

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

DURANGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT





MISSION STATEMENT

- Providing emergency services to our community ▫
 - Protecting our community from risk ▫
- Preventing emergencies through education and training ▫
- Performing all duties with courage, dedication, and respect ▫

VALUES

As a member of the team I will...

Provide a safe environment for my crew and myself.
We all deserve to go home to our families.

Provide quality emergency and non-emergency care to the public.
They deserve nothing but the best.

Encourage & respect all ideas.
Everyone's opinions are valued.

Be honest and treat everyone with respect and dignity.
Integrity has no substitute.

Be a mentor and teach others.
Embrace the diversity and utilize the knowledge and talents of those around you.

Communicate with my colleagues.
This will promote trust and understanding.

Have the courage to act and do what I think is right.
Believe in yourself.

Remember that the most important acts are often small in nature but large in heart.
Acts of kindness show compassion.

Maintain the integrity, morality, and ethical foundation of the Fire & EMS service.
Thousands have devoted their lives to create it.

Be the current representative, not owner, of our profession.
Be proud and shape the future.

Be an efficient and effective steward of the community's resources.
Without their support, we do not exist.



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TRAINING DIVISION
WILDFIRE DIVISION
EMS ADMINISTRATION DIVISION





FROM THE CHIEF

RANDY BLACK

2023 was an amazing year for Durango Fire Protection District (DFPD). There were a lot of changes—some long-term projects were resolved, and some new opportunities arose.

Fire Chief Hal Doughty retired at the end of 2023 after 13 years of service as Deputy Chief, then Fire Chief. There were many accomplishments during his tenure and we wish him well in retirement. DFPD conducted a nationwide search for the next fire chief. After going through the promotional process, the vote of the Board of Directors named me as Chief Doughty's successor, effective November 2023. It is the biggest honor of my career to work with the amazing staff at DFPD and to guide us into the future. DFPD is transitioning from a small to mid-sized fire district and has been experiencing some growing pains along the way. The entire membership will continue to work through those while defining the organization's future and will create a plan to set the department up for success in moving forward.

DFPD's Service Plan, which supports taxing ability, is a legally binding plan that is approved by the La Plata County Commissioners. The Service Plan was updated in July to be consistent with the current operations of the organization. This is a project needing review on a regular basis to ensure the plan is continually up-to-date.

From a project standpoint, 2023 saw the final solution to a fire station problem that DFPD had since 1983. Durango Fire (pre-consolidation) was separated from the Durango Police Department and placed in a temporary location. A forever home for this station had been searched for since. DFPD made numerous attempts at obtaining a new location, unsuccessfully. Finally, in 2023, the building Station 2 has occupied since 1983 was purchased. The process of rebuilding a new, safe, and built-to-current-standards station has begun. The project is slated for completion in the spring of 2025.



STATION 2 DESIGN

FROM THE CHIEF



In addition to the need of a new fire station, DFPD's administration outgrew the office space after 20+ years since the consolidation. While designing the new Station 2, office space was allotted for administration in the same building. When budget numbers rolled in for new construction at the Station 2 site, the project became unaffordable for this addition. Coincidentally, the same day the numbers came in, a building across the street from the current administrative office space/Station 1 went up for sale. This space provides for current needs and for growth in the future. It was also less than half the price of moving administration to Station 2 and has more than twice the square footage. The building was purchased and the administrative staff has moved in. It will be a great location to serve the community for the foreseeable future.

During the 22 years since the consolidation, DFPD did not have the financial ability to stay current on the rolling stock needs. After playing catch-up for a long while, in January of 2022, an order was placed for three new trucks: a 2,000-gallon tactical tender, a new in-town fire engine, and a 4x4 fire engine for the staffed Station 15 near Purgatory. Two of those trucks arrived in 2023, the third in early 2024. The two trucks were put in service, are amazing additions to the fleet, and have allowed DFPD to divest itself from older trucks. While the Fleet and Facilities Division does an amazing job keeping the trucks running, the availability of parts has become challenging in recent years. One of the parts the division struggled to replace, a speedometer cluster, kept a truck out of service for five months.

There are three more fire trucks on order that will arrive over the next two years. These new trucks will set DFPD up for quite a while, giving time to address other capital needs. In 2023 we also saw the arrival of three new ambulances. One was purchased by La Plata County using ARPA funds. That truck is specific to DFPD's contract with Mercy Regional Medical Center, to transport mental health patients to long-term care facilities outside of the area. The other two were 911 replacement ambulances. With 70-80% of DFPD's calls being EMS in nature, the ambulances get an enormous amount of mileage racked up in a short time.

As always, the staff of DFPD are the most important asset. As DFPD continues to grow, the goal is to hire and promote the best and most enthusiastic employees to ensure that the community is in good hands and served well. DFPD will begin 2024 with a new leadership team and a number of new employees. The future looks bright, the staff is amazing, and DFPD looks forward to what 2024 has to offer the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Black".

Randy Black
Fire Chief
Durango Fire Protection District

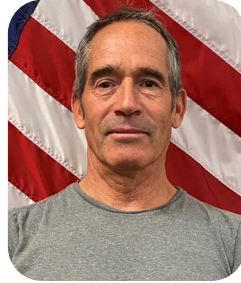




BOARD OF DIRECTORS



KAREN BARGER
PRESIDENT
TERM: 2023-2027



STEVE LIST
VICE PRESIDENT
TERM: 2022-2025



TINA MCCALLUM
SECRETARY/TREASURER
TERM: 2022-2025



SAMANTHA GALLAGHER
TERM: 2022-2025



ROB FARINO
TERM: 2023-2027



JOHN DEZENDORF
TERM: 2023-2027

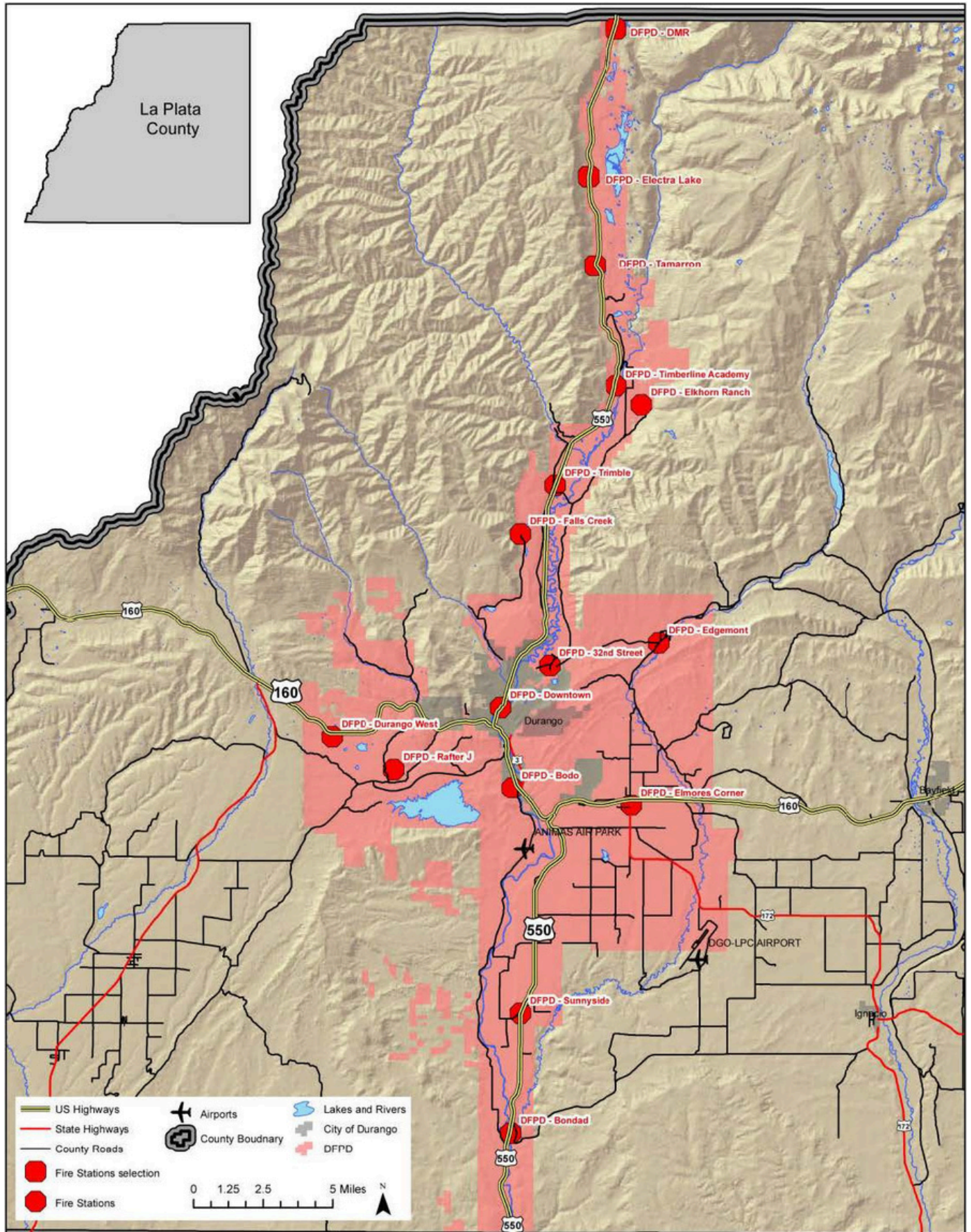


LYLE MCKNIGHT
TERM: 2023-2027

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Durango Fire Protection District is funded by a 8.2 mill levy from property tax and a contract with the City of Durango. The District is governed by a seven-member board of directors, elected at large. The governing board is responsible for, among other things, adopting the budget, appointing committees, and hiring the District fire chief. The fire chief is responsible for carrying out the policies of the board of directors, and is the Chief Executive Officer of the Fire District, hiring and managing all staff of the district.

DISTRICT MAP



DISTRICT MAP

BUSINESS SERVICES SECTION



-FINANCE-
-HUMAN RESOURCES-
-INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-



FINANCE

FINANCE has been awarded a certificate for excellence in financial reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association, annually from 2010-2022. A two-person office consisting of a director and administrative assistant, Finance is in charge of all day-to-day accounting functions for Durango Fire Protection District, including accounts payable, payroll, accounts receivable, and deposits. In addition, the Finance Director is responsible for the following:

- Provide regular financial reports and financial information to management and the Board of Directors;
- Confer with the Fire Chief to produce the annual budget;
- Work with external auditors to complete the annual audit;
- Prepare the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report;
- Consult with management on long-term financial planning and the capital improvement plan.

FINANCE

FULL ANNUAL BUDGET
AND PAST ANNUAL
COMPREHENSIVE
FINANCIAL REPORTS ARE
AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
DURANGOFIRE.ORG.



DURANGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND BUDGET VS ACTUAL FOR 2020, 2021, AND 2022 BUDGET

DURANGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND BUDGET VS ACTUAL FOR 2022 AND 2023 AND 2024 BUDGET

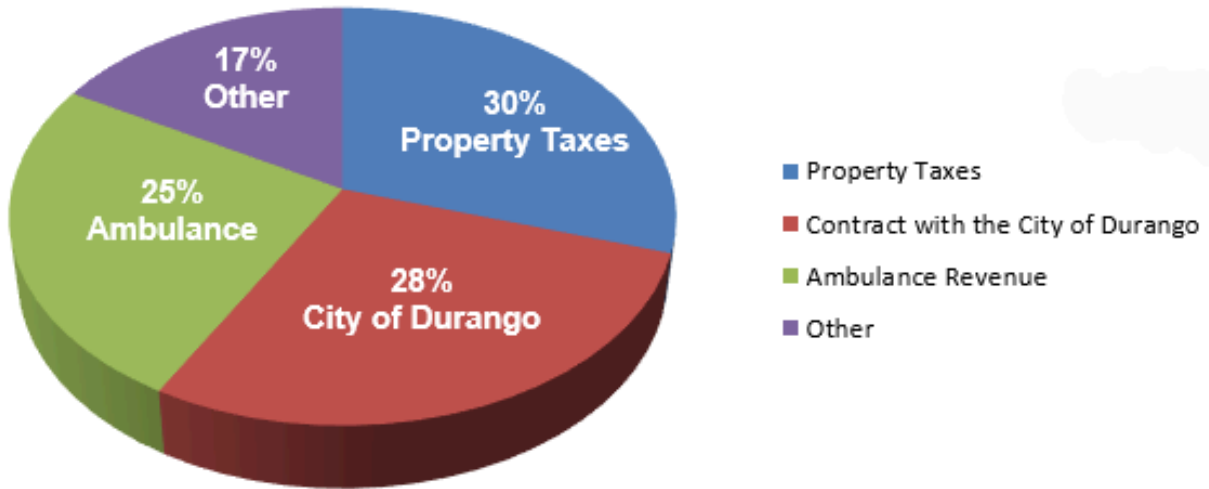
	<u>2022 Budget</u>	<u>2022 Actual</u>	<u>2023 Budget</u>	<u>2023 Actual*</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>
Revenues					
Transfer from General Fund	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,750,000	\$ 1,750,000	\$ 1,750,000	\$ 1,200,000
Capital contribution from City of Durango	272,052	272,052	272,052	272,052	272,052
Lease purchase funding	3,000,000	-	-	-	12,000,000
Impact fees	300,000	214,580	200,000	661,351	200,000
Capital grants	-	-	405,000	327,214	-
Rent	-	30,000	120,000	116,101	250,000
Sale of assets	-	-	3,550,000	3,630,537	1,200,000
Interest	2,000	5,191	5,000	31,826	5,000
Total revenues	<u>4,774,052</u>	<u>2,271,823</u>	<u>6,302,052</u>	<u>6,789,081</u>	<u>15,127,052</u>
Expenditures					
Capital expenditures					
Capital expenditures for Station 2	3,000,000	74,479	600,000	275,271	12,000,000
Purchase of 103 Sheppard Drive	-	-	4,300,000	4,144,474	320,000
Capital equipment	1,630,000	1,779,305	2,108,000	1,973,150	2,550,000
Lease purchase payments	100,000	-	-	-	-
Total expenditures	<u>4,730,000</u>	<u>1,853,784</u>	<u>7,008,000</u>	<u>6,392,895</u>	<u>14,870,000</u>
Excess of revenues over (under) expenditures	<u>44,052</u>	<u>418,039</u>	<u>(705,948)</u>	<u>396,186</u>	<u>257,052</u>
				Beginning Fund Balance (Capital Projects Fund)	1,067,863
				Ending Fund Balance (Capital Projects Fund)	1,324,915

* 2023 Results are unaudited.

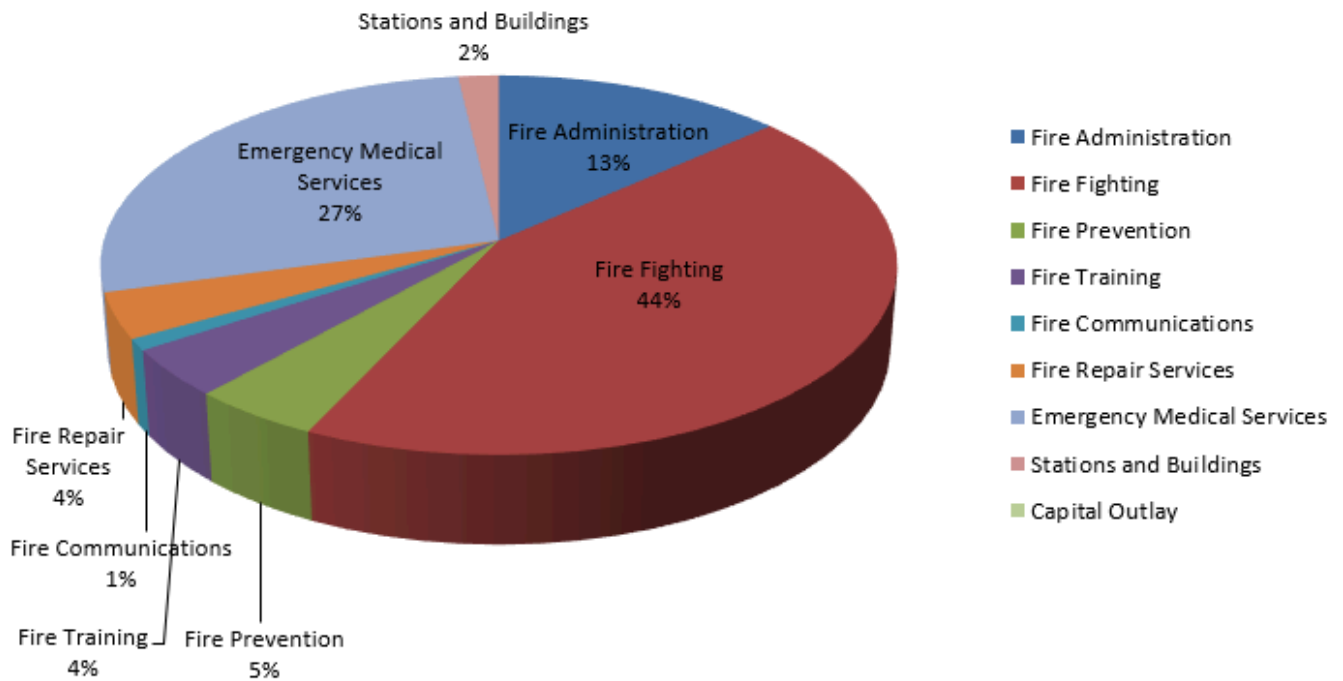


FINANCE

2023 Actual Revenue by Source



2023 Actual Expenditures by Department



DURANGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT GENERAL FUND BUDGET VS ACTUAL FOR 2022, 2023, AND 2024 BUDGET

DURANGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT GENERAL FUND BUDGET VS ACTUAL FOR 2022 AND 2023 AND 2024 BUDGET

	<u>2022 Budget</u>	<u>2022 Actual</u>	<u>2023 Budget</u>	<u>2023 Actual*</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>
Revenues					
Property taxes	\$ 5,022,454	\$ 4,954,588	\$ 5,227,708	\$ 5,174,783	\$ 6,458,353
Specific ownership taxes	1,000,000	1,087,206	1,000,000	1,019,568	1,000,000
Contract with City of Durango	4,934,504	4,918,398	4,910,344	4,910,344	5,735,059
Other local taxes	30,000	18,008	15,000	29,948	15,000
City of Durango capital contribution	-	-	-	-	-
Other revenues					
Ambulance income, net**	3,420,000	3,937,020	3,668,480	4,346,272	3,768,480
Fees for services	1,126,000	1,340,076	1,175,000	1,369,442	850,000
Grants	6,000	186,937	406,000	119,589	256,000
Interest	7,000	79,146	50,000	266,953	240,000
Miscellaneous income	60,500	45,666	60,500	97,666	80,500
Total revenues	<u>15,606,458</u>	<u>16,567,045</u>	<u>16,513,032</u>	<u>17,334,565</u>	<u>18,403,392</u>
Expenditures					
General government					
Fire administration	1,830,248	1,805,977	1,878,232	2,021,035	2,297,690
Fire fighting	5,550,850	5,827,852	6,477,100	6,577,723	6,532,500
Fire prevention	660,000	604,573	702,300	704,797	768,600
Fire training	619,350	547,094	649,900	620,305	856,100
Fire communications	166,600	177,198	167,100	148,045	212,002
Fire repair services	561,400	629,009	612,650	589,257	618,700
Emergency medical services	4,305,950	4,127,859	4,652,500	4,142,862	4,905,000
Stations and buildings	247,000	204,621	254,500	281,156	356,000
Capital outlay	-	78,848	-	-	-
Contingency	200,000	-	100,000	-	200,000
Total expenditures	<u>14,141,398</u>	<u>14,003,031</u>	<u>15,494,282</u>	<u>15,085,180</u>	<u>16,746,592</u>
Excess of revenues over (under) expenditures operating	<u>1,465,060</u>	<u>2,564,014</u>	<u>1,018,750</u>	<u>2,249,385</u>	<u>1,656,800</u>
Transfer to capital projects fund	<u>1,750,000</u>	<u>1,750,000</u>	<u>1,750,000</u>	<u>1,750,000</u>	<u>1,200,000</u>
Excess of revenues over (under) expenditures	<u>(284,940)</u>	<u>814,014</u>	<u>(731,250)</u>	<u>499,385</u>	<u>456,800</u>

Beginning Fund Balance (General Fund) 5,864,878

Ending Fund Balance (General Fund) 6,321,678

* 2023 Results are unaudited.

** Ambulance revenue is stated net of contractual and bad debt write-offs



HUMAN RESOURCES

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources was busy in 2023, staffing leadership roles and working to stay in front of challenging employment times. The largest role filled included a national search for the position of Fire Chief. DFPD had 21 applicants for the position, which was narrowed down to five Zoom interviews, then three in-person interviews. This process took three months and included several members of the organization and members of the community. It concluded with Randy Black being selected as Fire Chief, officially starting in November 2023.

Durango Fire works diligently to stay up to date with current salary and benefit trends. By doing so, recruitment and retention are not as taxing; however, just like other employers, DFPD has had a fair share of hard-to-fill positions. Skilled trade positions, such as firefighter/EMS workers, are becoming harder to hire as already-trained employees. DFPD has had great success with hiring entry-level employees and providing the required technical training in-house.

STAFFING NUMBERS BY POSITION

Fire Chief - 1

BUSINESS SERVICES SECTION:

Finance - 2

Human Resources - 2

SUPPORT SERVICES SECTION:

Deputy Chief - 1

Prevention & Code Enforcement - 7

Fleet & Facilities - 4

OPERATIONS SECTION:

Deputy Chief - 1

Fulltime FF/Medics - 72

Reserve FF/Medics - Approx. 15

Volunteers - Approx. 30

Inter-Facility Transport - 4

Training - 5

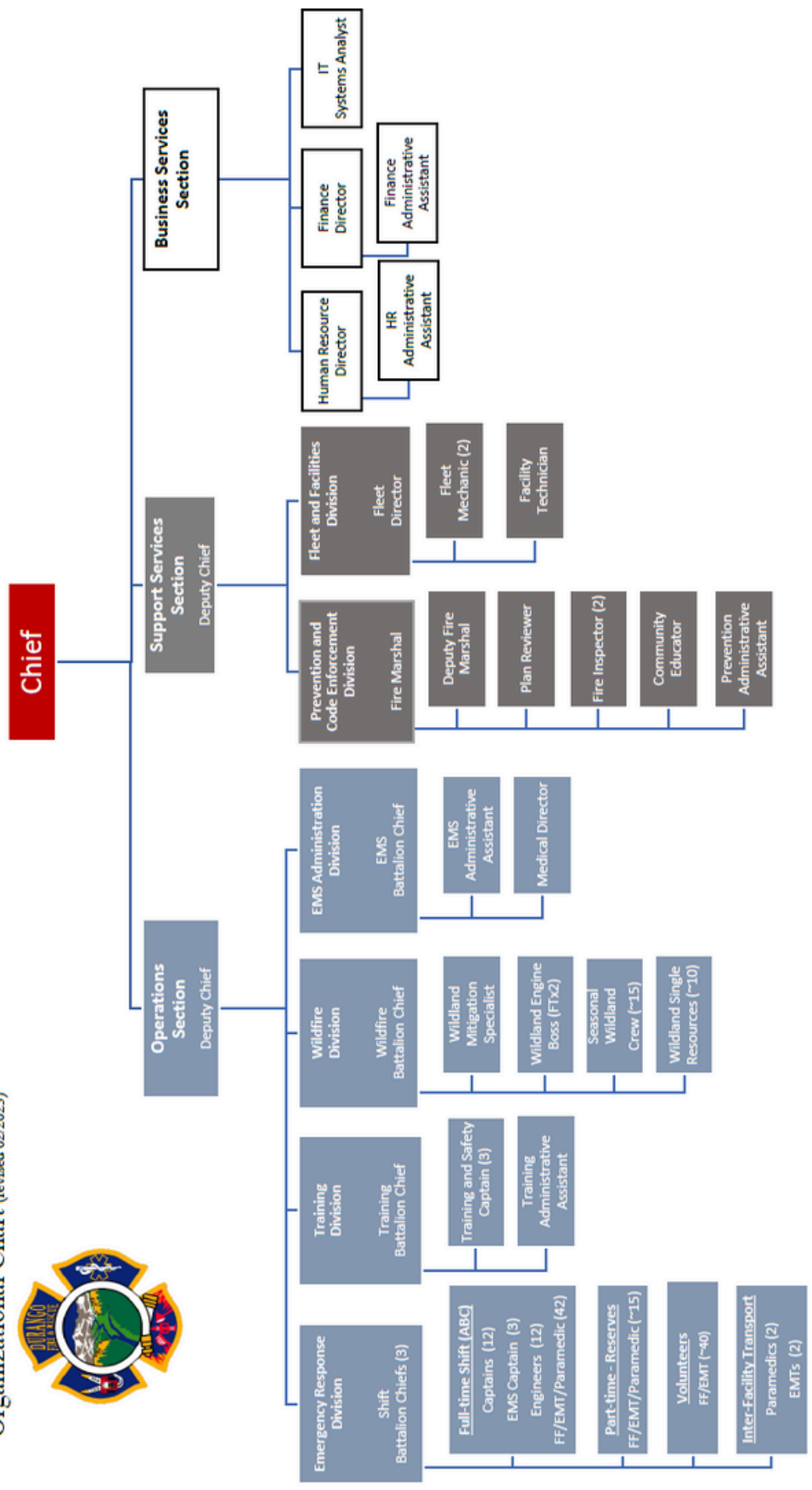
Wildfire - 22

EMS Administration - 3



Durango Fire & Rescue

Organizational Chart (revised 02/2023)



SUPPORT SERVICES SECTION



-PREVENTION AND CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION-
-FLEET AND FACILITIES DIVISION-



PREVENTION AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

PREVENTION AND CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

The Prevention and Code Enforcement Division evaluates incidents, educational programming, fire investigations, construction, wildfire concerns, and community needs to better facilitate the succeeding year. Following evaluation of the data, a community risk reduction plan for the current year is developed. The plan is broken into five categories: education, engineering, enforcement, emergency response, and economic incentives.

EDUCATION

One hundred seventy-eight community education programs were presented to 5,510 members of our community. The programs included dangers and challenges of smoking/vaping, first aid and CPR, fall prevention, home fire safety planning, fire extinguishers, cycling safety, careers in the fire service, culinary safety, suicide prevention, youth firesetting, and individually-designed programs for those with disabilities. Many of these programs are presented with partner agencies such as Community Connections, Senior Center, San Juan Basin Health, Suicide Prevention Coalition, 9R School District, Boy and Girl Scouts, Parks and Recreation Department, the HUB, Fort Lewis College, and La Plata Youth Services.

ENGINEERING

The Division works with engineers, planning departments, general contractors, state agencies, federal agencies, homeowners, and life safety system contractors to ensure construction meets the locally adopted code(s) that establish the minimum level of community safety, property conservation, and firefighter/emergency responder safety in our community. **Nine hundred sixteen construction and life safety system plan reviews** were completed. The impact of development on the Prevention and Code Enforcement Division has been significant since 2021 when the Division reviewed only 310 plans.



ENFORCEMENT

In 2023, the inspection program for the Division completed the following inspections:

1	Assembly Seating	36	Mobile Food Preparation
11	Bumpout	36	NFPA 13 Suppression System
5	Carnivals and Fairs	75	NFPA 13D Suppression System
2	Clean Agent Extinguishing System	10	NFPA 13R Suppression System
19	Construction	1	Occupancy Load Calculation
2	Elevator Interface with Fire Alarm	3	On-Site System
3	Emergency Responder Radio Coverage	301	Re-inspection
45	Exhibits and Trade Shows	2	Special Amusement Building
3	Explosive/Blasting	3	Special Event
30	Final Construction	2	Standpipe System
239	Fire & Life Safety	17	Temporary Membrane Structure
28	Fire Alarm & Detection System	24	Underground Water Supply
12	Kitchen Fire Suppression System		

TOTAL NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS PERFORMED IN 2023: 916

The **Open Burn Permit program** issued 59 new permits and renewed 412 permits. This program, approved by the State of Colorado Air Quality Control Division, allows the Division to locally approve small open burning projects that aid in wildfire mitigation, defensible space development, and ditch maintenance. It provides the opportunity to educate on how to burn safely, to have contact information for who is burning, and to reduce the volume of false calls. The District was involved in the issuance of 21 State of Colorado Air Quality Control permits.

False/Nuisance/Malicious fire alarm incidents continued to challenge our crews and inspectors with 465 incidents. For those who receive a fee from the Fire District for service to these calls, there is an offer of exchange of work performed on the system to negate the fee. The goal is to reduce the false/nuisance/malicious calls. This is a nationwide challenge.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Division is responsible for determining the origin and cause of fires in the District. Lessons learned from these investigations are used to educate the public and prevent future fires. Fire investigators are certified through the International Association of Arson Investigators and the National Association of Fire Investigators. In 2023, the Division completed seven formal fire investigations.



FLEET AND FACILITIES DIVISION

The **Fleet and Facilities Division** consists of a director, two mechanics, and one facilities maintenance technician. The Division is responsible for the repair, maintenance, and purchasing of all fire department vehicles and station needs. This Division also performs all NFPA-required testing for the fleet.

FACILITIES

Station 1 - 142 Sheppard Drive - Bodo Park Station
Station 2 - 1235 Camino Del Rio - Downtown Station
Station 3 - 770 CR 251 - East Animas/32nd Street Station
Station 4 - 8565 Hwy 550 S. - Sunnyside Station
Station 5 - 6342 CR 240 - Edgemont Station
Station 6 - 31263 Hwy 550 N. - Trimble Station
Station 7 - 204 Hwy 172 - Elmore's Station
Station 8 - 615 W. Fork Rd. - Rafter J Station
Station 9 - 50 Lazy Pine Drive - Durango West Station
Station 10 - 587 Elkhorn Mtn. Road - Elkhorn Ranch Station
Station 11 - 4040 Hwy 550 S. - Bondad Station
Station 12 - 225 Academy Drive - Timberline Station
Station 13 - 6363 Falls Creek - Falls Creek Station
Station 14 - 40839 Hwy. 550 N. - Tammaron Station
Station 15 - 44301 Hwy 550 N. - Electra Lake Station
Station 16 - 49816 Hwy. 550N. - DMR Station
Administration Facility - 103 Sheppard Drive
Fire Training Facility - 182 Sheppard Drive

UPDATES TO FACILITIES

- Complete rebuild of septic system at Station 15.
- Fresh paint in all station restrooms.
- Fresh stain and paint at Station 10.
- Purchased Administration building - 103 Sheppard.
- Secured downtown fire station location.



FLEET

- 17 Fire Engines
- 2 Reserve Fire Engines
- 2 75' Aerial Ladder Trucks
- 1 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
- 1 Tanker - 3000 gallon
- 1 Tanker - 2400 gallon
- 1 Tanker - 2000 gallon
- 6 Tankers - 1500 gallon
- 9 ALS Ambulances
- 1 ALS Interfacility Transport Ambulance
- 1 Hazardous Materials Unit
- 6 Brush Trucks - Type 6
- 4 Brush Trucks - Type 3
- 1 EMS Supervisor Vehicle
- 1 Chief Vehicle
- 2 Deputy Chief Vehicles
- 1 EMS Chief Vehicle
- 4 Battalion Chief Vehicles for Operational Command
- 4 Fleet/Facilities Division Maintenance Vehicles
- 3 Training Division Staff Vehicles
- 6 Prevention and Code Enforcement Staff Vehicles

UPDATES TO FLEET

- Final adjustments and testing on Ladder 2.
- Annual ladder testing completed on all three ladder trucks.
- Five-year testing on all ground ladders.
- Replaced apparatus:
 - Brush 34
 - Medic 10
 - Brush 30
 - Medic 1
 - Medic 2
 - Tac Tender 1
- Two mechanics trained in Emergency Vehicle Technician (Colorado and Texas) for certification to work on fire trucks in accordance with NFPA standards.



OPERATIONS SECTION



- EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION-
- TRAINING DIVISION-
- WILDFIRE DIVISION-
- EMS ADMINISTRATION DIVISION-

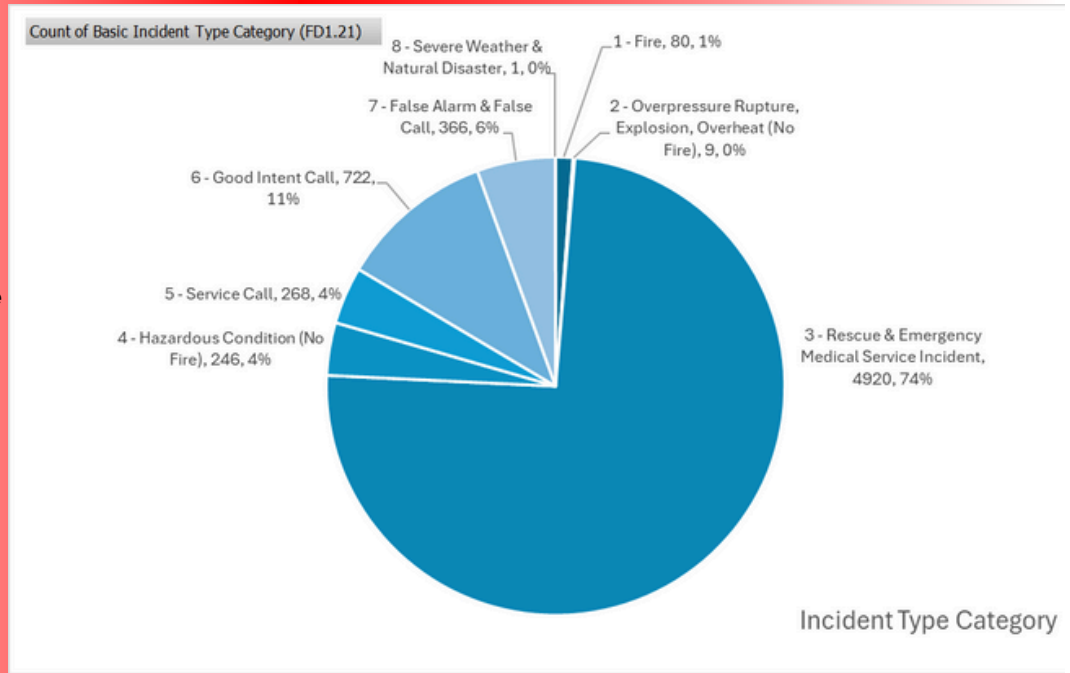


OPERATIONS SECTION

Durango Fire Protection District has 16 fire stations strategically placed within the district boundaries to maximize coverage during an emergency. The organization is the first due emergency response in the 325 square-mile district. DFPD also provides ambulance transport services to the Fort Lewis Mesa Fire District. **DFPD responded to 6,612 incidents in 2023.**

THE OPERATIONS SECTION CONSISTS OF ALL EMERGENCY RESPONSE, INCLUDING:

Structure Fires
Brush and Wildfires
Gas Leaks/Odors
Motor Vehicle Crashes
Fire Alarm Activations
Emergency Medical
Hazardous Materials
Swiftwater Rescue
High Angle Rope Rescue
Low Angle Rope Rescue
And many more...



The Operations Section is overseen by the Deputy Chief of Operations and Battalion Chiefs. Notice the staffing listed below--one battalion chief and five captains to ensure the proper supervision and activation of emergency crews. In addition, there are Battalion Chiefs who oversee the Wildfire, EMS, and Training Divisions. Daily responses to calls include full-time, part-time, seasonal, and volunteer members.

DAILY STAFFING INCLUDES:

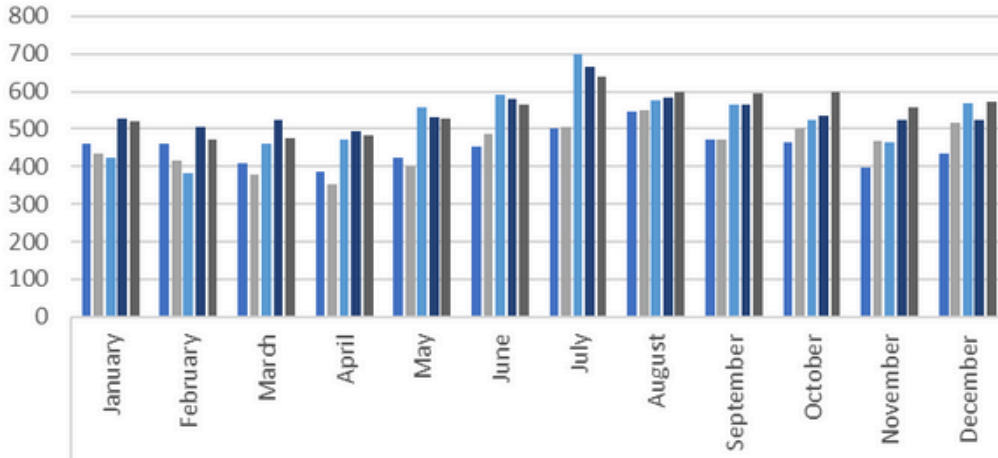
- 1-Battalion Chief
- 1-EMS Captain
- 1-Safety Captain
- 4-Fire Engines (with 12 firefighters)
- 5- Emergency Ambulances (with 10 EMTs and paramedics)
- 1-Non-Emergency Ambulance (with 2 EMTs and paramedics)



EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION



INCIDENT DATA - YEARLY COMPARISON

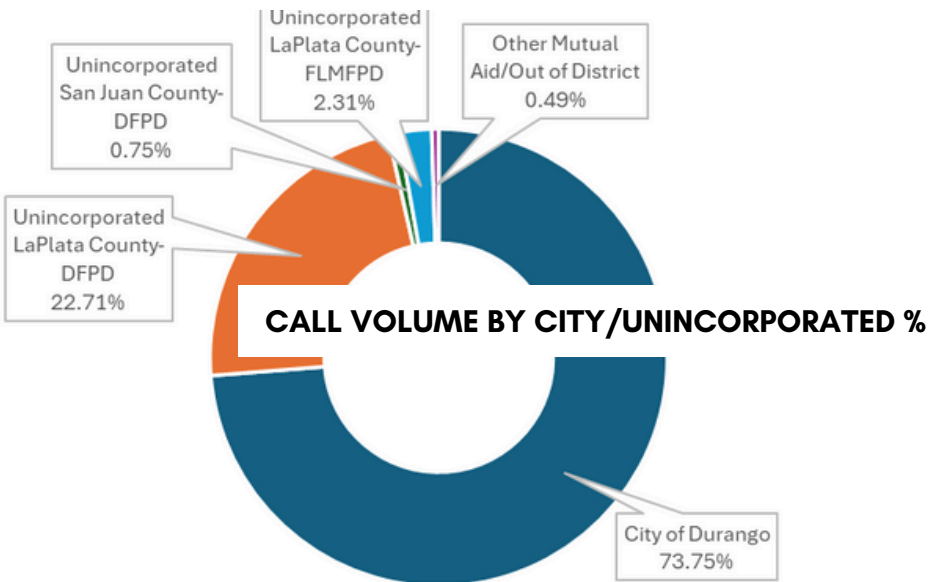
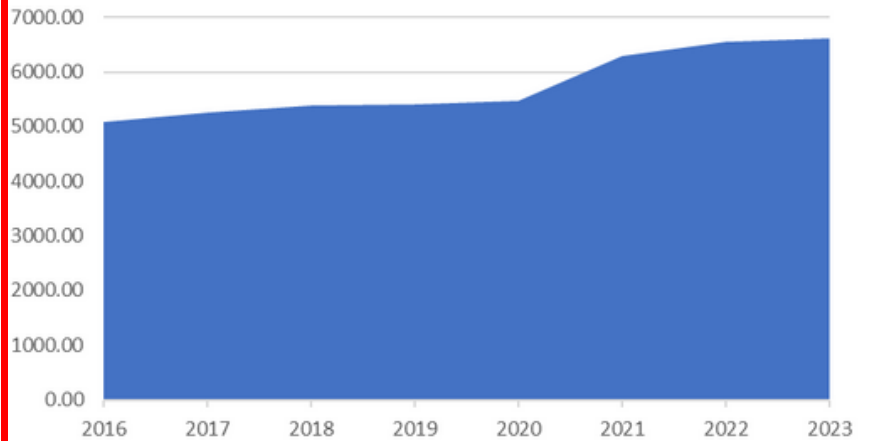


Total Number of Incidents by Month - DISTRICT WIDE

■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021 ■ 2022 ■ 2023



INCREASE IN TOTAL INCIDENTS



EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION



TRAINING DIVISION

The **Training Division** was restructured, starting in January 2023. The prior staffing model was a Volunteer Coordinator Captain, one EMS Training Captain and one Fire Training Captain, all on a 40-hour work schedule. The new model consists of a Training Battalion Chief on the 40-hour schedule and a Training/Safety Captain on each shift. In March, DFPD also added an Administrative Assistant to the Training Division, who has been a great asset to the organization.

The three Training/Safety Captains greatly changed the dynamic of what a Training Captain has to offer the department. Being on shift allows each captain to focus on their shifts' needs and dynamics, while working together to drive the overall department training. The other role that was filled by this position is having a designated Safety Officer on large or critical incident response. This includes, but is not limited to, motor vehicle accidents, technical rescue incidents, wildfire events, and structure fires.

The Training Division held multiple hiring processes throughout the year. These included promotional testing due to staffing changes and retirements, new employee hiring and onboarding, and volunteer recruitment.

2023 was a busy year for the Training Division. During the summer, there was a Firefighter 1 class with 13 students from various agencies. This included eight from DFPD, four from Upper Pine River Fire Protection District, and one from Los Piños Fire Protection District. Near the end of the Fire 1 class, 13 more students in the Fire 2 class joined, which led to some busy nights on the training grounds! Some other notable training events coordinated or hosted by the Division include Ice Rescue, Swiftwater, Ropes and Embankment Rescue, Live Fire Training, Pediatric EMS, OB/Childbirth, and many others. The Division is working hard to continuously improve the professional standards and qualifications of DFPD's firefighters, yielding a higher level of service to the public.

TRAINING DIVISION





TRAINING DIVISION



WILDFIRE DIVISION

2023 was an unusual wildfire season compared to the past 10 years. The year began with near record precipitation and cool spring temperatures. DFPD staffed its largest wildfire crew with 22 personnel. The slow start to the fire season allowed the month of May to be utilized for training on wildfire suppression tactics and strategies, backcountry medical scenarios, driving safety, mitigation planning, and prescribed fire implementation.

The **Wildfire Division** assisted with several prescribed fires (Rx) on US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. The most noteworthy was the BLM's Animas Mountain Rx. This occurred on the northwest edge of Durango and was accomplished by BLM in May of 2023. This burn had been planned for several years, and the conditions of 2023 allowed this to happen safely while meeting BLM's management objectives. This burn will help protect Durango for many years. Federal land management agencies in the area continue to be very proactive in vegetation management and prescribed fire.

In late June, a lightning storm ignited many fires in the area. Within three days there were three large fires burning simultaneously in the area and DFPD personnel assisted with those fires. July was hot and windy. DFPD assisted the Southern Ute Tribe through August, as well as provided an engine and incident management team members, to the San Juan National Forest through November. September brought cooler temperatures and enough moisture for the USFS and BLM to resume prescribed fire. DFPD was also able to assist in Bayfield, Dolores, and Pagosa. Despite a slow season nationally with the least acres burned since 1998, DFPD was still able to send an engine and several members to Oregon for two weeks to support incident management teams in Washington, Texas, Wyoming, New Mexico, and locally.

WILDFIRE DIVISION



NEW EQUIPMENT

DFPD received a new Type 3 and Type 6 engine and placed them into service in May of 2023. Both will support DFPD's commitment to providing increased wildfire protection to the community. DFPD was awarded a Colorado State Forest Service grant to purchase a large woodchipper and dump trailer. These pieces of equipment have made the mitigation efforts more efficient and effective.

MITIGATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

DFPD is a member of Wildfire Watershed Protection Fund (WWPF). The WWPF is an intergovernmental agreement between La Plata County, the City of Durango, and DFPD. The city and county contribute financial assistance to fund a WWPF coordinator and a grant writer. DFPD provides a workforce to perform some of the mitigation work and implement prescribed fire in mitigated areas. WWPF has assisted with mitigation along the Florida River/CR 240 corridor and stretching above Lemon Reservoir. This has been identified as a priority area based on the number of homes and the fact that the Florida River supplies most of Durango's drinking water and significant agricultural water in downstream areas. DFPD also partnered with Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) to develop the first real-time water quality monitoring on the Florida River. This allows for a baseline of water quality, and in the event of a wildfire, work towards the return to a pre-fire baseline implementation.

In 2023, the Division completed 100+ acres of mitigation on city, county, and HOA lands. Projects chosen were based on the number of homes protected and mitigation projects planned by adjoining owners (HOAs, BLM, USFS). DFPD developed a programmatic pile burn plan encompassing city open space inside Durango. This burn plan follows a national standard and allows other agencies to assist when conditions are appropriate. This assistance allowed over 500 piles within city open space to be burned in 2023. We also provided three days of free community chipping in 2023 as a test. There will be an increase of frequency of these events in the future. Most chips are donated to local biomass or compost companies to ensure the chips are not placed around homes.

The Wildfire Division worked with the Prevention Division to present several community classes about evacuation, home hardening, fire mitigation, and wildfire awareness. We also provided free wildfire risk assessments, many resulting in homeowners completing mitigation. One of the more notable successes of the WWPF was the creation of a wildfire resource center website that provides wildfire risk data for individual properties, completed mitigation, and maps to show homeowners their specific home ignition zones. <https://www.co.laplata.co.us/livingwithfire.php>

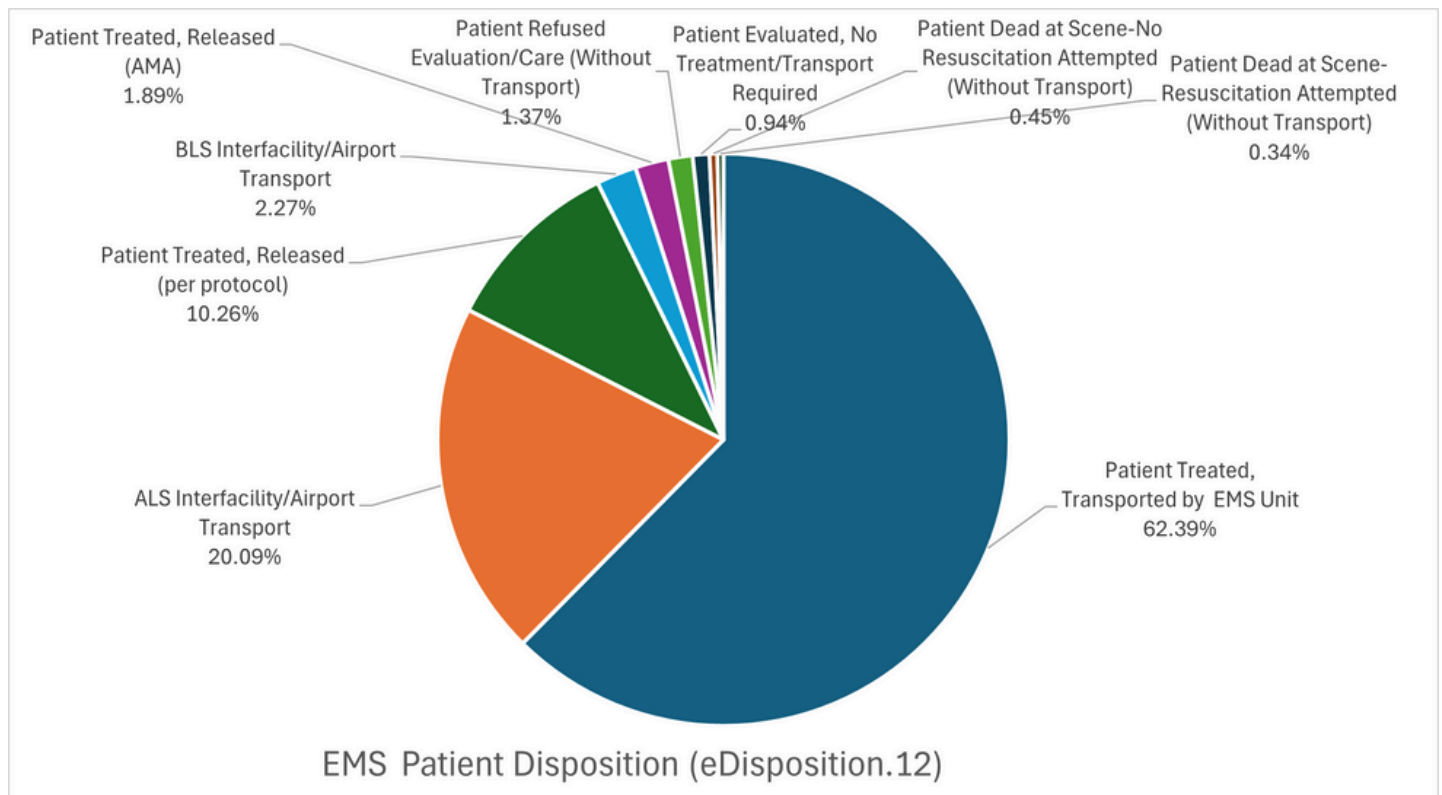




EMS ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

EMS ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

EMS Operations continued to be increasingly busy in 2023. As the community has grown, the volume and severity of EMS calls have also risen. DFPD EMTs and Paramedics responded to 5,087 medical calls and transported 3,240 patients to receiving facilities. Despite the increasing number of calls for service, as well as the challenging nature of many of those calls, DFPD's outstanding crew demonstrated a caring, compassionate, and professional approach to all patients. These factors are emphasized with regular training and a solid quality assurance process.



The long-range **Interfacility Transport (IFT)** program was heavily utilized again in 2023. This program provides scheduled ALS ground ambulance transport of patients to destinations out of the region. The IFT crew completed 165 trips, mostly to the Front Range, and occasionally to Grand Junction, Montrose, and other locations. These long transports take a toll on both staff and vehicles. We thank and applaud the IFT crew for another safe and professional year providing this vital service. DFPD was fortunate to replace the original IFT ambulance due to exceptionally high mileage with 100% funding from La Plata County through the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA).



After a lengthy wait—and stroke of luck finding two suitable chassis—DFPD also took possession of two new 911 ambulances in the fall. One of these new units was purchased with matching funding from a State EMS Provider Grant, supported by motor vehicle licensing. The completion of these two ambulance projects brought DFPD in line with the planned replacement schedule, decreases the downtime for maintenance, and assures safe and reliable ambulances to serve the community.

Cardiac arrest survival rates are one measurement of any community that supports quality CPR and AED use, as well as the EMS program that responds to provide a higher level of care and transport. Fifty-eight percent of patients who suffered a witnessed cardiac arrest had a return to spontaneous circulation prior to arrival at the Hospital Emergency Department. Of those, 29% survived, neurologically intact, and were discharged home. DFPD continues to seek ways to improve upon these and all types of patients we serve.

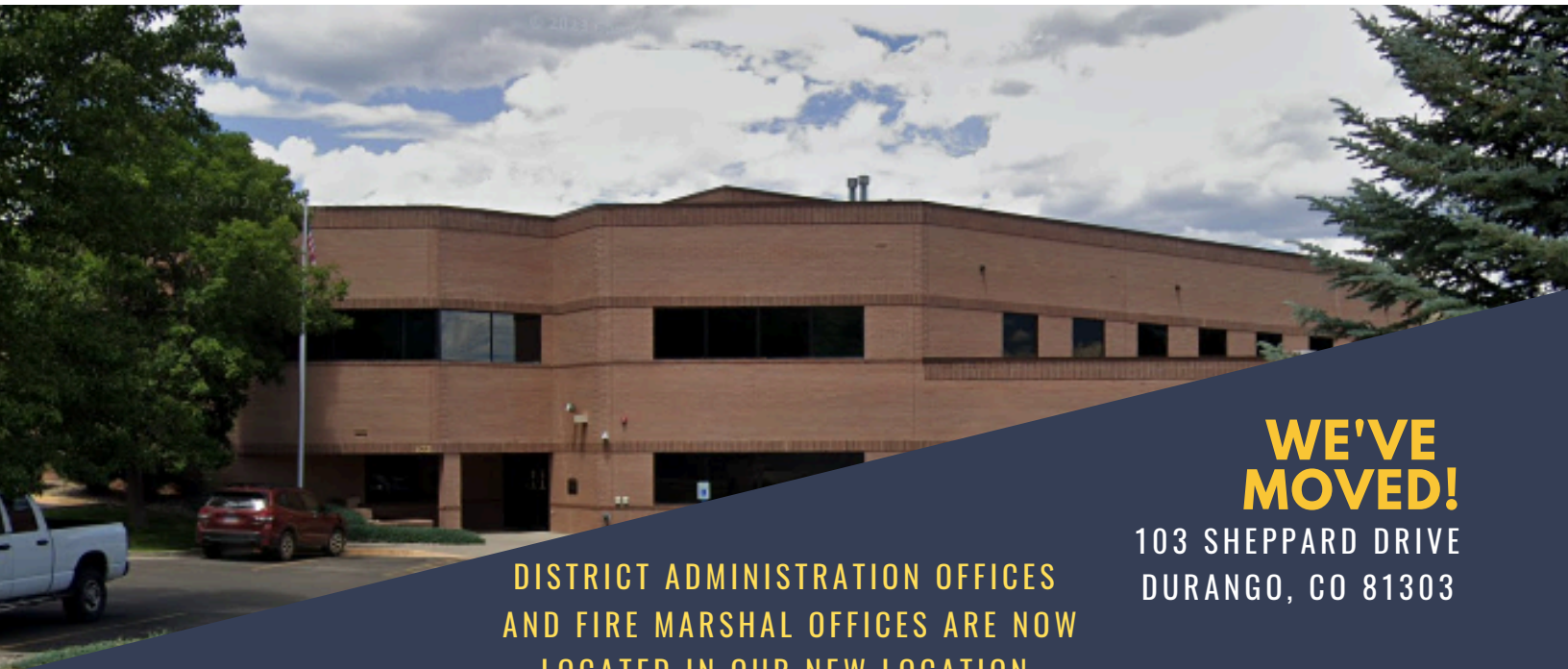
The **administrative team** continued to advocate for EMS issues at the local, regional, and state levels. Medical reimbursement structures for ambulance services and the sustainability of EMS systems are an ongoing struggle. Headway was made in 2023 by conducting and sharing ongoing research with legislators and state agencies on the critical disparities between costs and insurance reimbursement. Also addressed were matters of patient and medic safety, state grant funding, and ground ambulance licensing.

DFPD is also proud to have served the community through hundreds of man-hours of **special event medical staffing**. In addition to the usual events, such as rodeos, football games, triathlons, and cycling, DFPD staffed two new large multi-venue events and is working closely with event planners as special event demands in the Durango area continue to grow.





PREPARED BY THE STAFF OF DURANGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



**WE'VE
MOVED!**

103 SHEPPARD DRIVE
DURANGO, CO 81303

**DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OFFICES
AND FIRE MARSHAL OFFICES ARE NOW
LOCATED IN OUR NEW LOCATION**

***DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM OUR OLD
BUILDING IN BODO PARK**