

2024
1st Edition

Fire Line Newsletter

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Bringing in the New Year: 2024

I hope you had a safe and joyous holidays, as well as a Happy New Year celebration!

In review of 2023, we had an awesome year for Fond du Lac Fire Rescue and our community.

The first item that I want to highlight is this past “Keep the Wreath Green” campaign. Each year from Thanksgiving through New Year’s Day our three fire stations display a beautiful wreath on the outside of each building. The wreaths starts with green bulbs and anytime a fire is reported in the City, it is replaced with a red bulb. This past holiday season the citizens of Fond du Lac were extremely “Fire Safe” and we only had to changed one bulb to **red** on the wreath. That is **40 days** with only **one fire**. That is exceptional and is much lower than our past years average and much lower than similar campaigns held in communities throughout the Fox Valley. I attribute this success to our FDLFR Community Risk Reduction Division efforts on fire safety and more importantly, to the citizens of Fond du Lac taking extra safety precautions during this holiday season. What a great result from this campaign and let’s keep this reduction in structure fires rolling into 2024!

Additional accomplishment’s in 2023 include: a restructuring of the agency’s personnel and job duties that made an immediate impact, improving effectiveness and efficiency to our incident responses. We added programs to the department expanding in areas of mental health and wellness, new

processes for recruitment efforts, updated record management system and additional expertise in technical rescue through the WI Task Force 1. And all the while improving in these aforementioned areas, we continue to respond on more calls for service than ever before, nearly hitting a total of 8,000 Fire, Rescue and EMS incidents and responses.

As we keep the ball rolling into 2024, we have many great and exciting things to look forward to. First, we have five “in training” Firefighter Paramedic Cadets that are slated to be done with school in early-to-mid 2024. Tyler Kuske, Mason Jahn, Cody Clark, Amber Evers and Andy Hintz were all hired while still in paramedic school and by mid-year will all be completed with the FDLFR recruit academy, which is a huge welcome to the department staffing. Additional noteworthy items for 2024 include many improvements to our impeccable fire stations, including IT upgrades that allow for better in-station training and high speed apparatus doors that provide quicker responses of our apparatus and energy efficiency. Lastly, we will be having an independent 3rd party analyze and provide a feasibility study on our responses and incident locations in the city to see if there is a need for better coverage on the North side which may result in a 4th Fire Station.

The future looks bright for Fond du Lac Fire Rescue, and I am so excited for what the year 2024 will bring!

Until next time, be safe!!

*“Your Fire Chief”
Erick Gerritson*

...Acting to Save

Types of Calls:	November 2023	November 2022	Year to Date (2023)	Year to Date (2022)
Alarms Involving Fire	9	7	104	117
Fire Mutual Aid Given	0	2	15	12
Fire Mutual Aid Received	0	0	1	3
Other Calls (False Alarms, Service Calls, etc.)	108	76	1323	980
Emergency Medical Calls	547	582	5913	6059
Paramedic Intercepts	6	2	69	75
Interfacility Transports	17	54	415	458
TOTALS	664	665	7340	7156
Fire Inspections Completed	276	229	3485	2512
Defects found during Fire Inspections	76	119	1367	1313

CONGRATULATIONS!

Your continued commitment to the community and the FDLFR family is appreciated and valued. Congratulations on meeting this milestone!

Engineer Brian Munson – 25 Years

Lieutenant Matt Simon – 10 Years

Thank you!



Brian Munson

Hire Date: 2/15/1999



Matt Simon

Hire Date: 1/6/2014



EMS is Life!

By: Assistant Chief Garth Schumacher

Busy Year for EMS and Fire

I hope you all had a safe and enjoyable holiday season and you got all you wanted from Santa this year. 2023 was a busy year for EMS and Fire in Fond du Lac and it shows in our numbers. Below is the current number of EMS reports filled out by each individual Med Unit through November. Obviously, this does not encompass all the incidents the units responded on but it is a great indicator of how busy Fond du Lac Med Units have been.

Year to date we have responded on 89 Paramedic Intercepts, 120 Cardiac arrests and given Narcan 104 times with approximately 89 of those being suspected overdoses. The department average for members generating an ePCR is roughly 176 reports per medic currently in the ambulance rotation. The member who generated the most ePCR's completed 389, that's a lot of reports!

This year we are expected to once again surpass last year's run volume and quite significantly. It is my hope in the New Year we will be staffed adequately enough to match service demands and better respond to the increase in community needs.

In May of 2024, we should be taking delivery of a new med unit; we will then see our last International leave the fleet. The new med unit

will be on a Ram chassis and have the same module as the others, so functionality in the patient compartment will remain the same.

Overall, it has been a productive year and personnel have performed exceptionally when attending to our community and all the emergencies we have responded to throughout the year.

*Keep up the great work and be safe out there.
Happy New Year!*

MONTHLY RUN TOTALS		Med 21	Med 22	Med 23	Med 24	Med 25	Med 26
January	602	217	204	167	11	0	3
February	496	180	172	136	5	1	2
March	553	205	185	155	4	2	2
April	596	198	195	195	2	3	3
May	592	214	211	159	4	2	2
June	520	194	165	148	6	3	4
July	542	212	172	150	7	0	1
August	549	228	176	140	4	1	0
September	532	201	184	144	2	1	0
October	567	221	185	156	1	2	2
November	563	211	188	160	4	0	0
December							
TOTAL	6112	2281	2037	1710	50	15	19



Although it has been a mild winter so far, crews took advantage of the recent cold nights to train on water rescue on the retaining ponds at the Fairgrounds.





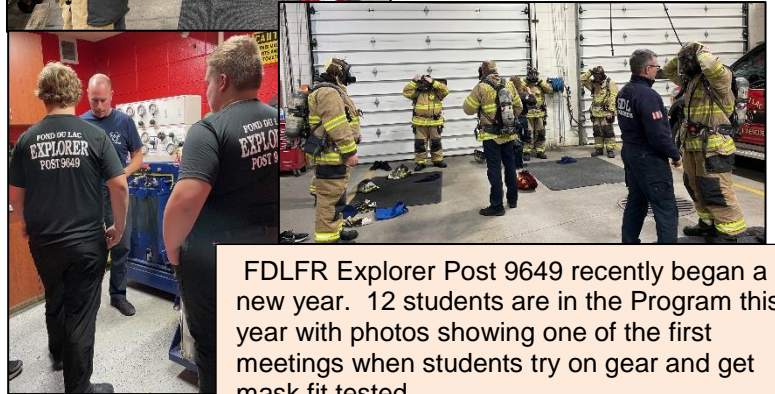
A big warm **WELCOME** to the newest members of the Fond du Lac Fire Rescue family – Cody Clark, Amber Evers and Andy Hintz were recently hired as members of the department. We look forward to these great additions to the department!



New members of the FDLR Honor Guard recently practiced their crisp movements for the very honorable events they are asked to attend. Thank you for joining this elite group.



The Bucket Brigade for Salvation Army was a huge success with \$22,896 being raised on a Friday morning with a match from the Osborn Family bringing the total raised to \$42,896. Awesome community spirit from our members!



FDLFR Explorer Post 9649 recently began a new year. 12 students are in the Program this year with photos showing one of the first meetings when students try on gear and get mask fit tested.



January

- Nate Philipisky
- Cade Curtis
- Patrick Hart
- Chris Behnke

February

- Dusten Hilgendorf
- Andy Hintz
- Jed Rathke
- Erick Gerritson
- Jack Prall
- Adam King
- Jake Vogds

March

- Cole Berendsen
- Paul Wilson
- Laura Ketelhut
- Adam Stephens
- Matt Simon
- Sean White



Well-trained people are the best defense against fire.

By: Assistant Chief of Fire
James Knowles III

The Difficult Decision: People First or Water First?

The three priorities on the fireground that are engrained into each firefighter include life safety, incident stabilization, and property conservation. The aspect of life safety is the most important and is very broad encompassing fire personnel and the affected civilians. Incident commanders, company officers, group leaders, and individual firefighters share the responsibility for responding personnel accountability throughout the duration of the incident. The same group also shares the responsibility to ensure that all civilians are removed from the structure or protected in-place until they can be removed, and Emergency Medical Services handle all injuries. At times removal may be a simple escort out of the building, while conducting primary search and rescue tasks,

and during unfortunate times when a deceased civilian is located later into the incident while performing a thorough secondary search.

Upon arrival of the first company officer, a quick situational size-up is performed and determination of which action is going to initially take shape – life safety first or incident stabilization first. Are we going to deal with the occupants that need to be removed or are we going to apply water to the fire first? Many factors come into play to answer the question. The number of trapped occupants, location of the occupant(s), extent of the progressing fire, location of the occupant(s) in relation to the fire, size and type of the building, accessibility to trapped occupants, and resources – equipment and

personnel immediately available to firefighters. If the life safety component of rescuing occupants from the building with no water, then the fire has the likely to grow into larger issues to deal with as time progresses.

Vice versa, if the decision of placing water on the fire right away to address the incident stabilization component, then the size and scope of the fire is decreased allowing the aspect of occupant search and rescue to be accomplished easier.

What is the answer? The type of building involved, the number of occupants involved, and the capabilities of responding fire personnel dictates it all. The decision ultimately lays upon the first arriving officer's knowledge of the responding resources and the capabilities to overcome the situation.

The answer may involve the domino effect – the fire rapidly progresses making access more difficult and traps more people, OR the fire is reduced in size minimizing the effects harming trapped occupants.

In fires involving single-family homes, most times firefighters will go for occupants first to remove them from harm and then deal with fire extinguishment, but in buildings that house multiple occupants – what is your decision? People first or water first? These questions are good round table discussions to implement with assigned crew members to gauge thoughts on different approaches toward the decision-making and tactical process of our fire responses.

In Their Own Words...

This section of the newsletter features a note or card received from the people we serve. Whether it is during an ambulance call, fire call, or a public education assignment, the members of Fond du Lac Fire Rescue are always dedicated to making their contact with area residents a positive experience.

Erick -
Please let your cousin and all the guys at the station know what a great time our Teen Group had yesterday. I'm told there were a couple seriously thinking about a career. Thanks for making it such a great experience!

Big Brothers Big Sisters
OF FOND DU LAC COUNTY



Community Risk Reduction & Life Safety

By: Division Chief Jason Roberts and
Community Risk Reduction Specialist Jennie Mildebrandt



Education

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division at Fond du Lac Fire Rescue rolled out an array of updated and new programs to our community in 2023. Staff and crews worked diligently providing over 30 educational programs to the community including fire extinguisher education, emergency planning and preparedness, hands-only CPR/AED/first aid and Close Before You Doze presentations. Through these presentations we were able to reach over 500 people throughout our community. FDLFR staff also built a new education program that incorporates a story and active participation with 4K students focused around fire drills, fire escape plans and a meeting place. A production of a fire safety video was distributed to grades K-5 along with fire safety literature and activities. This was the start for expanding our outreach to the schools (public, parochial and home schools) in 2024.

The 2024 year brings anticipation to release several additional educational programs to our schools. Fond du Lac Fire Rescue will be adjusting its focus on 5th graders to incorporate new education material and mini-lesson plans reaching all elementary grades. The goal is to have the greatest impact through messaging and building knowledge from one year to the next. FDL Fire

Rescue will continue to explore opportunities at the middle school level through culinary and baby-sitting education while expanding off the ACE program doll safety house involvement at the high school level.

The CRR Division has also grown its car seat inspection and installation program in partnering with SSM Health utilizing a State grant to issue free car seats. Fond du Lac Fire Rescue organized 1 car seat check/installation event and performed about 50 car seat inspections and installations in 2023. We plan to continue to expand this program and host a few more events in 2024.

Engineering

Fire crews have taken advantage of opportunities over the past few years to gain access, become familiar with and expand their knowledge with the occupancies being constructed, renovated or those incorporating new concepts. This is an important aspect to expedite the decision-making process and be proficient in an emergency response setting.

These opportunities have strengthened existing partnerships and promoted new ones while working together to protect the businesses and workers within the community. There are several additional

upcoming opportunities including Compeer Financial and Aurora Medical Center.

Enforcement

Fond du Lac Fire Rescue recognized that there was a deficiency in the re-inspection process. 2023 served as the first year of implementing a standard re-inspection process with education and monthly follow-ups for three months prior to enforcement. The change in the process has reduced month-to-month open fire violations from over 150 down to 90. This number continues to be reduced. The ultimate goal still weighs heavily on education over enforcement.

In addition to buildings, the CRR Division performs inspections on retail stores that sell fireworks and also completes site visits for use of illegal fireworks as well as for unauthorized burning. The message and education we provide is to make it clear that the risk is too great to allow these activities to occur. FDLFR will continue to take enforcement action on those that violate these ordinances and laws.



Economic Incentives

Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership obtained grant opportunities to enhance the safety of buildings in the downtown area. Owners have reached out to the fire department to install lock boxes to give easier access to the Fire Department in case of an emergency response. This effort by business owners has expedited operations for the fire department allowing them to clear one emergency and become more readily available for the next emergency as well as save property of the business owners when we are able to use keys or codes to enter a space. We encourage other businesses to reach out to obtain information on lock boxes keyed specifically for fire department use only.



Storage buildings are getting in compliance by having fire extinguishers placed on the exterior of the units every 150 feet, 75 feet of travel. This code was previously inconsistent in our community but with the follow-through, this allows users of the units, or those in close proximity who recognize a fire, to have

Community Risk Reduction & Life Safety... *Continued*



an extinguisher available should the need arise. Ultimately, access and utilization would reduce property loss in a fire event.

Smoke detection, fire sprinkler and fire hydrant existence and maintenance in buildings provides safety for its occupants and reduces potential loss of property or an entire building. FDLFR will continue to work through

education and enforcement to obtain compliance of these systems to mitigate any risks and provide long-term success and safety while operating within the FDL community.

Emergency Response

Fond du Lac Fire Rescue sustained significant property loss due to fire incidents in over 35 investigated fires in

2023. The CRR Division continues to respond to incidents such as repetitive alarms, cooking related incidents and falls to educate individuals and incorporate preventative measures to reduce future risk. These efforts have been supported through partnerships with the American Red Cross and the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC).

FDLFR has implemented a process to follow-up with fall victims with the goal promoting longevity and security with-in the homes. Fond du Lac Fire Rescue continues to promote sprinkler systems and install smoke alarms within the homes. Our goal is to expand our fire and injury prevention efforts within the community.

The 2023 Community Open House for Fire Prevention Week was a great success. Community members enjoyed the hands on demonstrations while learning to pay attention to fire prevention. Cooking safety starts with YOU!

