

Palmer Fire & Rescue

2023

Annual Report



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ABOUT US



The members of Palmer Fire & Rescue embody a spirit of selflessness and dedication, playing a pivotal role in supporting the community's safety. These individuals willingly contribute their time and skills to the Department, driven by a passion for public service and a commitment to helping others in times of need. Palmer Fire & Rescue's force is composed of diverse individuals from various backgrounds, each bringing unique skills and experiences that contribute to the overall effectiveness of the department.

These volunteers undergo rigorous training to ensure they are well-prepared to respond to emergencies ranging from fires to rescue incidents. Their role extends beyond just responding to calls; members actively engage in community outreach, education, and preparedness initiatives. Whether conducting fire safety education or participating in drills, the members of Palmer Fire & Rescue play a crucial part in building a resilient and well-informed community. Their unwavering dedication reflects a deep sense of civic responsibility, fostering a strong bond between the department and the residents it serves.

2023 Staffing

- 1 – Full-time Chief
- 1 – Full-time Training Officer
- 1 – Full-time Fire Prevention Officer
- 1 – Full-time Administrative Assistant
- 1 – Part-time Comm. Specialist
- 10 – Volunteer Officers
- 4 – Engineers
- 22 – Firefighters
- 14 – Support Firefighters
- 9 – Auxiliary Members
- 6 – Explorers
- 1 – Chaplain

FIRE CHIEF'S MESSAGE



Fire Chief
Chad Cameron

It is with great pleasure and a sense of pride that I present to you the 2023 Annual Report for Palmer Fire & Rescue. As your Fire Chief, it is an honor to share the achievements, challenges, and progress made by our dedicated team over the past year.

In 2023, our department responded to various incidents and emergencies, and I am pleased to report that our highly skilled and committed firefighters responded with utmost professionalism and dedication. Their unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of our community is evident in the remarkable accomplishments outlined in this report.

Over the past year, we have implemented several proactive measures to enhance our emergency response capabilities. This includes ongoing training programs, the acquisition of new equipment, and the continuous improvement of our operations. These initiatives have contributed to our ability to respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies, ensuring the protection of life and property in the community of Palmer, Alaska.

Our community outreach efforts have also been a focus of our department in 2023. We have conducted numerous educational programs, fire prevention activities, and community engagement events to foster a stronger connection between Palmer Fire & Rescue and the residents we serve. Building these relationships is crucial to our mission of creating a safer and more resilient community.

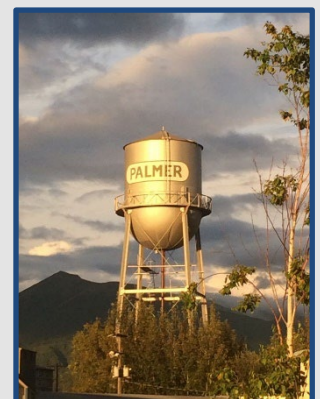
I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to our community members and partners for their continued support. Your assistance enables us to maintain the high standards of service that our community deserves.

As we move forward, Palmer Fire & Rescue remains committed to excellence, continuous improvement, and the safety of our community. We look forward to facing the future with confidence, knowing that our efforts are fortified by the support of the wonderful community we are privileged to serve.

Thank you for your ongoing trust you have in us.

Sincerely,

Chad Cameron, Fire Chief



MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Mission

We, the members of the City of Palmer Fire & Rescue dedicate our efforts to ensure the safety and welfare of the public through preservation of life, property, and the environment.

The mission of Palmer Fire & Rescue is why our Department exists. All our activities and efforts support this mission entrusted to us by the City of Palmer and the community we serve.

Vision

To provide service to the community at the highest level of professionalism possible. Proud of our past and embracing our future, the members of Palmer Fire & Rescue will work as an effective and integrated team, dedicated to continuous improvement and maintaining a positive attitude.

The Department will be a model to others and the pride of the community.

The vision statement is the overarching picture of where we want to be as an organization. This vision is intended to support the mission of the Department. We strive for excellence in all that we do and continually endeavor to improve not only operationally but also as an organization.

As a department, we have pride in our past, as the members that came before us built the reputation we enjoy today. We also embrace our future as it is full of challenges and opportunities.

Our Core Values

Excellence

Professionalism

Integrity

Community

Service

Our core values are not just nice words that look good in reports. This is the basis of how we live and operate. For us to have any measure of success, all members, regardless of rank, must live up to the core values of the Department. The loss of any one of these values would destroy our ability to operate in our community.

Trust is easily broken and takes a lifetime to build. The people we serve must know we are there to serve them and make things better with no ulterior motives or intentions.

HISTORY

Overview of Function:

Palmer Fire & Rescue is a department of the City of Palmer. Through a long-standing contract, Palmer Fire & Rescue provides fire and rescue services to the Greater Palmer Consolidated Fire Service Area.

History:

The earliest record found describing fire protection in the Palmer area is a Fire Notice issued by Fire Warden Father Merrill Salzman on October 3, 1935.

On October 17, 1935, a fire call rang out across the colonist's tent camp at about eight o'clock in the morning. A fire started around a stovepipe, which was eating away at one end of a tent belonging to a Red Cross nurse's named Madeleine de Foras. Crews responded with backpack pumps to extinguish the fire.

Over the years firefighting has advanced, and the spirit of the community has remained strong in our members. The way we alert our staff has changed, from a siren to a pager and smartphones. However, our personnel still answers the call whenever requested to help our community.



Services Provided:

The services provided to the community by Palmer Fire & Rescue include:

- Fire Response
- Rescue operations including vehicle extrication up to approximately mile post 129 of the Glenn Highway and associated backcountry
- EMS Assistance
- Fire Safety Education
- Response to surrounding communities for assistance
- Fire Prevention and Burn Permits
- Fire Investigation



FIRE STATIONS



Station 3-1
717 S. Cobb St.



Station 3-2
5955 N. Glenn Hwy



Station 3-3
15855 E. Clark Rd.



Station 3-4
901 S. Airport Rd.



Station 3-5
8200 E. Turner Road



Station 3-6
645 E. Cope-Industrial

OPERATIONS

Emergency Response

Palmer Fire & Rescue is responsible for ensuring that our members and equipment remain ready to respond to emergency incidents safely and effectively. This response capability is maintained primarily by volunteer staff. Our Department's officers voluntarily lead our response every evening from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am.

Palmer Fire & Rescue responds to all fire and rescue emergencies in the City of Palmer and the Greater Palmer Fire Service Area. Palmer Fire & Rescue's rescue response area includes Hatcher Pass and the road system from Glenn and Parks Highway interchange south of Palmer to approximately mile 129 on the Glenn Highway and Lake Louise. Agreements are in place to work with the other Matanuska-Susitna fire departments as well as the Alaska State Troopers and the Division of Forestry to assist with delivery of services.

Palmer Fire & Rescue maintains response capabilities to best meet the needs of our unique community. In addition to fire suppression and rescue response, these capabilities include technical rescue disciplines.

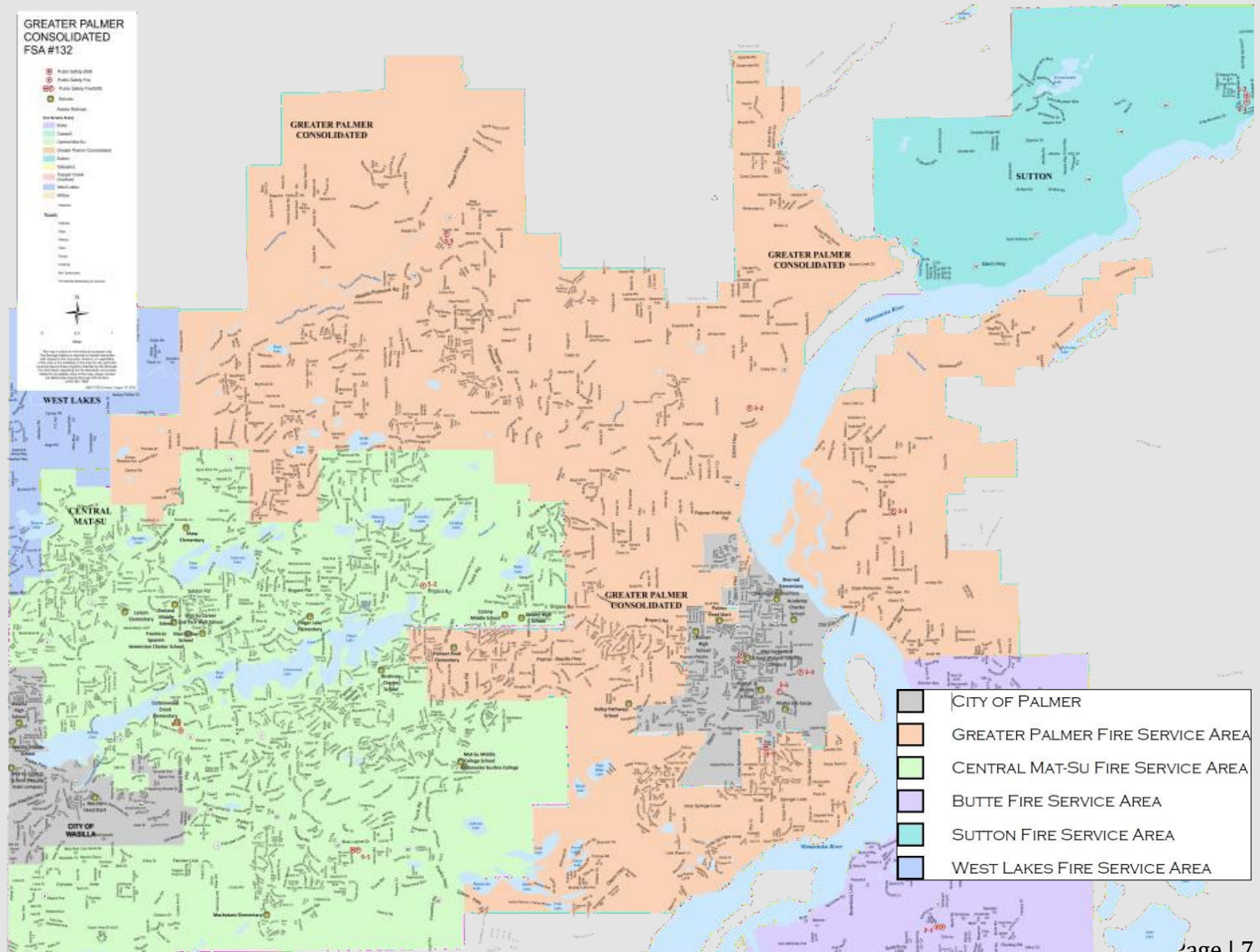


BUDGET & RESPONSE AREA

Budget

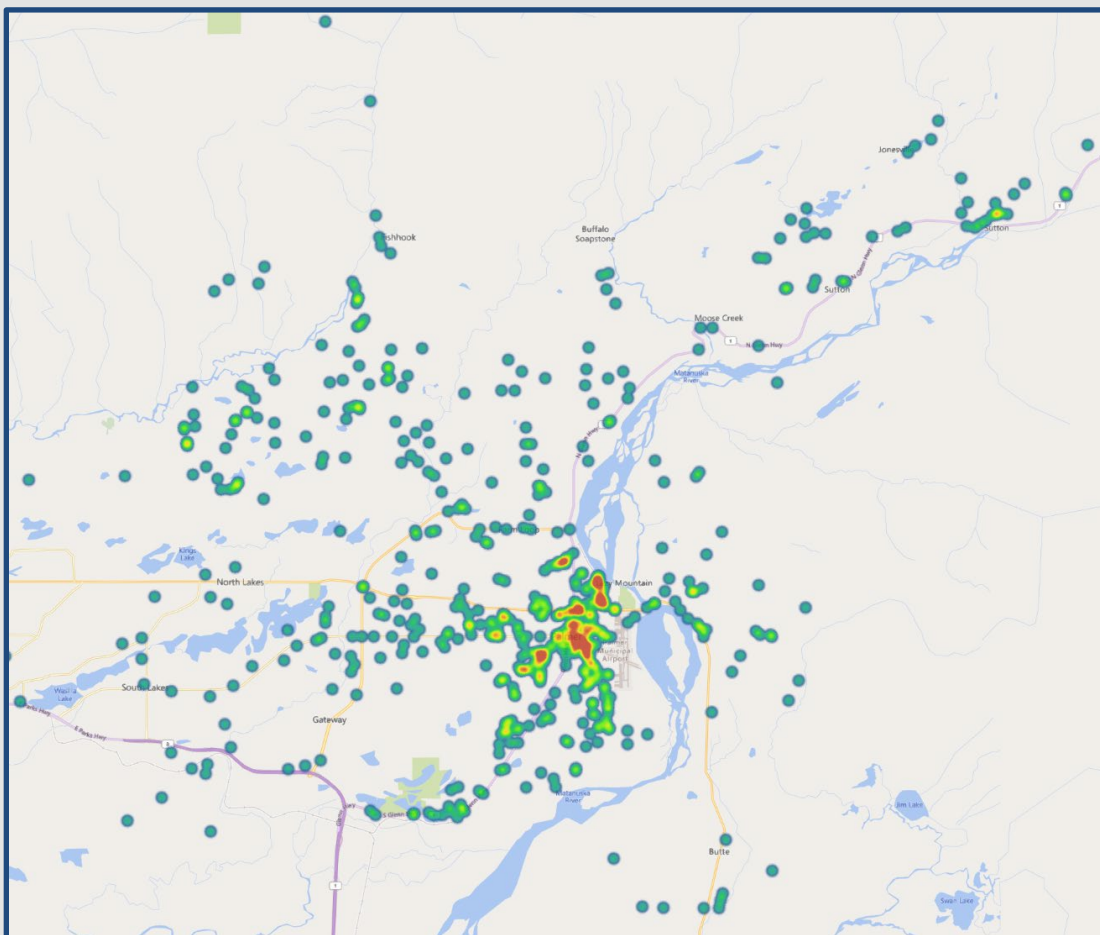
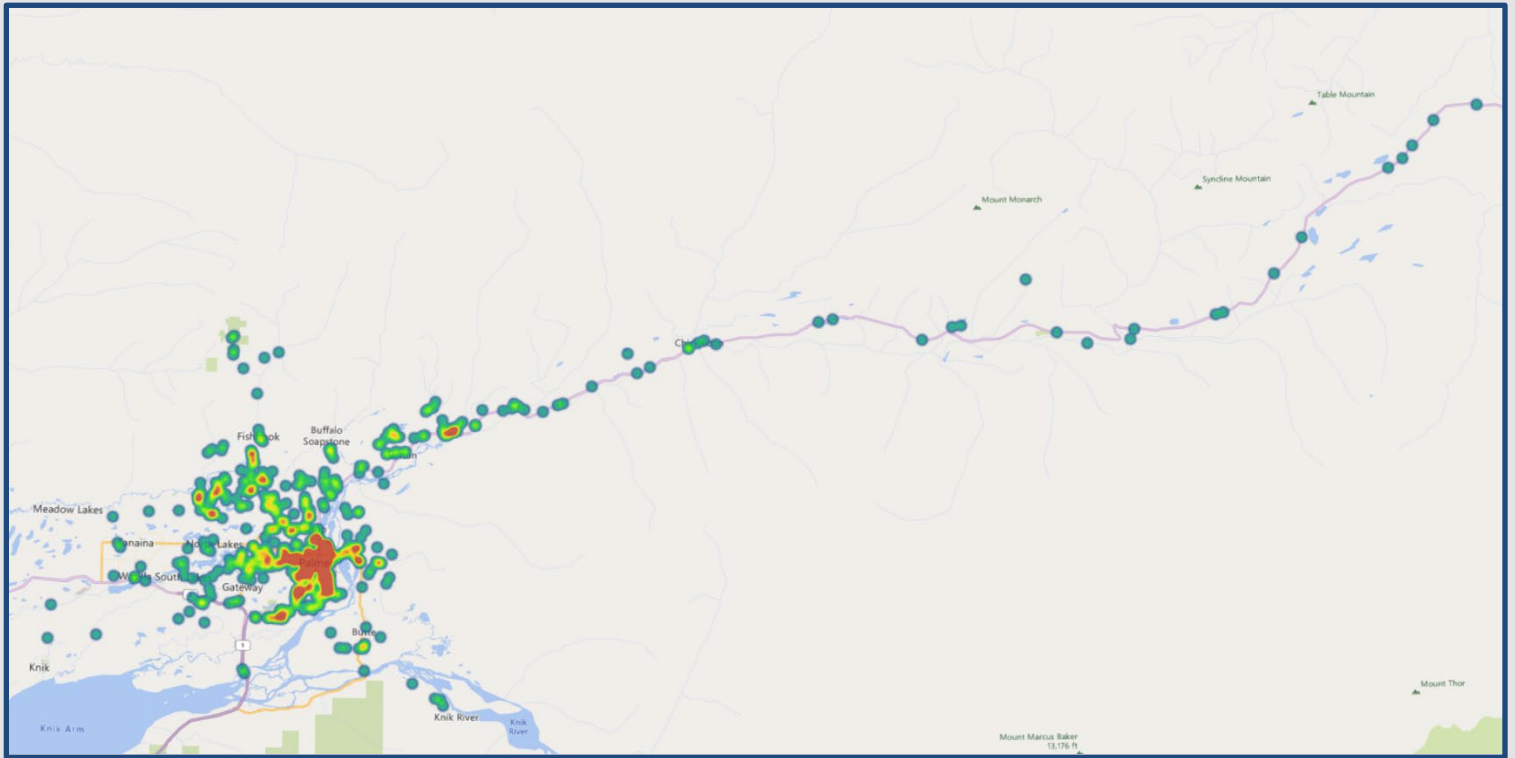
	2022 Actual	2023 Budgeted	2024 Approved
City of Palmer Contribution	\$565,282	\$692,232	\$754,148
MSB – Greater Palmer Fire Contract	\$504,289	\$636,639	\$1,182,131
MSB – Rescue Service Contract	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$88,000
Total:	\$1,119,570	\$1,273,277	\$2,024,279

Response Area



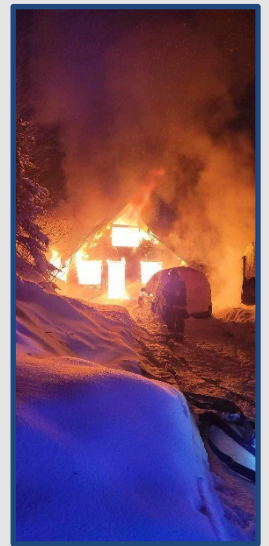
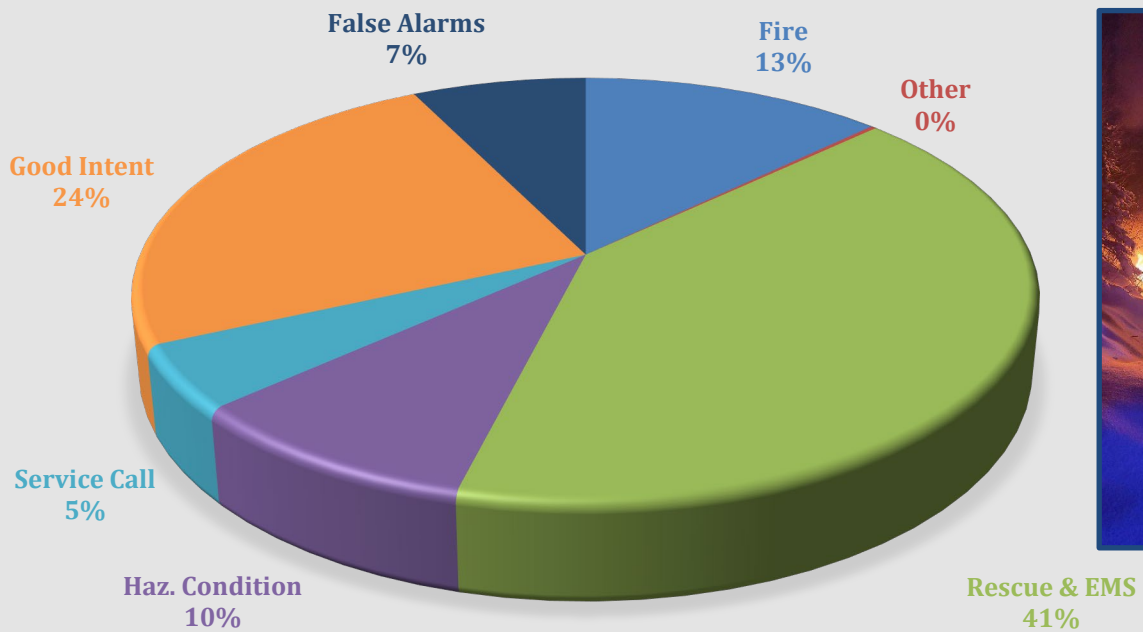
RESPONSES

2023 Response Map



2023 Responses

	City of Palmer	Greater Palmer	Aid Given	Total
Fire	28	52	35	115
Overpressure (No Fire)	0	1	0	1
Rescue & EMS	134	179	56	369
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	31	53	1	85
Service Call	9	12	23	44
Good Intent	72	83	65	220
False Alarm & False Call	34	26	6	66
Special Incident Type	0	1	0	1
Total	308	407	186	901

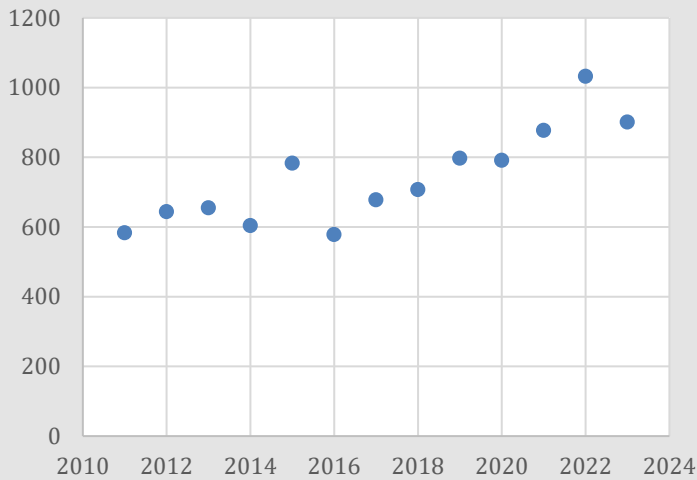


2023 Unit Response Totals						
Station	Unit	Fires	Rescue / EMS	False Alarms	Other	Total
Station 3-1 (Palmer)	Brush 3-1	13	0	0	3	16
	Engine 3-1	66	39	30	106	241
	Rescue 3-1	0	60	1	23	84
	Support 3-1	30	188	8	66	292
	Truck 3-1	11	0	0	10	21
Station 3-2 (Farmloop)	Brush 3-2	9	19	0	7	35
	Engine 3-2	15	10	4	20	49
	Tender 3-2	31	0	0	10	41
	Tender 3-4	9	0	1	1	11
Station 3-3 (Lazy Mtn.)	Engine 3-3	4	1	0	0	5
	Tender 3-3	9	0	1	1	11
Station 3-5 (Fishhook)	Brush 3-5	2	0	0	0	2
	Engine 3-5	36	3	2	33	74
	Rescue 3-5	5	81	1	22	109
	Tender 3-5	36	0	0	9	45
Station 3-6 (Training)	Engine 3-6	13	2	0	6	21
	Support 3-4	11	56	16	34	117
	Tender 3-1	15	0	0	3	18



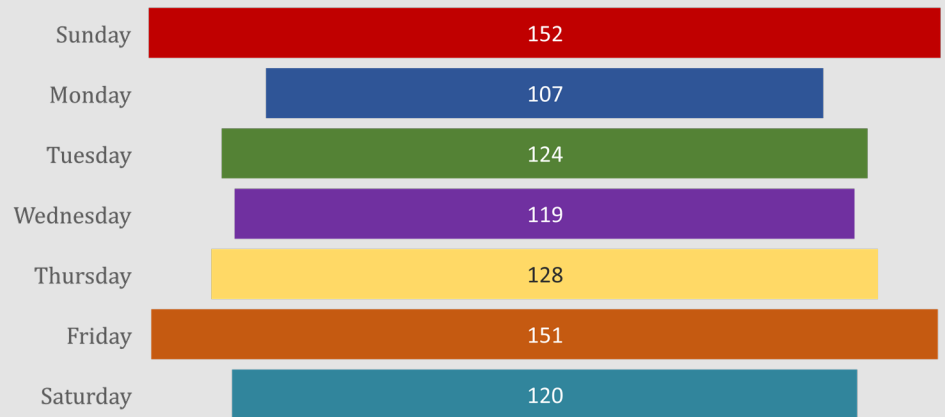
INCIDENT STATISTICS

Incident Volume by Year



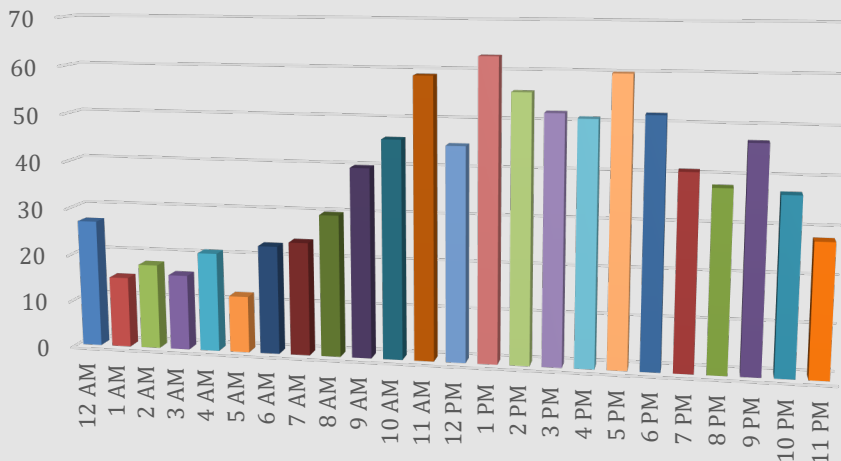
- Palmer Fire & Rescue's call volume continues to increase over time.

Incidents by Day of Week



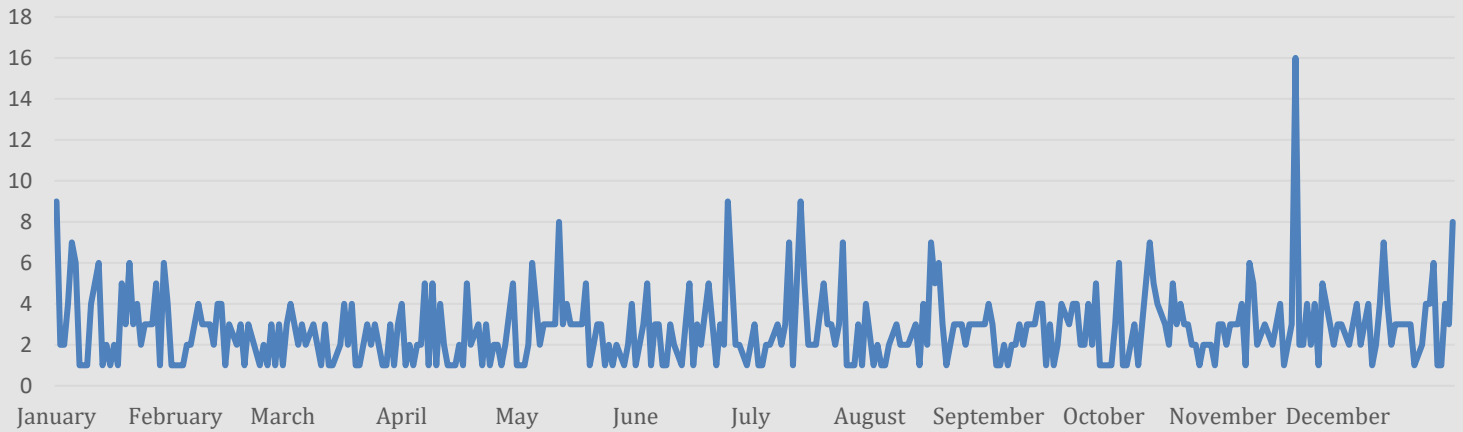
- Fridays and Sundays are the busiest days.

Incidents by Hour of Day



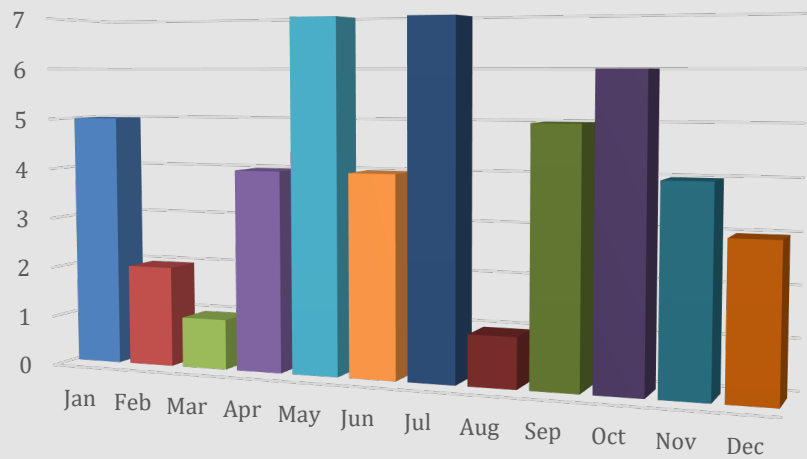
- 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM are the peak times for calls.

Incidents Count by Day



- Although there is no given time of year to have more incidents versus any other time of year, we continue to see a trend of increased emergencies in the winter and summer.

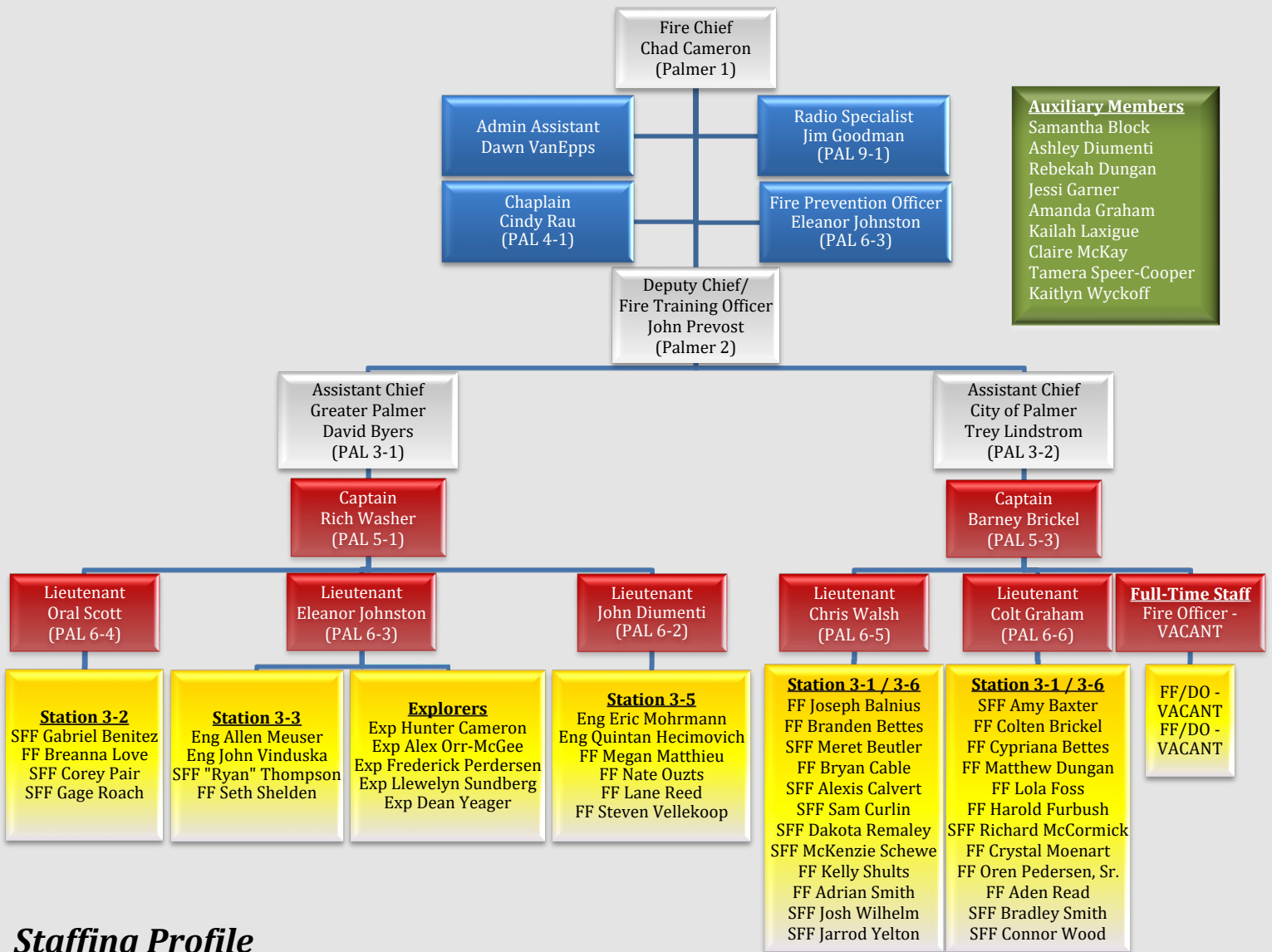
Structure Fires by Month



- Structure fires are not limited to winter.



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



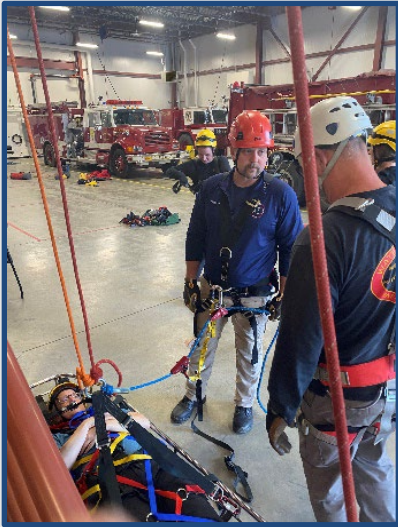
Staffing Profile

There are currently four, full-time personnel (Fire Chief, Fire Training Officer, Fire Prevention Officer, and an Administrative Assistant) who are scheduled five, eight-hour workdays, Monday through Friday. Three other full-time staff will be hired later in 2024 to improve Palmer Fire & Rescue’s response.

All other emergency response personnel volunteer and respond from either their work or their home.

- Personnel
- Emergency response personnel – 1 Fire Chief, 1 Training Officer, and 1 Fire Prevention Officer, and approximately 51 volunteer personnel.
 - 8 Auxiliary members help support the mission in a non-response manner.
 - Support Specialist (Radio) – Part-time employee shared with Palmer Police Department

TRAINING DIVISION



The Division Chief of Training, John Prevost, manages the Department's need to meet or exceed required training standards and identified best practices.

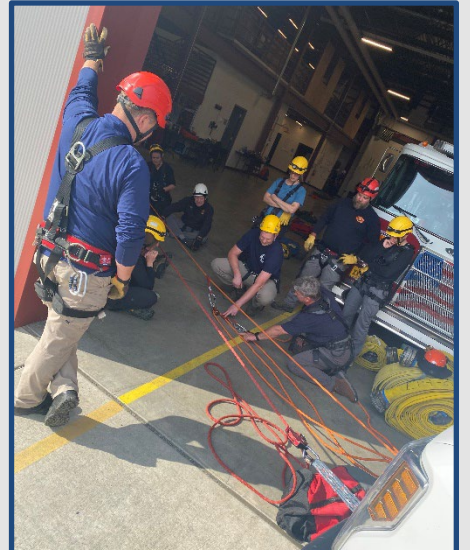
One of the best things that an old firefighter can do is pass on their knowledge and experience to new firefighters. We have an amazing group of responders here at Palmer Fire & Rescue. The "old-timers" are always ready to share and teach their skills and abilities, and the new members are eager to listen and learn. Our success and professionalism are a window into our culture of willingness to teach, and eagerness to learn. I could not be more proud of the group of people that assist me in educating newer responders.

2023 was a busy training year for our members. We had several members take certification classes and receive state and national certifications in Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Airport Firefighter, Emergency Trauma Technician, Emergency Medical Technician, Rope Rescue Technician, Ice Rescue Technician, Hazardous Material Operations, and Fire Officer I. I went to the National Fire Academy and attended the Training Program Management course.

In 2024, we will be re-structuring our training to allow for more participation. We will be incorporating more specialty training in with our standard fire training and conducting more station-based crew trainings at each of our stations. We will also continue to develop our professional development training and officer development programs to train our firefighters to be successful leaders. We plan to do more joint training with our neighboring departments so that when we are on incidents together, we can work more cohesively.

- John Prevost, Training Officer

Number of Training Events	219 training sessions
Total Training Hours for Personnel:	7,145 hours



Tomorrow's victory is today's training!

FIRE PREVENTION & EDUCATION



Fire Prevention Officer Eleanor Johnston conducts public education promoting fire prevention and safety concepts to the public, schools, and the business community.

Reflecting on another eventful year for Fire Prevention at Palmer Fire & Rescue, it has been truly gratifying to witness our Palmer Fire & Rescue family actively engaging with and educating the community on fire safety. This year, we collaborated closely with the Division of Forestry and Butte Volunteer Fire Department, joining forces to spread awareness about the importance of fire safety.

A key focus of our efforts this year centered around educating the community on cooking fires, a leading cause of house fires in the US, with an alarming average of 158,400 reported home fires annually. By shedding light on the potential risks associated with cooking, we aim to significantly reduce the incidence of cooking-related fires. It has been heartening to hear comments such as 'I didn't know that could cause that,' but unfortunately, we've also encountered stories of individuals learning the hard way due to a lack of awareness. Through education, our goal is to contribute to the protection of homes and lives.

- Eleanor Johnston, Fire Prevention Officer

44

Public Education Events

2,442

Children educated at schools

14,187

*People spoken to at events
about fire prevention*

FIRE LOSS INFORMATION

91.9%

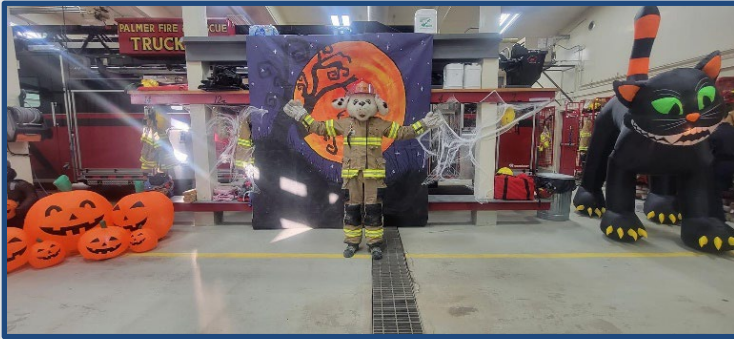
Since 2011, Palmer Fire & Rescue has saved 91.9% of the value of the property and contents of emergencies we have responded to!

Fire Loss Information

	Pre-Incident Value	Loss Value	Value Saved
2023	\$7,156,150	\$1,160,550	\$5,995,600
2022	\$3,869,200	\$1,055,500	\$2,813,700
2021	\$3,890,780	\$1,134,750	\$2,756,030
2020	\$11,533,150	\$957,225	\$10,575,925
2019	\$5,618,600	\$1,396,155	\$4,222,445
2018	\$19,501,155	\$537,050	\$18,964,105
2017	\$4,866,843	\$1,450,245	\$3,416,598
2016	\$7,325,000	\$640,050	\$6,684,950
2015	\$10,883,055	\$1,760,700	\$9,122,355
2014	\$61,179,350	\$2,311,990	\$58,867,360
2013	\$48,027,131	\$999,150	\$47,027,981
2012	\$9,259,157	\$1,886,800	\$7,372,357
2011	\$5,612,750	\$853,200	\$4,759,550
Total	\$198,722,321	\$16,143,365	\$182,578,956

Breakdown of 2023 Fire Loss

Incident Type	Sum of Loss
Building Fires	\$990,800
Passenger Vehicle Fires	\$28,000
Fires in Mobile Home Used as Fixed Residence	\$16,000
Self-propelled Motor Home or Recreational Vehicle Fires	\$13,700
Off-road Vehicle or Heavy Equipment Fires	\$3,000
Cooking Fires, Contained to Container	\$2,000
Fires in Portable Building, Fixed Location	\$2,000



**EXCELLENCE, PROFESSIONALISM,
INTEGRITY, COMMUNITY, SERVICE**

PROMOTIONS & CERTIFICATIONS

Firefighter I

- Matthew Dungan; March 31, 2023
- Mary McLean; March 31, 2023
- Trevor McLean; March 31, 2023
- David Mowatt; March 31, 2023
- Aden Read; March 31, 2023
- Adrian Smith; March 31, 2023
- Steven Vellekoop; March 31, 2023
- Ethan White; March 31, 2023

Firefighter II

- Branden Bettes; June 29, 2023
- Colten Brickel; June 29, 2023
- Bryan Cable; June 29, 2023
- Matthew Dungan; June 29, 2023
- Mary McLean; June 29, 2023
- Crystal Moenaert; June 29, 2023
- David Mowatt; June 29, 2023
- Aden Read; June 29, 2023
- Lane Reed; June 29, 2023
- Steven Vellekoop; June 29, 2023

Certified Fire Investigator

- Eleanor Johnston; April 27, 2023

Airport Rescue Firefighter

- Bryan Cable; May 4, 2023
- John Diument; May 4, 2023
- Colt Graham; May 4, 2023
- Eleanor Johnston; May 4, 2023
- David Lundin; May 4, 2023
- John Prevost; May 4, 2023

Fire Officer I

- Colt Graham; November 11, 2023
- Christopher Walsh; Nov. 11, 2023

Lieutenant

- Christopher Walsh; August 25, 2023

Deputy Chief

- John Prevost; November 22, 2023



AWARDS

Top Responders (Call Volume)

- 👤 Firefighter Colten Brickel – 301 calls
- 👤 Firefighter Oren Pedersen, Sr. – 282 calls
- 👤 Firefighter Joseph Balnius – 227 calls
- 👤 Firefighter Bryan Cable – 210 calls
- 👤 Captain Barney Brickel – 156 calls
- 👤 Lieutenant Colt Graham – 151 calls
- 👤 Firefighter Branden Bettes – 143 calls
- 👤 Captain Richard Washer – 130 calls
- 👤 Firefighter Aden Read – 121 calls
- 👤 Firefighter Megan Matthieu – 118 calls

Top Participation (Time)

- 👤 Firefighter Colten Brickel – 1,178.5 hours
- 👤 Firefighter Bryan Cable – 834.5 hours
- 👤 Firefighter Lane Reed – 824 hours
- 👤 Chaplain Cindy Rau – 683.5 hours
- 👤 Captain Richard Washer – 676 hours
- 👤 Firefighter Branden Bettes – 665.5 hours
- 👤 Firefighter Oren Pedersen, Sr. – 632.5 hours
- 👤 Lieutenant Colt Graham – 632 hours
- 👤 Firefighter David Mowatt – 599 hours
- 👤 Firefighter Joseph Balnius – 590 hours



Explorer of the Year

Explorer Alex Orr-McGee

Support Firefighter of the Year

Firefighter Dakota Remaley

Rescue Technician of the Year

Firefighter Colton Brickel

Instructor of the Year

Deputy Chief John Prevost

Firefighter of the Year

Firefighter Lane Reed

Officer of the Year





Lieutenant Colt Graham

Chief's Award of Excellence




Captain Barney Brickel

Milestone Anniversaries

Five Years

-  Lieutenant Colt Graham
-  Firefighter Joseph Balnius
-  Firefighter Breanna Love
-  Firefighter Megan Matthieu























Ten Years

-  Firefighter LaNita Copeland
-  Firefighter Harold Furbush
-  Engineer Eric Mohrmann

Twenty Years

-  Captain Richard Washer

Certificates of Appreciation

-  Palmer Dispatch – 9G-Base
-  MATCOM
-  Matanuska Towing & Recovery
-  Danny Russell, City of Palmer Mechanic
-  Palmer Police Department
-  Matanuska-Susitna Borough EMS
-  Barry Mothershead, Greater Consolidated Palmer Fire Service Area Board of Supervisors
-  Ted Stuff, Greater Consolidated Palmer Fire Service Area Board of Supervisors
-  Marty Van Diest, Greater Consolidated Palmer Fire Service Area Board of Supervisors
-  John Moosey, City Manager
-  Howard Smith, Mat-Su Borough Fleet Maintenance
-  Ken Barkley, Mat-Su Borough Department of Emergency Services Director
-  Brian Davis, Mat-Su Borough Department of Emergency Services Deputy Director of Fire
-  Brent Davenport, Mat-Su Borough Department of Emergency Services Rescue Operations Chief
-  City of Palmer Mayor, Steve Carrington
-  City of Palmer City Council:
 -  Deputy Mayor Carolina Anzilotti
 -  John Alcantra
 -  Richard Best
 -  Jim Cooper
 -  Pamela Melin
 -  Joshua Tudor



UPCOMING INITIATIVES

- Create and distribute surveys to create a 5-to-15-year Strategic Plan for Palmer Fire & Rescue using input from:
 - City of Palmer
 - Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Department of Emergency Services
 - Palmer Fire & Rescue members
 - Neighboring agencies
 - The citizens and business owners of the City of Palmer and the Greater Consolidated Palmer Fire Service Area
- Hire and integrate three full-time responders into Palmer Fire & Rescue
- Bring in outside training for staff in high-performance team building
- Receive and put into service a fire engine for the City of Palmer and Greater Consolidated Palmer Fire Service Area



- Hire an architect to look at options to improve Station 3-5 (Fishhook) to better meet the needs of the community
- Create a fire inspection program to work in conjunction with the State of Alaska Fire Marshal's Office
- Improve our fleet maintenance program to ensure mechanics have the equipment necessary to work on our apparatus
- Improve our community outreach program:
 - Continue movie nights at fire stations in our communities
 - Increase our presence in the Palmer Middle and Palmer High Schools
 - Expand the Fire Explorer program in the high schools
 - Attend more community events

Thank you Palmer!

