

POUDRE FIRE AUTHORITY
ANNUAL REPORT

2020

An Unprecedented Year



Our Mission is to protect life and property by being prompt, skillful, and caring. Our actions are anchored in the core values of Courage, Leadership, and Duty.





A Note & Farewell from the Poudre Fire Authority Chief

2020: The Year We'll Never Forget

The pandemic and the toll it took on families, businesses, and lives, will last long beyond 2020. We hold a spot in our hearts for the loved ones lost and lives changed forever. Poudre Fire Authority (PFA) had an Incident Management Team in place working to keep responders safe, so they could help keep the community safe, almost the entire year. Firefighters wore masks in stations and followed new protocols before, during, and after incidents.

As summer was ending, the Cameron Peak Fire broke out presenting another resource intensive challenge. For two months, a dark cloud hung over our community as the fire grew in size and intensity. Many were evacuated as thousands of responders worked to contain the flames. It entered PFA's jurisdiction in mid-October destroying or damaging property in its path. Then the East Troublesome Fire grew over 130,000 acres in a single day and jumped the Continental Divide. These events tested our resources to their very core. Responders and the community stood together, resilient and strong, through the crises. Captain Ryan Thomas said it best when he said we live and work in a "heroic community."

Through these trials, PFA looked to the future to move forward and plan for the changing needs of our jurisdiction. We improved our cardiac arrest survival rates and fire extinguishment effectiveness. PFA was accredited for a second time by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. This third-party evaluation focuses on continuous improvement. All 230 members of PFA contribute to that ongoing trajectory making it one of the top fire service organizations in North America.

We look forward to the changes at PFA, including new leadership as I hang up my fire helmet for the last time. I am proud to have dedicated over half my life to PFA and honored to have stood beside the men and women that comprise this great organization. I look forward to transferring command to Fire Chief Derek Bergsten. I know him as a compassionate, engaging, and collaborative leader. His innovation and wealth of experience will guide PFA through the ever-changing challenges of providing the best possible fire and emergency services to this exceptional community.

- Tom DeMint, Fire Chief

“

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- Tom DeMint, Fire Chief

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WE ARE COMPRISED OF



223

FULL-TIME POSITIONS



192

UNIFORMED POSITIONS

92% MALE 8% FEMALE



31

CIVILIAN POSITIONS

52% FEMALE 48% MALE



Who We Are

A warm welcome to our new Fire Chief, Derek Bergsten

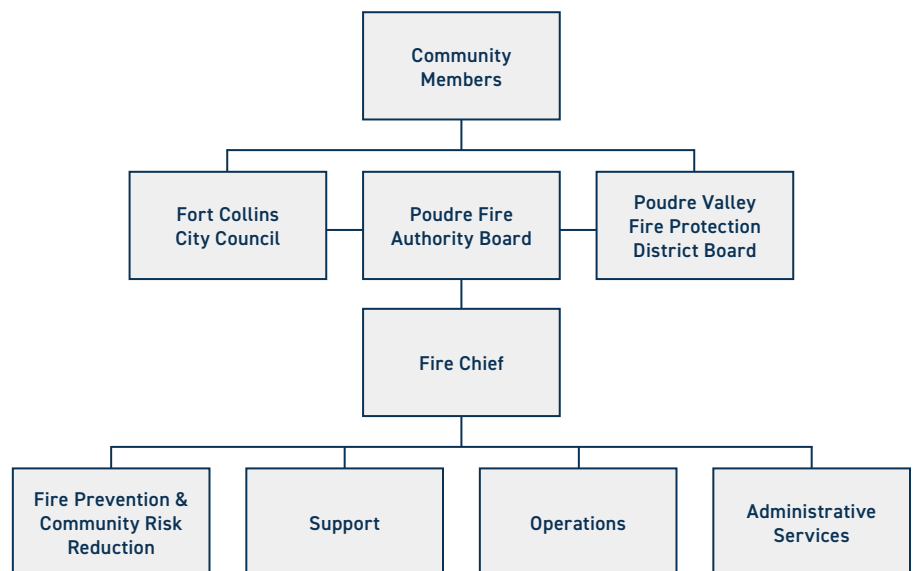
Fire Chief Derek Bergsten is coming to PFA from the Rockford Fire Department in Illinois. He began his firefighting career as a firefighter/EMT volunteer in 1989 in the City of Loves Park, Illinois. He was hired as a firefighter/EMT by the Rockford Fire Department in 1994 and rose through the ranks. Chief Bergsten has a strong history of prioritizing innovation, collaboration, and diversity. He was named the 2020 Illinois Fire Chief of the Year by the Illinois Fire Chief Association.

PFA is governed by a Board of Directors

The Board is comprised of two members from Fort Collins City Council, two members from the PVFPD Board of Directors, and a fifth member selected by the other four, historically the Fort Collins City Manager. The PFA Board of Directors appoints the Fire Chief, who in turn manages and employs all personnel of the Authority.



Front Range Fire Consortium Academy
20-1 graduation.



The Fire Service During a Pandemic

Leadership began meeting about a new virus spreading across the globe in 2020.

By March, an Incident Management Team was in place and meeting regularly. The terms “Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), unprecedented time, and social distancing” were suddenly ubiquitous on the news and in conversations. All PFA firefighters are certified emergency medical technicians and play an active role on medical calls, so they needed to be prepared to care for someone potentially infected with the virus.

The team worked to establish new protocols both in the fire stations and on scene. Firefighters followed extensive decontamination protocols, began wearing masks during their shifts, and donning a higher level of PPE on calls involving a potential COVID-19 patient.



Life in the fire stations began to look different and leadership focused on how to keep our people safe.



Firefighters Stepped Up to the Challenge

Like the rest of the world, PFA was unsure of what the future would hold, but the mission to protect life and property remained steadfast for both employees and the community. Leadership created contingency plans around the potential for responders to get sick or need to quarantine. Trigger points were determined to know exactly how many responders could be out before the next strategy would need to be applied to ensure that service was maintained. Thankfully, these trigger points were never reached.

In late April, firefighters gained access to high-priority COVID-19 testing in part because of efforts by Chief DeMint and three other fire chiefs who spoke directly to Congressman Neguse during a meeting with the fire chiefs of the 2nd Congressional District. They explained that they needed to know if a responder had COVID-19 to maintain staffing levels and keep fire stations safe. The congressman then led the drafting of a bipartisan letter to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which resulted in the change.



Under a Declaration of Local Disaster Emergency, PFA has successfully requested reimbursement for expenses associated with COVID-19.

TO-DATE PFA FUNDING RECEIVED

\$75,000

FROM FEMA

\$25,000

FROM CARES

PFA will be requesting more reimbursements during 2021 and until the Emergency Declaration expires.

Meeting the Challenge

Firefighters joined first responders throughout the community to turn canceled birthday parties into unforgettable neighborhood parades as well as show appreciation for our health care heroes.

A crew began the “One-a-Week Challenge” and asked all first responders to get takeout from a local restaurant once per week.

The Front Range Fire Consortium was reimagined, so the flow of new responders and their careers continued.

Headquarters closed indefinitely, board members began meeting virtually, and civilian employees started working from home.

We joined the Poudre River Public Library District, City of Fort Collins, and Fort Collins Police Services to launch the virtual book reading series, “Read Along with Community Helpers”.

We remained staffed at 100% and service was uninterrupted.

At the time of this writing, PFA had a total of 11 confirmed cases of staff with COVID-19 throughout the pandemic. Zero would have been the best number, but we are happy the percentage was low, our people recovered, and care to the community was not affected.

Emergencies did not take a break for the pandemic.

There was an increase in requests for the juvenile fire setter program, home fires continued to ignite, and technical rescues were needed in response to emergencies in the Poudre River and foothills.



Cameron Peak Fire

The size, duration, and immense response marked this fire as one of the unforgettable events of 2020. Extreme temperatures, low humidity, rugged terrain, and strong winds, contributed to its record-breaking growth.



How PFA Assisted with the Wildfire

PFA firefighters were involved from day one. They joined a force of over 2,000 highly trained responders from at least 46 states and Puerto Rico in the fight. PFA's involvement was the highest in mid-October when the fire entered PFA's jurisdiction. What became known as the Otter Rd. Spot Fire threatened people, animals, and property in Redstone Canyon. Some rural parts of PFA's jurisdiction had mandatory and voluntary evacuations.

CAMERON PEAK FIRE AT A GLANCE



208,663

ACRES BURNED



8.13.2020

FIRE REPORTED



12.2.2020

100% CONTAINED



Firefighters Spent Day and Night Monitoring the Fire

Firefighters worked building fire lines, protecting structures, and physically standing guard. PFA volunteers, many whose own homes were at risk, dedicated themselves to the protection of the area. Operations chiefs and task force leaders scouted the area to create assignments for crews. Firefighters helped pack bags, herded livestock, and dug lines through the night in protection of lives and property.

Presidential Disaster Declaration

In 2021 a Presidential Disaster was declared for the Cameron Peak Fire. This allows agencies involved to request reimbursement from FEMA. PFA will be submitting expenses for personnel and apparatus with the outcome to be reported in the 2021 Annual Report.



1,791

PERSONNEL
HOURS*



85

PFA CREW
MEMBERS*



109

MILES OF DOZER
AND HAND LINE



778

APPARATUS
HOURS

*Career, Volunteer, Seasonal, and Part-Time Firefighters



2020 Budget and Funding Outcomes

Funding Critical Services

PFA, as a separate governmental entity, receives the majority of its revenue from a combination of sales/use taxes and property taxes from the City of Fort Collins.

RESERVES



\$8.8 Million

23% OF THE OPERATING BUDGET

EXPENDITURES UNDERSPENT BY



\$1.4 Million

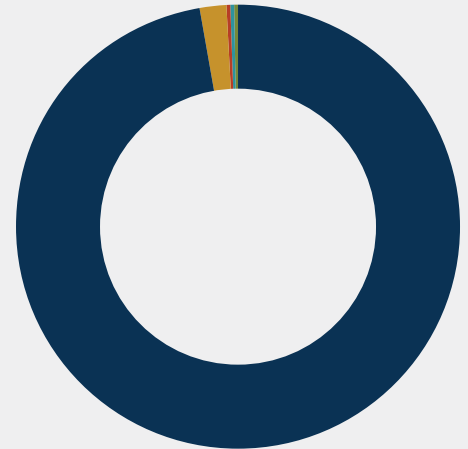
3.3% OF THE BUDGET

TOTAL REVENUE

\$40,045,397

- Intergovernmental **\$38,992,632**
- Fees & Charges for Service **\$739,897**
- Licenses & Permits **\$179,358**
- Earnings on Investments **\$78,810**
- Miscellaneous Revenue **\$54,700**

97% of the Revenue is Intergovernmental, **8%** of the Revenue is KFCG Funding.

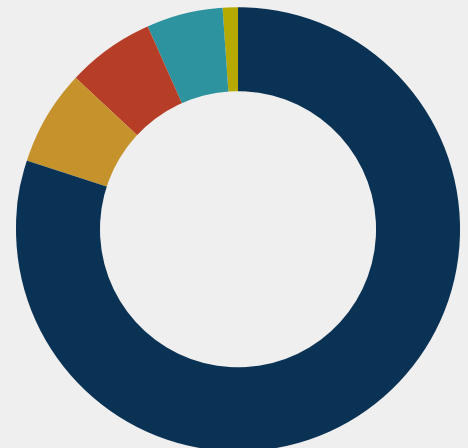


TOTAL EXPENDITURES

\$38,263,131

- Salaries & Benefits **\$30,692,248**
- Other Purchased Services **\$2,629,636**
- Supplies & Equipment **\$2,402,382**
- Capital Outlay **\$2,179,843**
- Other Purchased Services **\$359,022**

63% of the net operating budget was allocated to the Operations Division.

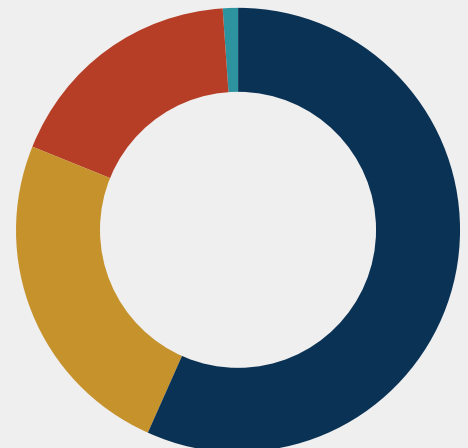


CAPITAL BUDGET

\$7,983,847

- Station 7 Remodel **\$4,509,750**
- Station 6 Shop **\$2,015,000**
- Apparatus Replacement **\$1,442,586**
- Burn Building **\$16,511**

Capital spending changes every year, based on capital project needs.



IT'S ALL IN THE NUMBERS



216,000

ESTIMATED POPULATION OF PFA'S JURISDICTION



230

SQUARE MILES OF SERVICE AREA

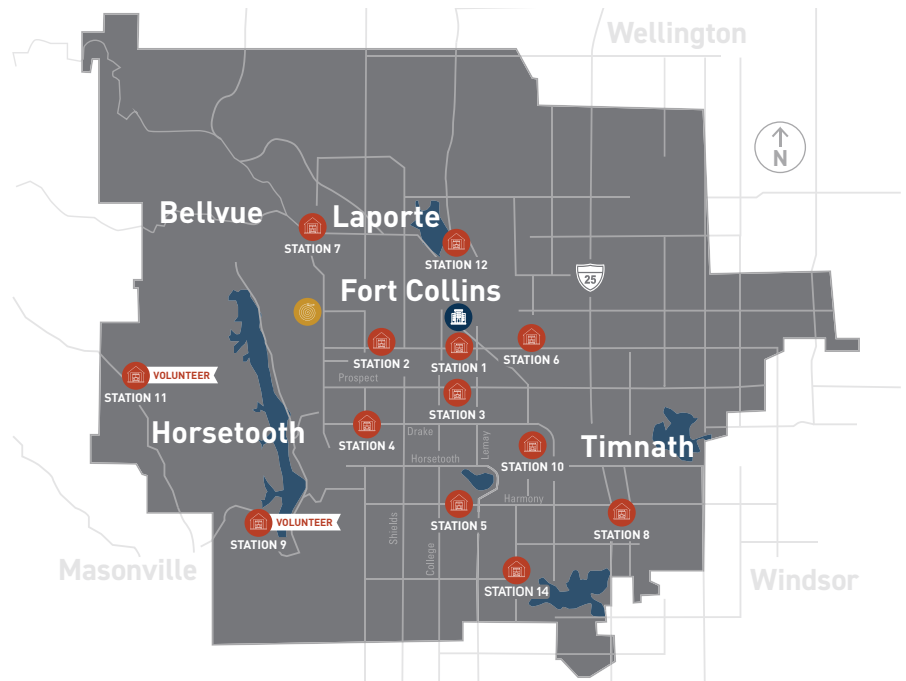


\$41.5 Billion

VALUE OF PROPERTY PROTECTED



What We Protect



PFA SERVICE AREA IN GRAY



FIRE STATIONS

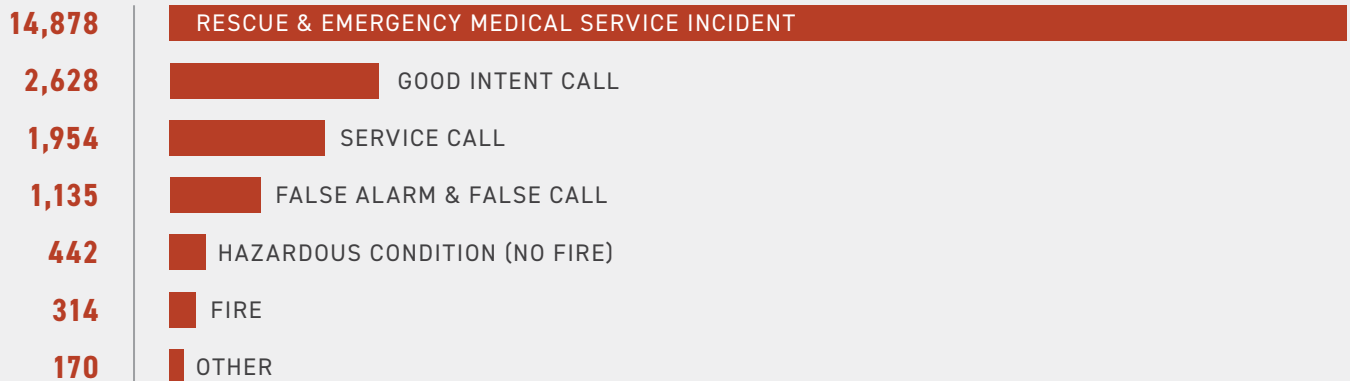


TRAINING CENTER



ADMIN. BUILDING

TOTAL SERVICE INCIDENTS IN 2020 = **21,521**





The “Wins” of 2020

This unforgettable year included significant challenges, but also many achievements. Advancements in technology, a second accreditation by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, a cardiac arrest survival rate that leads the nation, and enhancements in training resources show 2020 left positive memories too.



“

Moving to the more modular construction saved a significant amount of money while adding versatility. We can use this building to create a safer and realistic training environment.

- Battalion Chief Brandon Garcia

”

New Burn Prop Built at Training

After three years of planning, research, and work, the new burn building was erected. The building is truly unique; made entirely from Conex boxes. The design makes the new prop more versatile, long-lasting, and affordable. The original concrete burn building was in use for over 25 years. The structure lovingly known as Bill and John's Rib House, in honor of two firefighters that helped establish it, continues to be used for non-live fire training such as rescues.

Responding to Cardiac Arrests

The EMS Battalion and entire agency continues to focus on responses to medical emergencies including cardiac arrests from a medical issue, like a heart attack. We use data for Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests, meaning those whose cardiac arrest was not from a trauma, such as car accident or fall. In 2020, PFA and UHealth encountered 102 patients who were in cardiac arrest. Of these 102 patients, 49 were transported to area hospitals. Ultimately 18 were released from the hospital having survived their cardiac arrest. We describe these patients as being neurologically intact, meaning their personalities, cognitive function, and quality of life were largely unaffected by their illness.



Technology Advances: Working Together to Get There Faster

PFA joined Berthoud Fire Protection District, Estes Valley Fire Protection District, Loveland Fire Rescue Authority, and Wellington Fire Protection District in an Interagency Governmental Agreement (IGA) to begin closest unit dispatching throughout Larimer County on September 15, 2020. Closest unit dispatching involves a dispatching system that displays to 911 dispatchers all available emergency fire department vehicles based on GPS location, and dispatches the nearest unit to an emergency, regardless of jurisdiction.

How Does it Work? Computer Automated Dispatch and Station Alerting

Closest Dispatch:

The IT/GIS team worked closely with our vendor and partner agencies to build and implement a top Computer Automated Dispatch (CAD) platform that focuses on interoperability with partner agencies in Larimer County, which includes fire, EMS, and police. This integration created a response platform that focuses on getting the right personnel and equipment to the emergency using the most efficient methods possible.

Station Alerting:

The Purvis fire station and automated voice dispatch alerting system was implemented to automate the process of alerting personnel by radio communication and in station alerting. It builds upon previously used technology, enhances communication, and is expected to decrease overall response time. The system integrated seamlessly with the new CAD system. Not only does the system improve response time through technology solutions, but it is also a much more streamlined and reliable system. There are many features and functionality options available, and we look forward to expanding the use of this platform to improve day-to-day operations.

PFA is always fast paced, but 2021 will be a period of exceptional change.

We will welcome a new chief, explore accreditation report recommendations, and work on capital projects. We look forward to finding more ways to deliver the right-sized response at the right time, growing internal communications, and restarting in-person public engagement.



DOWNLOAD THE LIFESAVING PULSEPOINT APP

The app notifies you when someone needs CPR within a quarter of a mile of your current location. Join the more than 10,000 people that are already using it. It will walk you through CPR, how to use an AED, and even show you the AED closest to you.



poudre-fire.org



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