



2/28/2024

To: Jackson Baures, Public Health Division Manager

From: Ralph Sartain, Fire Chief

Agency: Ashland Fire & Rescue

RE: 2023 Ambulance Service Area 3 (ASA) & Annual Report

Dear Jackson,

Ashland Fire & Rescue (AF&R) strives to provide the community with the best available all-hazard emergency response, non-emergency response, prevention, public education, emergency management, CERT, weed abatement, and wildfire reduction services in Southern Oregon. I am proud to lead this exemplary staff of dedicated professionals who have risen to the challenges presented before them.

We are pleased to present our 2023 Ambulance Service Area (ASA) Report for ASA 3. We are excited to demonstrate the commitment of our staff to our constituents. We are incredibly grateful for the overwhelming support we receive from our community, the city council, and our city administration. We look forward to sharing what was accomplished and what we look forward to for the coming year.

Ashland Fire & Rescue is dedicated to our core values of professionalism, compassion, integrity, teamwork, and community. We look forward to serving and protecting our community, ASA 3, our regional partners and the hundreds of thousands of visitors who visit our region annually.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ralph Sartain MO, IAAI-CFI, NAFI-CFEI

Fire Chief

Ashland Fire & Rescue

Established in 1887, Ashland Fire & Rescue provides twenty-four-hour service and responds to over 5,500 calls each year in an area that exceeds 600 square miles.



2023 REVISITED:

ASA Re-Assignment:

Ashland Fire & Rescue (AF&R) successfully applied for and was re-assigned a contract with Jackson County to provide ambulance transport services for Ambulance Service Area 3 (ASA).

This re-assignment of ASA 3 allows AF&R to continue to provide ambulance service to the citizens of Ashland, the surrounding communities, and visitors of south Jackson County as we have done since 1996.

Our only change in the request for the services was for an increase in the fees associated with our transport services. We conducted a state audit of fees to determine the median price and did all we could to remain below that mark and keep the service as close to net neutral as possible. Our fee increase is as follows:

Advanced Life Support Transport from \$1,151 to \$1,551

Basic Life Support Transport from \$1,151 to \$1,351

Milage from \$15.03 to \$23.30

Treat and Release from \$348 to \$448

Significant Changes in 2023:

With the realization of increased call volume and the stress put on the system, AF&R in 2023 moved forward with the creation of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division. This division's primary task is the dedicated resource delivery of EMS services or commonly referred to as a single-role EMS, to the patrons of ASA 3.

The division was brought online in a series of phases in June and October 2023. With the completion of the October hiring process, we were able to provide four dedicated EMS responders (7) days a week and for 10 hours per day during peak hours, reducing our needs for additional resources for assistance, while increasing the availability of our firefighters for the community.

In March of 2023 the City of Ashland hired its first-ever Emergency Management Coordinator. This position will be tasked with Coordinating with the Jackson County Emergency Manager, Medford's Emergency Manager, and our south county partners in Talent, SOU, and Ashland School districts to build a robust program of preparedness.

In October of 2023 AF&R through support of the City Manager's office, the City Council and the community supported the addition of two executive team members Training Officer (TO) and Fire Marshal (FM) to the administrative staff of AF&R.

Mutual Aid:

AF&R maintains automatic/mutual aid agreements with all fire and EMS providers in Jackson County. In addition, AF&R has mutual aid agreements with agencies in Josephine, Douglas, and Klamath Counties, as well as Northern California Emergency Medical Services (NOR/CAL EMS).

AF&R updated its mutual aid agreement with Mercy Flights in 2023 and we additionally entered an IGA with the Oregon State Fire Marshals Office (OSFM) to host a Type 3 fire engine which will be provided by OSFM. Our requirement for this new piece of equipment was to continue to support our neighboring agencies, neighboring counties, state deployments and if necessary, out of state deployments. This is a continuation of the service commitment we already provide to our regional partners.

Community Service:

While it might not appear to fit into this section, the addition of the Fire Marshal (FM) to AF&R will allow for an increase in our community involvement in public education. The

FM is tasked with community protection, public education, and community risk reduction as just a few of their primary responsibilities. Additional programs we offer include:

- **School Programs- K thru 5th**

AF&R teaches a variety of fire safety and injury/illness prevention classes to each K-5 class yearly. The instructed classes include "Compression Only" CPR classes for all 7th-grade students.

- **Southern Oregon University**

AF&R continues to provide training to the residence hall supervisors. Topics include EMS emergencies, fire emergencies, extinguisher training, and injury/illness prevention.

- **Internship and Rider/Observer Program**

AF&R provides field internships to EMT Basic and Paramedic students through Rogue Community College, Umpqua Community College, and College of the Siskiyou's. We have continued to strengthen our program with Oregon Health Sciences Nursing (ICAN) where the student nurses follow selected patients through their semester taking care of this population's needs. The individual is then transferred to the next group of ICAN students upon arrival at AF&R. We also provide a rider/observer program for the Rogue Valley's local high schools and the interested public.

- **CERT – Community Emergency Response Team**

The spring and fall CERT basic training programs occurred in 2023 bringing additionally trained emergency responders to our community. The Fire Life Safety Specialist is responsible for overseeing CERT, assisting in teaching community programs, conducting code enforcement, and providing a response to citizen complaints. Our department paramedics teach most of the medical-related topics to our new CERT members.

Combined the Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (WRAP) members into CERT for consolidation of resources and volunteer organization. 28 Students completed WRAP training. There was over 2500+ hours cumulative volunteer hours through CERT and WRAP and 20 new volunteers were added to CERT.

- **Smoke Alarm Installations:**

50+ smoke alarms were added in our community to families or individuals who did not have a working or even an existing smoke alarm.

- **Medical Stand-by**

AF&R continues to support the community at sporting events within the City. The

department provides a Paramedic staffed ambulance free of charge to all Southern Oregon University and Ashland High School football games.

- **Fall Prevention**

The department continues teaching fall prevention and fire safety education to the local retirement facilities.

- **Active Shooter Hostile Event Response (ASHER)/Stop the Bleed**

We continue providing active shooter and stop-the-bleed training to local businesses and community groups in 2023. Additionally, we continue to be training in ASHER protocols with our local law enforcement partners.

- **Sensory Bag Program (Frazier Bags)**

Starting in March of 2023, AF&R partnered with Michelle Frazier of Fire District 3's Community Care Program, to begin carrying Frazier Bags to provide tools to aid in the assessment and relationship building of patients with special needs.

- **Wildfire Community Risk Reduction**

On May 7, 2023, we held a Green Debris drop off which saw 207 vehicles and approximately 200 cubic yards of vegetation recycled. 4 wood shake roof replacements occurred as part of a FEMA PDM grant. 5 Firewise USA neighborhood risk assessments were performed. We updated the Smokewise business workbook for the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. Produced "The Real Dirt on Mulch – Lessons from the Almeda Fire" - Outreach and Education Video (on fireadaptedashland.org & AF&R YouTube channel) and 2-page flyer on dangers of Bark Mulch used in landscaping (funding by FAC Net award). Awarded CWDG Grant for Ashland CWPP Update (\$249,700). Applied & Awarded Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) Grant (\$59,922.50).

Mercy Collaboration

AF&R continued our support of a grant with Mercy Flights through the Ashland Hospital Foundation to administer Community Care Paramedicine (CCPM) in the Ashland/Talent area.

This grant provides funding for one Mercy CCPM to administer care to our community. We continue to look for ways to be mutually beneficial partners with Mercy Flights.

Equipment:



AF&R took delivery of (1) new 2023 Braun Northwest North Star Ambulance in November of 2023. We ordered an additional ambulance in November which is scheduled for a May 2024 Delivery.

This 2023 Braun will be replacing Medic 1 which is currently assigned to our EMS Division.

A change to our unit identifiers occurred in 2023 as we launched the single role program. Our single role EMS providers respond out of our designated call sign Medic Units, while our dual role firefighters respond out of our Squad designated units.

Our current fleet of ambulances is an ever-evolving system with many moving parts and pieces. The following is our current fleet of ambulances, their current location in our system and where they will eventually end as our system develops in 2024.

Medic 1



**2011 LIFELINE
AMBULANCE**

Medic 1 is a 2011 Lifeline ambulance. This will be replaced by the 2023 Braun listed above as soon as it is licensed and inspected by the state. The 2011 Lifeline ambulance will then return to a reserve status until Medic 2 arrives in May of 2024. After the delivery of Medic 2 this unit will be decommissioned.

Medic 2



Medic 2 was ordered November 2023 and is scheduled to be delivered in May/June of 2024. This new unit will be a 2024 Ford Transit, all-wheel drive, built by Braun Northwest similar in design to this photo.

Medic 102



Medic 102 is a 2022 Lifeline Ambulance that is currently out of service and being repaired. It will be returning to the fleet in March of 2024. Once it returns it will be assigned as Squad 1, and current Squad 1 will be placed back into reserve status as Medic 101.

Squad 1



Squad 1 is a 2015 Horton Ambulance and is currently assigned to Fire Station 1. Once Medic 102 returns to service in March this 2015 unit will be placed back into a reserve status remaining at Station 1.

Squad 2



Squad 2 is a 2022 Lifeline ambulance which went into service in the spring of 2023. There will not be a change to this unit's assignment.

Squad 102



**2018 BRAUN
AMBULANCE**

Squad 102 is our reserve at Station 2 and is a 2018 Braun Northwest ambulance. There will not be a change to this unit's assignment.

Additional Equipment:

BC1



Our 2011 Chevy Suburban command vehicle was exchanged for a 2023 Ford Tahoe. This new vehicle designated as BC1 or Battalion Chief 1, is our command-and-control vehicle which can be used as a single source resource to respond to medical calls if no other units are available in our system.

Engine 1



We are grateful to our City Administration, Mayor, Council, Budget Committee, and general citizen support of AF&R.

This 2023 Pierce Saber was added to our fleet as the primary fire engine out of Station 1. All of our Type 1 Engines are ALS capable, meaning they carry the

same lifesaving equipment as our ambulances they just cannot transport the patient.

This engine replaced a 2002 Pierce Dash. The 2002 Pierce was donated to the Green Springs Rural Fire Protection District. Both agencies share a special relationship with each other and a common goal of serving the citizens of Ashland and surrounding communities.

Stryker Gurney and Load System



We have replaced or upgraded all power loads and gurneys in our fleet to the Stryker system. This means all our ambulances from first out to our reserves are equipped with the same equipment. Thus, reducing the possibility of an accidental injury or unfamiliarity with a system that is not used that often. The

power load is designed to reduce the potential of a work-related injury by using motors to lift patients, keeping the staff from straining, or being injured if they have poor lifting mechanics.

Training:

As another significant accomplishment for 2023 we have added a dedicated training and EMS officer (TO). The TO is tasked with supervising our single role EMS providers as well as ensuring the completion of all state mandated training both on the fire and EMS side of the organization. The TO is additionally tasked with running all fire and EMS academies and ensuring we are abiding by Jackson County Standing EMS orders by monitoring and quality assuring our reports.

Specialty Teams



AF&R maintains a core group of Paramedics trained as Technical Rescuers. In addition, each member of the department receives basic Rope Rescue training, allowing our Paramedics to offer "reach and treat" capabilities when operating in steep terrain and prior to the arrival of the technical rescue team.

AF&R also provides the only regional response trained trench rescue team in the Jackson County fire service.

AF&R completed our DPSST/NFPA recertification, and Ashland Fire & Rescue is accredited thru March 2026. With the addition of the TO as well as staff members obtaining required additional training AF&R is now able to increase its availability to provide self-training and accreditation by adding NFPA Fire Officer I, NFPA Fire Officer II and NFPA Fire Instructor I to our list of accredited classes. These additions

help demonstrate that AF&R’s continued training meets or exceeds the state requirements for continuing education.

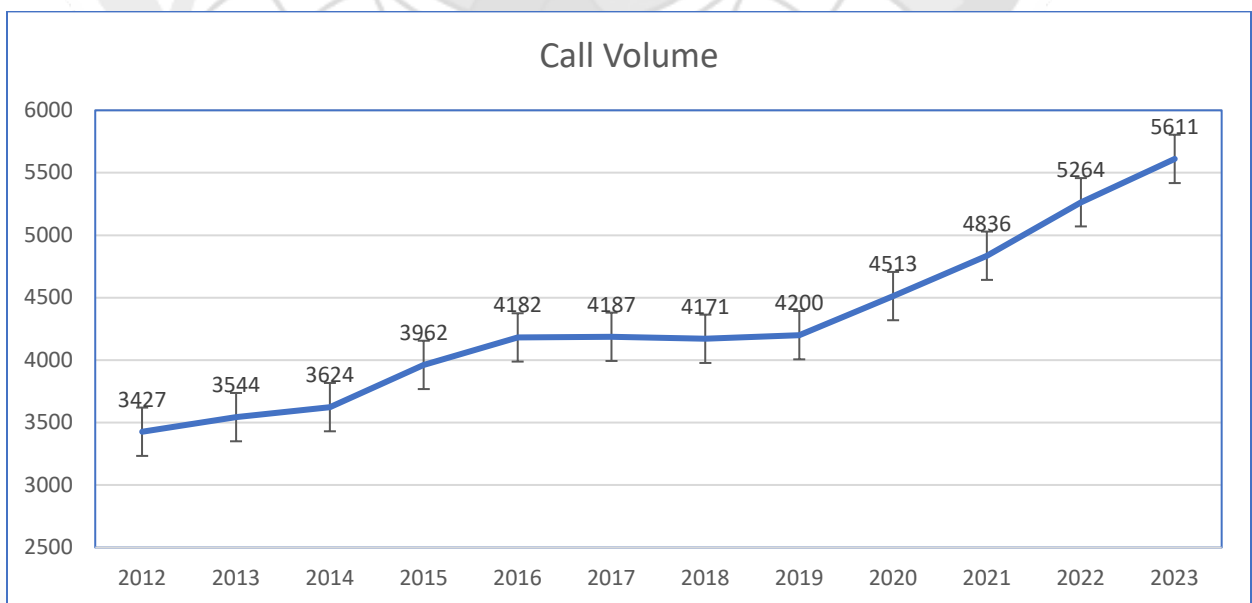
AF&R maintains a cadre of trained instructors for critical care areas of knowledge such as Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support, and CPR. All new employees must attend an in-house academy for four weeks, complete training in Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC) and attain their NFPA Driver certification during their probationary year.

Data Issue:

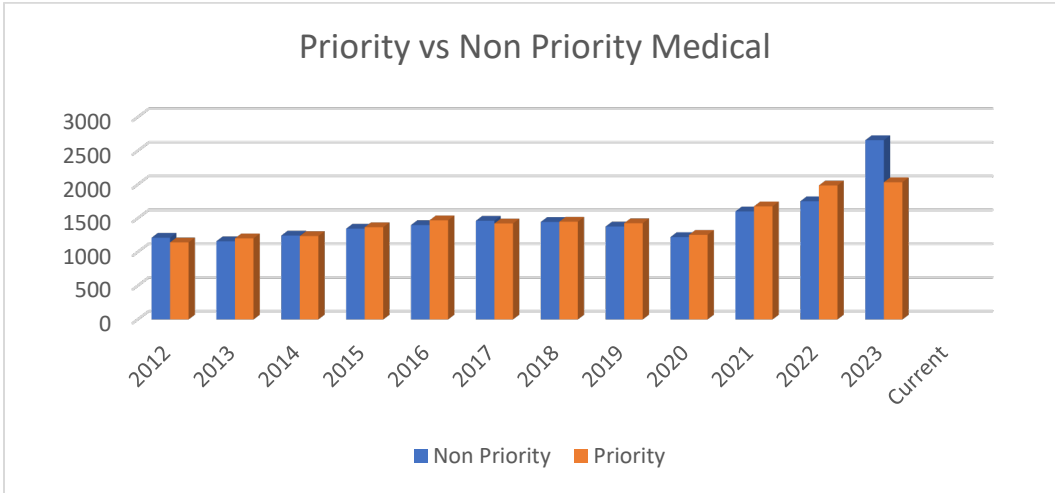
We had two major data changes to our organization and because of this we were not able to provide as accurate information as we normally have for the Runs and Transport Section of this report. Specifically, we do not currently have the ability to track cancelled calls, average mile per transport or calls by other agencies in AF&R’s ASA. We switched from a local resource management system to a state reporting management system and some data points were not transferred to the state agency and this data was lost. We are working to try and find an alternative way to track this information moving forward.

The Data:

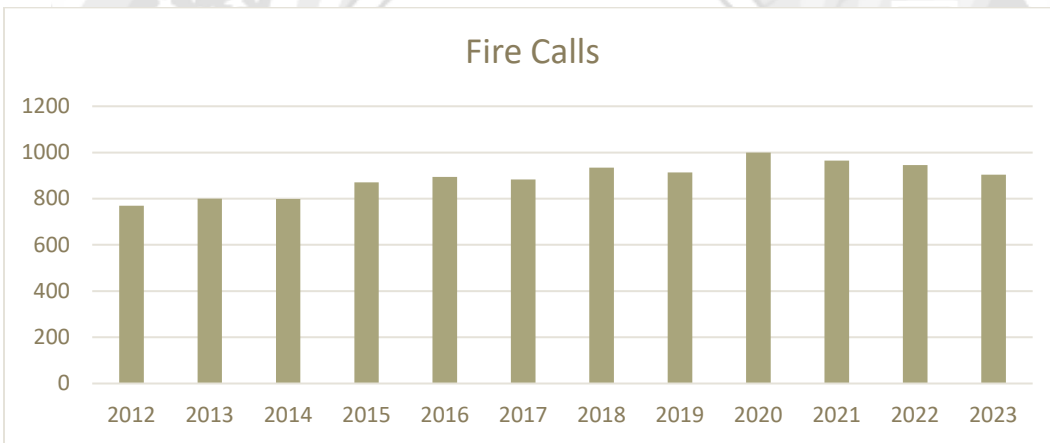
The following information is provided through data collection with Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon (ECSO) our dispatch center. We finished the year with 5611 calls for service, up 6.6% from last year.



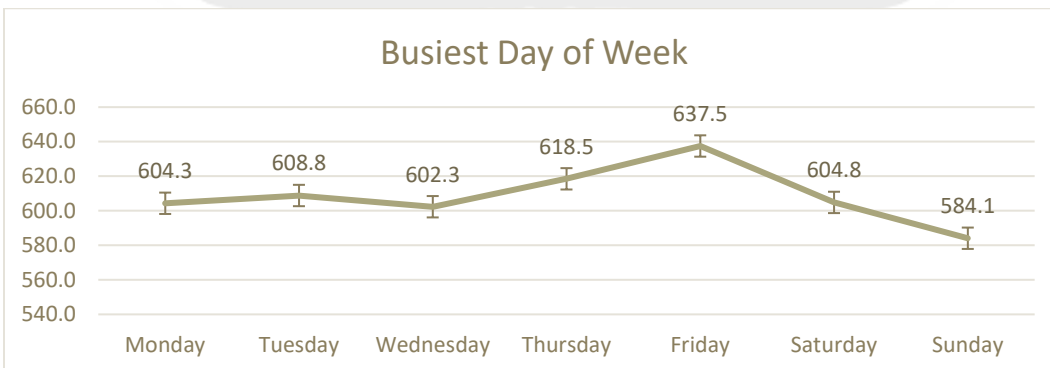
We responded to 2658 medical non-priority calls and 2034 medical priority calls.



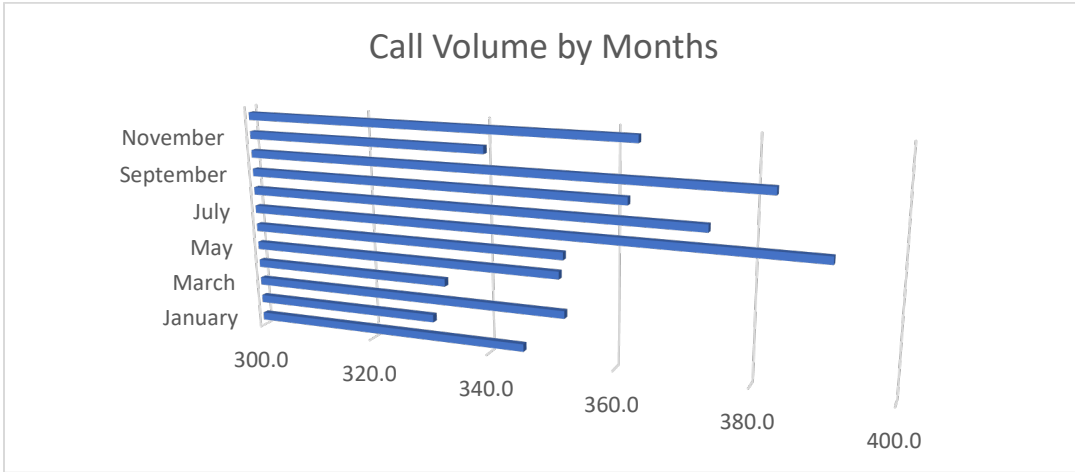
Our total fire calls dropped from 946 in 2022 to 904 in 2023.



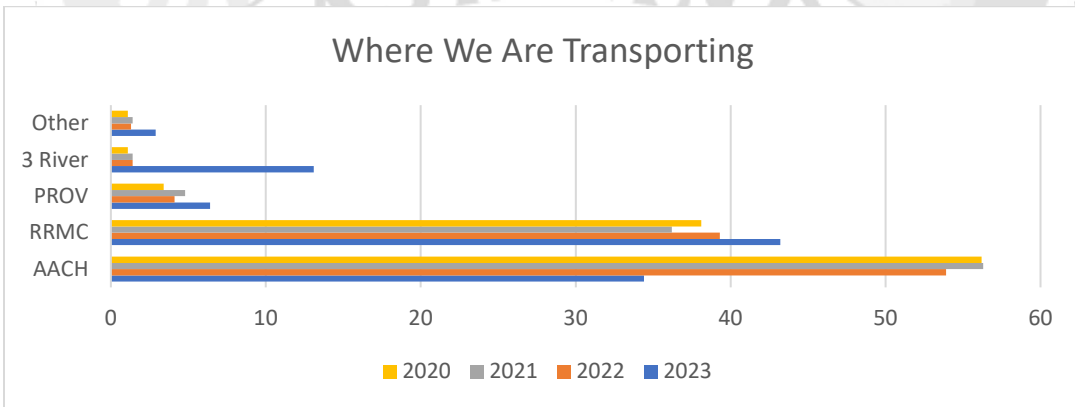
Our busiest day of the week was Fridays where we responded to 637.5 calls for service.



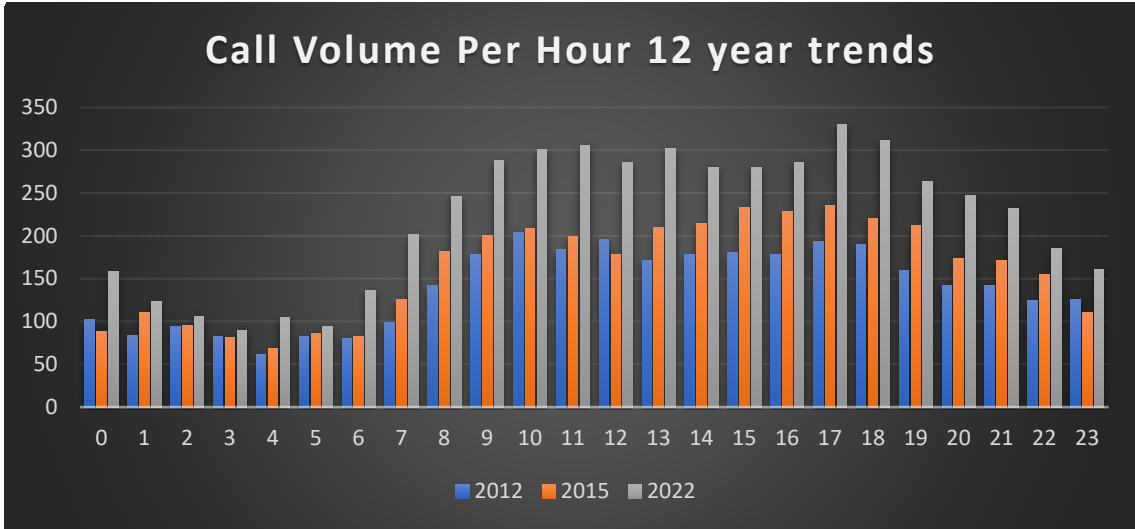
Our busiest month was August when we responded to 525 calls for service.



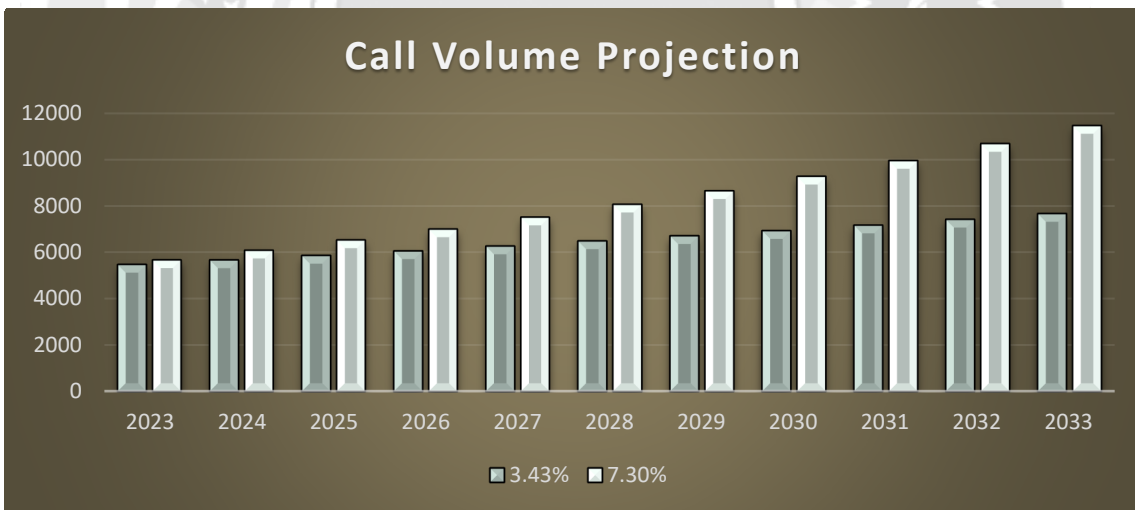
We are spending more time on the road. This translates to added wear on our ambulance fleet necessitating replacing them sooner. In 2023 we transported to Ashland Community Hospital 34.4% of the time, down from 2020 when it was 56.2%. Our primary destination hospital is now Rogue Regional where in 2023 we transported 43.2% of the time from 2020 where we transported 38.1%. Our largest jump in transport occurred to 3 Rivers Campus in Grants Pass where in 2020 we transported 1.1% and finished 2023 at 13.1% of the time.



To determine the proper placement of our single-role practitioners, we analyzed the data to determine where and what hours we are the busiest and where they will make the most impact. With the addition of the next two teams, we will be covering an even larger section of time.

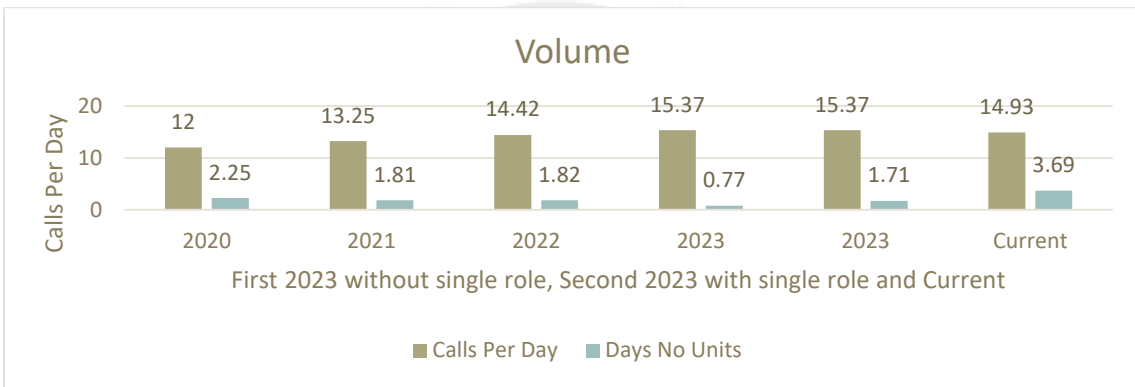


When we built out our call volume projects for our business model, we chose a high and a low trend based on historical data. At the conclusion of 2023 we were trending towards the high side of our chart. This is our projected call volume for the next nine years, both at the low and high ends



This final graph shows our current call volume and time between calls for service with no units available. We closed out 2023 averaging 15.37 calls for service per day, and 59 days into 2024 we are averaging 14.93. As all of our EMS systems continue to get busier, calls for service can be delayed as there are no units to respond. In 2015 we would have this occur once every 15.2 days. This continually increased in frequency until July of 2023 where we hit one call every .77 days. We added the

single role program to the system and by the end of year the number decreased to once every 1.71 days. For 2024 we are averaging one delayed call once every 3.69 days and we expect this will decrease significantly more with the addition of the next two single-role units. This demonstrates the business plan is working as discussed with our City Management, Council and Budget Committee, and the trend is reversing.



The Future:

To support our commitment to the County Commissioners in the re-assignment of ASA-3 we will be adding two additional single-role EMS ambulances teams to our system. In January 2024 we completed a successful hiring process and entered into tentative hiring agreements with four additional single-role practitioners. In April of 2024 we will be starting an in-house EMS academy followed by intensive field training. We are anticipating by the first week of June releasing this staff, bringing additional coverage for dynamic system coverage to our system and honoring our commitment to our City Council, our Community, and the County Commissioners.

Challenges:

We along with the private ambulance providers and the associations are watching the Veterans Administration as well as the Insurance industry in their quest to remove their payment profile to that of Medicare/Medicaid. It began with the no surprise act which targeted air ambulance providers and exempt ground ambulance service. These providers are now moving their focus to the ground side of the EMS system. If this passes it will be a catastrophic blow to private ambulance service providers and will force many more fire agencies to become transport capable leaving the remote areas unprotected or minimally protected in the world of EMS.

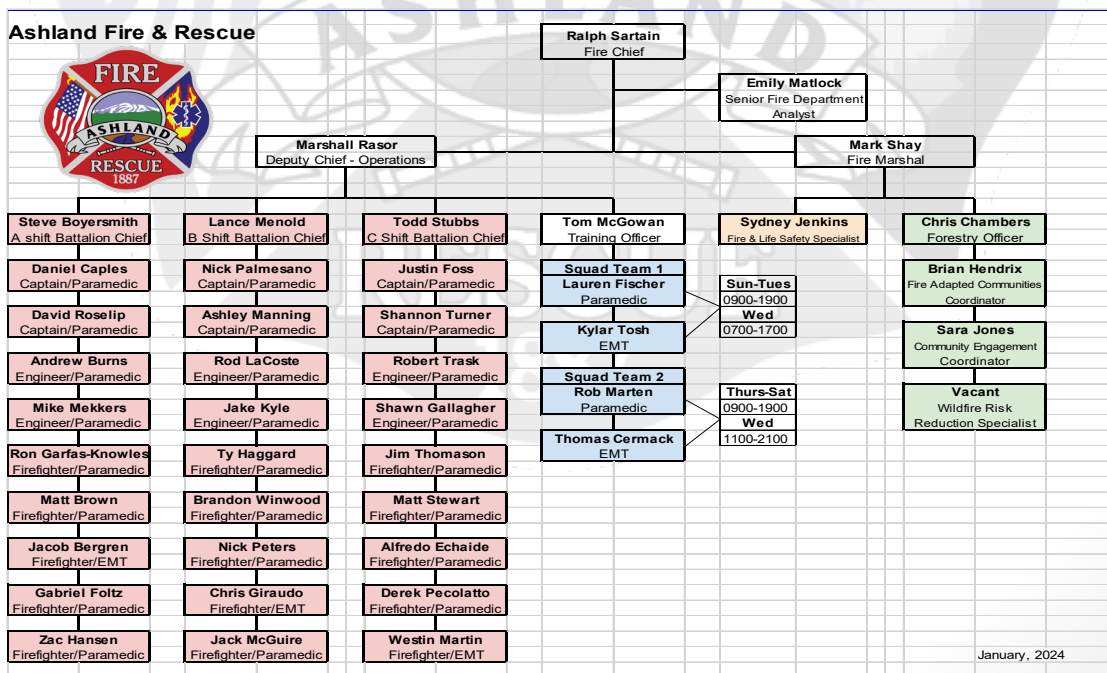
We look forward to working with the county to revise the ASA language and look forward to enhancing the availability of different EMS best practices from around the nation here in Jackson County. We recognize a need for different recruiting methods as the shortage of paramedics in the country is increasing. Also, with supply chain issues we realize an increase in all service costs, equipment costs and an extended delivery time for major purchases such as ambulances, gurneys, and cardiac monitors.

With continued staffing issues at the hospitals and extended wait times for patient transfer we are reducing the availability of ambulances in the system causing an increase in wait time for first responders on scene waiting for ambulances to arrive for the transport.

We will need to look for alternative means for transport/system dispatch to ensure we are sending the right resource at the right time to the right calls.

An additional area which may pose a challenge will be the changing of the current OSHA Fire Brigade Standard first adopted by OSHA in 1980. The standard is under review and has requested significant changes to the OSHA requirements in preventive health care, station design, emergency response vehicles and more. The comment period for the proposed rule change is set for May 6, 2024.

Organization Chart 2023



Closing:

There are a lot of positive changes coming out of Ashland with our current City Council, change in the City Manager governance and our members. We look forward to being an integral part of the community and ASA 3 as we work to improve and move forward continually answering to our mission statement which is:

“AF&R is dedicated to protecting lives, property, and the environment. By delivering fire suppression, emergency medical, disaster management, fire prevention and public education services by professionally trained, dedicated personnel, we strive to achieve the highest quality of public service to our customers.”

-Respectfully submitted-

