



# **BISMARCK FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**2015 ANNUAL REPORT**

## LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

The 2015 Annual Report reflects high levels of activity for the department in responding to emergency situations, elevating levels of preparedness, and promoting health and safety through public fire education and fire risk management services. This report provides information on the department services and the processes utilized to measure and respond to the increasing demands for service.

The department has developed and maintained many partnerships to work efficiently and collaboratively with stakeholders and other emergency response agencies. We promote information sharing and program coordination with our partners to ensure the best service delivery to our customers. The Emergency Management Program and the Community Emergency Response Committee are examples of successful coordination between city departments. Our mutual aid partnerships with adjacent fire departments increase our overall capabilities. In partnership with the State of North Dakota, we serve as a regional response agency to the southwest quadrant of the state for large scale incidents involving hazardous materials or structural collapse. We value the partnerships that are in place as we work to deliver high levels of service in the most efficient ways.

The women and men of the department are professionals that strive for the highest level of service, respect, and obligation to the citizens and visitors of Bismarck.

Sincerely,

*Joel Baespfug, Fire Chief*

Bismarck Fire Department

## *Mission*

*To be a proactive organization protecting health, safety, and property for the City of Bismarck.*

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## **STRATEGIES**

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### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Safeguard the community by providing appropriate personnel and equipment capable of effectively mitigating natural and man-made emergencies which are common or have significant potential to occur in our community.**

### **PREVENTION**

**Work to reduce the occurrence or impact of natural and man-made emergencies that are common or have significant potential to occur in our community by enforcing codes, planning, and educating the public.**

### **ADMINISTRATION**

**Provide the administrative organization processes and policies necessary to accomplish the mission of the department in order to provide the best value for the City of Bismarck.**

### **WORKPLACE**

**Provide a work setting that helps the employees use their abilities to accomplish the mission of the department while fulfilling their professional ambitions.**

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## **CORE VALUES**

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The standards for behavior that all employees are to model in their personal work behaviors, decision making, contribution, and interpersonal interaction.

### **Integrity**

- Trust, adherence to moral and ethical principles

### **Nice**

- Kind, pleasant, caring

### **Commitment**

- Engaging, involvement, dedication

### **Honesty**

- Uprightness, fairness, reliability

### **Excellence**

- Talent or quality which is unusually good and surpasses ordinary standards

### **Support our Neighbors**

- Lend a helping hand

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## *Emergency Response*

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### **2015 Emergencies**

The Fire Department responded to 3,831 emergency incidents in 2015. This is an increase of more than 10% from the previous year and 40% over the past five years.

During the year there was no loss of life or injury to civilians from fire. There were two instances where a firefighter was injured at an emergency scene.

Fire damaged approximately \$935,000 of property. The majority of this occurred in residential properties. Cooking related fires were the most common cause of residential fires. Over the past five years fire has destroyed approximately \$6,500,000 of property.

### **2015 EMERGENCIES**

<b>Fires</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Structure Fires</b>	<b>59</b>
Private Dwelling Fires (1 or 2 family)	(26)
Apartment/Multi-Family Dwelling Fires	(21)
Other Residential Fires (hotels, motels, etc.)	(2)
Other Structure Fires	(10)
<b>Vehicle Fires</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Grass/Wildland Fires</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Other Type Fires</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Emergency Medical/Rescues</b>	<b>2,609</b>
<b>Fire Alarms</b>	<b>652</b>
<b>Mutual Aid Responses</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Hazardous Materials Releases</b>	<b>72</b>
(spills, leaks, etc.)	
<b>Other Type Hazardous Response</b>	<b>88</b>
(arcing wires, power line down, etc.)	
<b>All Other Responses</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>TOTAL EMERGENCY RESPONSES</b>	<b>3,831</b>

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## *Emergency Response*

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### **TRAINING AND READINESS**

Equipment readiness is a constant priority requiring upkeep and checking fire apparatus, breathing equipment, monitoring devices, emergency communications, and an array of tools and appliances.

Fire personnel are professionals that are required to maintain their skills and competencies in Firefighting, Emergency Medical Technician, Hazardous Materials Technician, Auto Extrication, Technical Rescue, Physical Fitness, and Emergency Vehicle Operations.

In conjunction with the public works department, a systematic approach is implemented to flow fire hydrants and monitor fire flow capabilities through water modeling.

### ***FIRE SUPPRESSION***

- Conduct regular monthly fire suppression training that includes fire ground operations, hose streams, ladders, ventilations, breathing apparatus, and search and rescue to name a few topics.
- Special emphasis on new tactics based on recent scientific research on fire behavior.
- Hands on training in five buildings which were due to be razed.
- Firefighters each average over 20 hours of fire suppression training per month.



*Firefighters attacking a garage fire at an apartment complex. The fire is contained to three units, saving the remainder of the structure and units.*

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## *Emergency Response*

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### ***EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES***

- All emergency response personnel are trained to the National Emergency Technician level (EMT).
- Operate within a coordinated tiered response system which includes fire department response to medical emergencies such as persons having trouble breathing, chest pain, non-responsive patients, falls, stroke symptoms, etc.

*Firefighters Kron, Kanz, and Bogers train on CPR using the new 2015 backpack style EMS bag.*



### ***WILDLAND FIRES***

- Personnel ensure response readiness for wildland fire incidents to include wildland urban interface risks.
- Training is continual to ensure competencies and skill sets are maintained.
- Maintain working relationships and mutual aid partnerships with surrounding departments.
- Coordinate training with City Forestry on routine saw training.

### ***HAZARDOUS MATERIALS***

- **Maintained core competencies and skills in dealing with hazardous chemical releases.**
- **Personnel attended advanced training in Pueblo, Colorado on crude oil derailments, hazmat technician, and incident command for transportation of hazardous materials.**
- **Personnel attended advanced training in Baltimore, Maryland at the International Association of Fire Chiefs Hazardous Materials Conference.**
- **Personnel attended advanced training in Anniston, Alabama.**
- **The department trains quarterly with the North Dakota National Guard Civil Support Team and the training has included meth lab detection, equipment operations, railcars, hazmat IQ, and a multi-agency exercise at the State Legislative Chambers.**
- **Conducted 1-ton chlorine cylinder training at the City Water Plant.**
- **The department serves as a state regional response asset for the State of North Dakota to hazardous material emergencies.**



*A firefighter in a fully encapsulated chemical protection suit uses monitoring equipment to check for the presence of dangerous materials.*

### ***STRUCTURAL COLLAPSE***

- Training was conducted in the three disciplines of Structural Collapse (Shoring, Breaching/Breaking, and Lifting/Moving).
- Hosted statewide regional structural collapse training.
- Four personnel attended the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Office “Disaster City” training.
- The department serves as a state regional response asset for the State of North Dakota to structural collapse emergencies.



*Firefighters build “shores” to support the weight of a compromised structure.*

### ***AUTO EXTRICATION***

- Dedicated over 700 hours of training our personnel in basic and advanced extrication techniques, including big rigs, school buses, and exotic metals used in today’s new energy efficient vehicles.
- A special thanks is extended to local businesses for their partnership in allowing us to train on a wide variety of vehicles.

*Door removal and patient extrication following a traffic collision.*



### ***ROPE RESCUE***

- **Maintained skills and core competencies.**
- **Advanced technical skills and rope rescue capabilities.**
- **Trained with Safety Services at the Beulah Dakota Westmoreland Mine.**
- **Identified, preplanned, and trained within target hazards including the Event Center, Water Treatment Plant, water towers, communication towers, parking ramps, industrial sites, and outdoor sites for low angle rescue.**



*Firefighters training with specialized rope equipment for the removal of patients from difficult and dangerous circumstances.*

### ***CONFINED SPACE***

- **As a confined space rescue team, training is a high priority to ensure a high degree of safety. For every 10 persons killed in confined spaces, 6 are would be rescuers.**
- **Confined space examples in Bismarck include tanks, manholes, boilers, furnaces, sewers, silos, hoppers, vaults, pipes, trenches, tunnels, ducts, bins, and pits.**

### **TRENCH RESCUE**

- Hosted a statewide Trench Rescue training in conjunction with the North Dakota Firefighter's Association and D2000 Safety.
- Technician level training focused on resource needs, site control and management, general and specific hazards, collapse patterns and skills needed to safely conduct a trench rescue.
- Dedicated 560 training hours to Trench Rescue.

*Firefighters practice patient removal at Bismarck's multi-agency trench rescue training event.*



### **WATER RESCUE**

The purpose of water/ice rescue is to provide a first level of life rescue response to a number of locations within Bismarck.

*Firefighters Pifer, Rogstad, Miller, and Captain Schlittenhardt conduct ice water rescue training as part of their annual training.*



### ***EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS***

- Conducted Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC), for all emergency response operators.
- Training addressed vehicle inspection, maintenance, operation, liability, department procedures, ordinances, and laws.
- Field training consists of each person engaging in 4-hours of course training where maneuvers are conducted to address serpentines, restricted space backing, dimensioning clearance, and three point turns.

### ***HONOR GUARD***

The Honor Guard is a symbol of fire service tradition and pride. The members maintain proficiency and skills, and this is evident by their attendance at special events.



*Bismarck Fire Department Captains Hurt and Mehlhoff, and Firefighters Rogstad, Dahmus, and Huber serve as Honor Guard on the stairs of the State Capitol.*

### ***EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT***

- **The Emergency Management program is important to the overall city preparedness and coordination of large scale incidents. Focus areas include: continuity of government operations/business, mitigation planning, risk assessment, training/exercises, and recovery planning.**
- **Personnel from city departments maintain skills in the activation and functions of the Emergency Operations Center.**
- **Maintains the overall readiness of the center and personnel.**
- **Coordinated the development of two full scale exercises: The Active Shooter Full Scale Exercise and the Full Scale Airport Exercise. The exercises were designed to enhance our community preparedness level. After-Action Reports and Improvement Plans were developed to capture the lessons learned and to support continued growth in our response capabilities and level of preparedness of the community level. Total participation in both exercises among response agencies, hospitals, schools, volunteers, volunteer agencies, and other partners exceeds 900 personnel.**
- **Coordinated the development of the Bismarck Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan which was approved by FEMA as of June 1, 2015. The plan identifies risk, vulnerability, and mitigation action items relating to 16 identified hazards including natural, technological, and human-caused hazards. The plan is made available to the public via the city's website.**



*June 2015 storm damage.*



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## Prevention

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The department places a high priority on fire prevention. Fire safety inspections of buildings and events are one effective means to provide a safer environment by reducing risk for the occupants. Our staff inspects nearly 4,000 sites each year. These are places and buildings that the public visit and have an expectation of reasonable safety. It is not unusual for our staff to identify a fire code safety violation during a fire inspection. In 2015, there were 1,832 code violations cited and by the end of the year over 90% of them were already corrected. This demonstrates that the program is effective and it provides a risk management service to the community.

Prior to construction, our staff reviews the plans to ensure proper fire safety measures are provided, fire protection systems are correct, and emergency communication devices are provided.

The department continually disseminates fire safety information to the public through a number of medias. Events are conducted within the fire stations, at the schools, community social events, and at businesses. It is estimated that these safety events were delivered to over 11,000 children and adults in 2015. By being proactive in the delivery of fire safety education, we believe that persons are better prepared to identify fire risks and what actions to take in the event of a fire emergency.



*Firefighters Anderson and Johnsrud teaching the students that firefighters are their friends.*

Every fire is investigated to determine where it may have originated from and what caused it to occur. This information may identify human behavior trends that will be followed up with correlating fire education efforts. The fire investigation may identify that the fire was not accidental and will prompt the involvement of law enforcement.

*A Bismarck fire investigator examines and documents wiring that may have ignited a fire as part of the investigation process.*



## Administration

The fire department provides emergency services from five fire stations that are located across the city. Each of the stations is staffed on a 24-hour basis with 3-4 persons on each fire engine. Depending upon the type of emergency, personnel from either one, or from multiple stations, will respond. The number of emergency responses from each of the fire stations in 2015 was:

Headquarters	1,431
Expressway	1,159
Divide	896
Lockport	774
Tyler Parkway	774

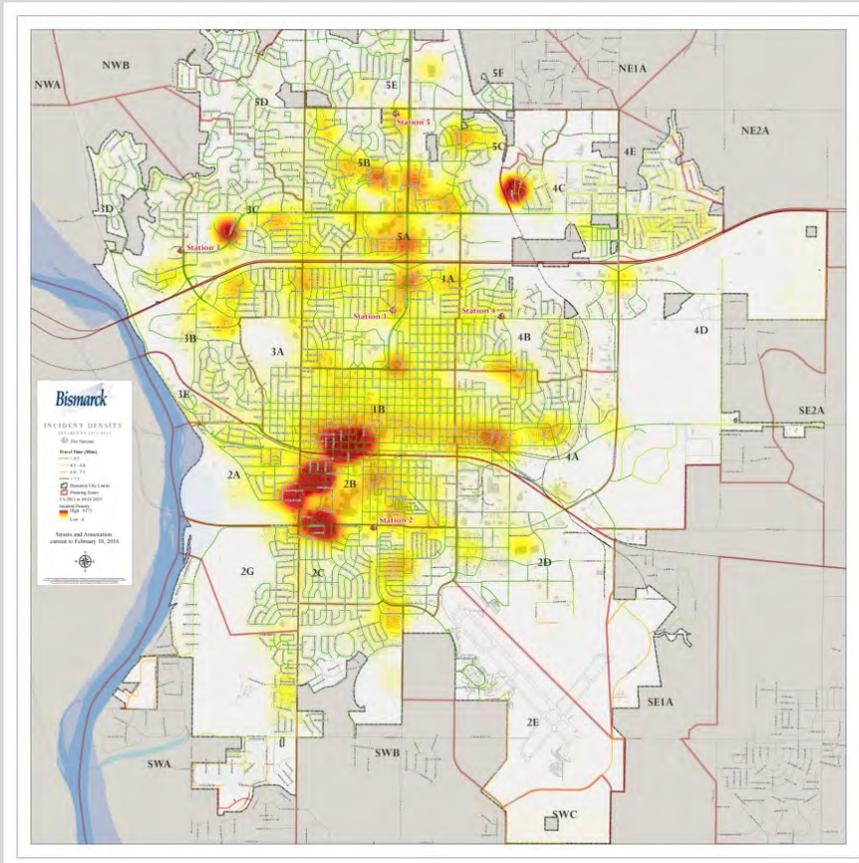


Providing high quality fire protection services in a growing community requires constant attention to the changing areas and trends.

Performance Analysis and Growth Management Review is performed through the use of 32 planning zones. Each zone is measured in regard to the types of fire risks, size of buildings, population, demand for service, and

emergency response times. This process provides us with the information necessary to maintain professional and prompt services, and to recommend placement of existing or new resources.

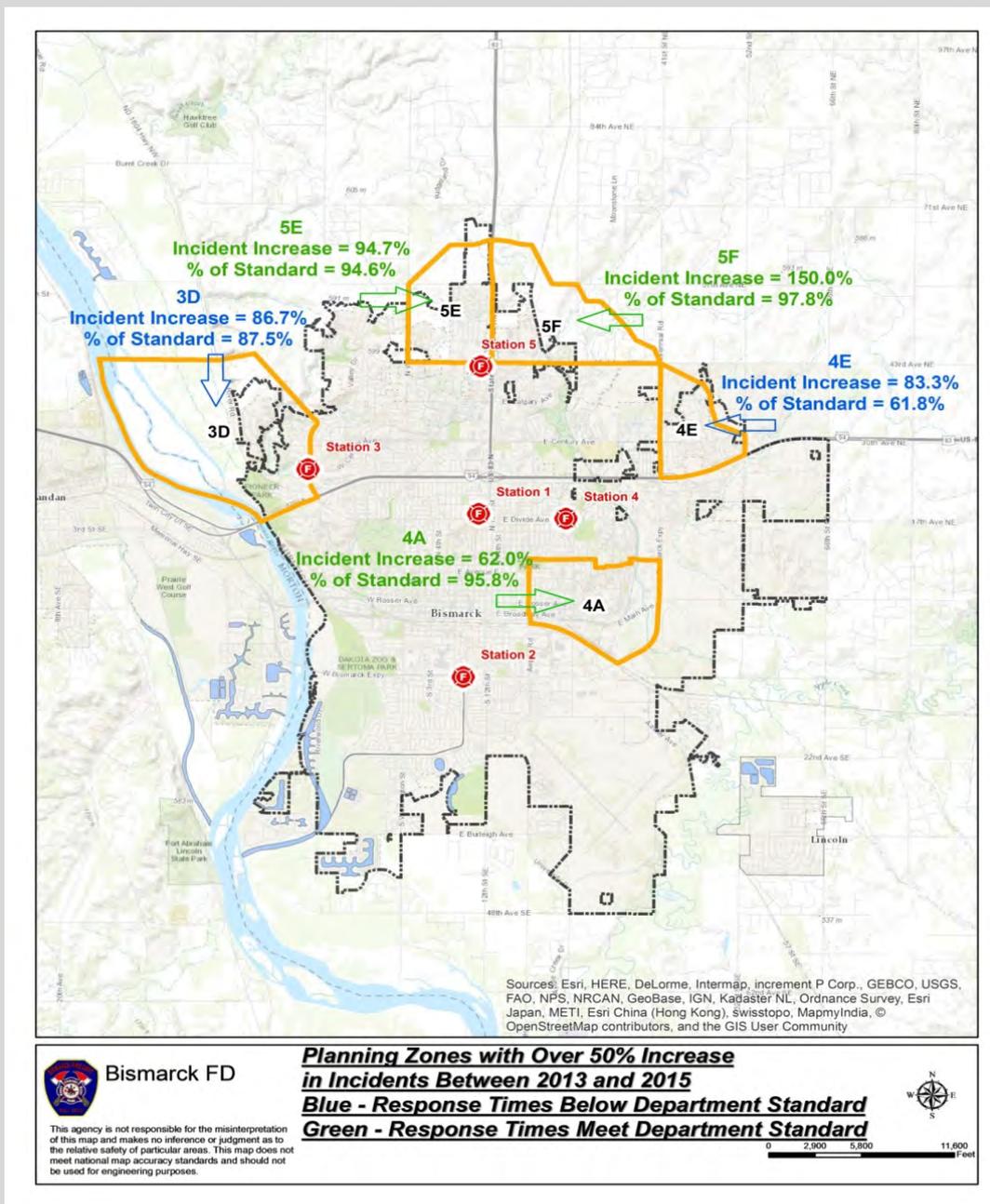
For all emergency events that occur, our standard is to be on-scene and engaged in emergency response activities within 6 minutes, 90% of the time. Weekly performance reviews are conducted to evaluate emergency response times to actual incidents. Response time modeling is conducted through GIS and Street Networks to help measure our response capabilities to all areas of the cities. In 2015, the department met the 6-minute response standard 93.1% of the time in response to emergencies. The 6-minute standard was met 95% of the time when the emergency incident was a structure fire.



*Fire incidents from 2011 – 2015 overlaid on planning zone map. The technology visualizes trends associated with community growth.*

## Administration

In review of the 32 planning zones, five planning zones saw significant increases in the demand for service (over 50%) since 2013. In three of these five zones, the department's response is meeting the standard with over 90% compliance to the 6-minute goal. Two of the five zones do not meet the 90% standard. One met the standard 87.5% of the time, and one met it only 61.8% of the time. This is zone 4E in the northeast part of the city. Though the overall number of emergencies occurring in 4E is still low due to it being a new growth area, the planning zone information indicates future action needs. The response time performance is being addressed through a proposed relocation of the station at 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Divide Avenue to a site further east and north, the 4000 block of Divide Avenue.



### PROJECT LIFESAVER

Cognitive and developmental impairments affecting young children and older adults are growing at a rapid rate across the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control, one in fifty children born is affected by Autism. The American Health Assistance Foundation reports that one person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's approximately every 69 seconds.

In order to address this identified growing need, the Bismarck Fire Department designed and developed an interactive Safety Coalition and Campaign for the purpose of identification, intervention, and interaction to this important high-risk population in the City. Families Affected by Autism/Alzheimer's Coalition for Education (F.A.A.C.E) Safety Campaign was implemented in February 2015 for the following purpose:

- To establish a "face" for identification, with all Bismarck Stakeholders who have an interest in the well-being and safety of individuals affected by Autism/Alzheimer's, i.e.; firefighters, police officers, health officials, parents, practitioners, and caregivers.
- To encourage an awareness for public safety responders of the unique challenges they may "face" before, during, and after an emergency affecting an individual with Autism/Alzheimer's.
- To educate families/individuals "faced" by the effects of Autism/Alzheimer's, to critical fire and safety measures and tools available before, during, and after an emergency.

Recently, F.A.A.C.E helped facilitate the implementation of the nationally recognized program "Project Lifesaver" for Bismarck and the State of North Dakota. Project Lifesaver provides police, fire, and other first responders a comprehensive proven program including data-base, equipment, and training to quickly locate and rescue "at risk" individuals with cognitive disorders who are at constant risk to the life threatening behavior of wandering including those with Alzheimer's disease, Autism, and Down syndrome. The Bismarck Fire Department is proud to be partnering with "Project Lifesaver" on behalf of the families and individuals "at risk" to wandering and other emergencies, living within our community. We are also currently testing and training with the "radio telemetry technology" provided by "Project Lifesaver", for the viability and limitations for an interior search and rescue during a fire emergency.

The fire service must remain vigilant in the development/design of proactive programs to address the needs of those who are at high-risk for an injury or death. With cognitive and development issues increasing by the year, emergency services need to be proactive. Programs like F.A.A.C.E. and Project Lifesaver are an opportunity to be better prepared to serve those with these types of needs.



*Fire Marshal Joseph Cox displays Project Lifesaver detection equipment used to locate and rescue individuals.*

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## *Workplace*

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The men and women of the Bismarck Fire Department are professionals that care for the persons they serve in the community and for the persons they work with.

We are proud of all our employees. The employees who joined our department are recognized in this section. Throughout the course of their careers, some accept the challenge to advance their rank through a promotion. In this report we recognize those fire officers. We also recognize those employees who have retired after dedicating their years to the fire department.

## **NEW HIRES**

**2014-2015**



**Samantha Grand**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 3/16/2014**



**Owen Fitzsimmons**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 7/16/2014**



**Brad Gunsch**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 9/1/2014**



**Steven Malzacher**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 9/16/2014**

# NEW HIRES

2014-2015



**Joseph Cox**  
**Fire Marshal**  
**Date of Hire: 12/1/2014**



**Christopher Anderson**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 2/1/2015**



**Erik Kanz**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 2/1/2015**



**Charles Keis**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 2/1/2015**



**John Gustafson**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 3/16/2015**



**Riley Nelson**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 3/16/2015**



**Tony Cimarosti**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 5/10/2015**



**Logan Pritchard**  
**Firefighter**  
**Date of Hire: 6/21/2015**

# PROMOTIONS

2014-2015



**Ian Flanders**  
**Promoted to Captain**  
**3/1/2014**



**Dusty Schlittenhardt**  
**Promoted to Captain**  
**5/1/2014**



**Brian Reinke**  
**Promoted to Captain**  
**9/16/2014**



**Jeremy Francis**  
**Promoted to Captain**  
**2/3/2015**

# RETIREMENTS

2014-2015



**Captain Dale Snyder**  
**Retired 3/1/2014**  
**25 Years of Service**



**Captain Jesse Smith**  
**Retired 2/3/2015**  
**30 Years of Service**



**Captain Rick Graba**  
**Retired 4/26/2014**  
**26 Years of Service**



**Firefighter Mike Keller**  
**Retired 2/22/2015**  
**31 Years of Service**



**Captain Steve Johs**  
**Retired 9/15/2014**  
**25 Years of Service**



**EH Specialist Dan Mattern**  
**Retired 5/15/2015**  
**35 Years of Service**