Academy for Fire Marshals**. This long and very demanding class was a huge step forward for the FMO. Prior to these two graduating there was only one certified law enforcement officer within the FMO. Bringing all employees to law enforcement certified was a goal that was set and accomplished. This will be a huge asset to the office as well as the whole department and City as a whole.

The rank of the Assistant Fire Marshals was historically a Lieutenant, but in 2023 the rank was changed to a Captains position. This change allowed the FMO to be more aligned within the rank structure of the Danville Fire Department. Captains now can rotate into the FMO and serve 3 to 5 years with the option of transferring to other divisions within the department within the same rank. This should help with more rounded captains in all divisions before promoting to a higher rank. Before this change a lieutenant did not have the ability to transfer due to the discrepancy in the rank system. This should also help with filling vacancies in the FMO.

Prior to 2023 the FMO had conducted all the public education and public relations within the Department. The FMO has become increasingly busy every year placing a strain on the services delivered. In 2023 the Department created a **new position of Community Risk Reduction (CRR)**. This new position will detect problems within the community that are occurring and develop programs to reduce the occurrence. This position will handle public education and relations for the department as well. The FMO will also benefit from this program as it moves these duties mentioned away from the taxed FMO to the CRR Director.

The Fire Marshal (FM) Division Chief was changed from Shelby Irving, who moved over to take the role of the CRR Director, to Richard Guill previous Assistant Fire Marshal (ASFM). This change created a vacancy within the FMO for an Assistant Fire Marshal. Budget restraints prevented this position from being filled. Plans are to fill this position in the new budget year.

Fire investigations is a role that the FMO delivers for the department. The FM and the ASFM rotate weekly calls. Future plans include the **Company officers conducting cause and origin investigations while on duty** and the FMO personnel assisting in certain situations. Two Captains completed the investigation training and were certified in the four-week class in 2023. This was the first step toward the goal set for investigations in the FMO.

The FMO has seen an **increase in the number of plan reviews and inspections** in 2023. Construction started to boom within the city and several large projects began. This is exciting for the **city growth and the future of Danville**. The changes made and future plans along with the growth of the city made 2023 a **great year** for the FMO.





# GRANTS

## Assistance to Firefighters

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program is to protect the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards. FEMA provided the funding needed to purchase **a new Cascade System** to be used to refill breathing apparatus cylinders used in firefighting.

## Aid to Localities

Monies from Fire Programs along with city funds help to purchase one replacement apparatus each year for the Fire Department.

## JT Minnie Maude Charitable Trust

The JT Minnie Maude Charitable Trust provided grant funding for the department to purchase parkas carcinogen resistant turnout gear containers for 123 personnel.

## Hazmat

Funding through VDEM allowed the Hazmat Team to purchase **six new SCBA units**.

## PSAP

The department received a grant from the Department of Emergency Management. This funding helps to send three personnel from the Emergency Communications Center to the National Emergency Number Association conference each year.



Cascade System



SCBA Unit

# THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Chili Cookoff



Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Chili Cookoff



Chili Cookoff Winner



Chili Cookoff Judge Panel



Monster Mash Halloween Community Event



Monster Mash



Fire Hydrant Decorating Contest Winners





### Special Thanks for the constant support from:

City Manager Ken Larking  
Mayor Alonzo Jones  
Vice Mayor Gary Miller  
Councilman James Buckner  
Councilman L.G. Larry Campbell, Jr.

Councilman Bryant Hood  
Councilman Barry Mayo  
Councilman Sherman Saunders  
Councilman J. Lee Vogler  
Councilman Madison Whittle

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