



City of South Milwaukee Fire Department

2024 Annual Report

01/01/2024-12/31/2024



Serving the Community with
Commitment / Concern / Compassion



City of South Milwaukee Fire Department

929 Marshall Ct · South Milwaukee, WI 53172

To the citizens of South Milwaukee,
The Honorable Mayor Jim Shelenske,
City Administrator Patrick Brever,
South Milwaukee Common Council and,
Police & Fire Commission:

On behalf of the dedicated men and women of the South Milwaukee Fire Department, I am pleased to present our Annual Report. This document reflects not only the statistics of the past year, but more importantly, the story of our commitment to serving the residents, businesses, and visitors of South Milwaukee with professionalism, compassion, and pride.

To our firefighters and EMS personnel—your hard work does not go unnoticed. You have answered every call with courage and compassion, ensuring the safety of our residents while balancing the challenges that come with this demanding profession. Your perseverance and teamwork are the backbone of this department, and I could not be prouder.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to City Administrator, Common Council, the Mayor and the Police & Fire Commission. Your continued leadership, support, and commitment to public safety allow us to carry out our mission effectively, ensuring that we have the resources and guidance necessary to serve our community.

And to the citizens of South Milwaukee—thank you. Your unwavering support, trust, and partnership mean everything to us. Whether through kind words, community initiatives, or simply standing behind us in our mission, you remind us why we do what we do. Together, we continue to strengthen the bond between the fire department and the community, working toward a safer, stronger South Milwaukee for all.

As we move forward into another year, I am confident that our collective dedication and partnership will only continue to grow. Thank you for all that you do—let's keep building on our successes together.

With gratitude,

John T. Litchford
Fire Chief of the
South Milwaukee Fire Department

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The SMFD in the Community

Aside from its role as first responders, the SMFD maintains a consistent presence at various community events. Below are a few examples of our 2024 outreach.



Mission Statement

The South Milwaukee Fire Department proudly protects life, property, and the environment with professional, compassionate, and efficient emergency response services. As an all-risk, all-hazard agency, we deliver fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazard mitigation, fire prevention, and water rescue to all who live, work, and visit South Milwaukee.

We equip, train, and educate our personnel to provide high-quality service and proactive risk reduction, supported by strong partnerships with our neighboring communities through the Milwaukee County Shared Services agreement.

Rooted in over 131 years of tradition, we honor our past while embracing innovation, committed to keeping our community safe today and for generations to come.

Department Information

The South Milwaukee Fire Department (SMFD) proudly serves as an all-risk, all-hazard agency, providing comprehensive fire suppression, technical rescue, and advanced emergency medical services to an estimated 20,211 residents within 4.78 square miles of our city. Our firefighters stand ready 24/7 to respond to any emergency—whether it's a structure fire, medical call, hazardous materials incident, water rescue or large-scale disaster.

We also proudly take part in the Shared Services Agreement of Milwaukee County Fire Departments—a forward-thinking, reciprocal partnership designed to maximize regional efficiency and safety. This collaboration provides a coordinated response of personnel and apparatus to significant fire ground operations, ensuring that every department in Milwaukee County benefits from collective strength, shared resources, and unified service to the public.

Beyond our city limits, SMFD is an active participant in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), ensuring that no community stands alone in times of crisis. Through this system, we respond when neighboring departments need assistance, and in turn, receive critical support when major incidents occur in South Milwaukee.

SMFD Organized – 1893

PROVIDING 131 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE CITY OF SOUTH MILWAUKEE



City Officials

Mayor James Shelenske

Craig Maass

District 1 Alderperson

Brett Briesemeister

District 1 Alderperson

Tim Backes

District 2 Alderperson

Michal Olechowski

District 2 Alderperson

Lisa Pieper

District 3 Alderperson

Joseph Bukowski

District 3 Alderperson

David Bartoshevich

District 4 Alderperson

Peggy Clark

District 4 Alderperson

Patrick Brever

City Administrator

Sandi Wesolowski

City Clerk

Christopher Smith

City Attorney

Katie Crosby

Assistant City Administrator

Karen Skowronski

City Treasurer

Kelly Martyka

Municipal Judge

Police and Fire Commission

Carla Uphill

President

Tobie Weberg

Secretary

Heather Frederick

Commissioner

Don O’Kray

Commissioner

Don Weber

Commissioner

Department Personnel

When fully staffed, the South Milwaukee Fire Department maintains a three-platoon system utilizing three shifts of 8 personnel each on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week schedule. Off-duty personnel are notified when staffing levels at the station fall below a pre-established minimum or when the department responds to a report of an emergency incident that will require additional personnel to mitigate.

John Litchford
Fire Chief

Christina Garcia
Administrative Assistant

Black Shift

BC Nathan Fager
Lt. Jared Rentmeester
FF/P Craig Boschke(I)
FF/P John Rhinesmith
FF/P Ryan Porter
FF/P Matthew Swietlik
FF/EMT Ryan Cho
FF/EMT Carter Zawacki

Green Shift

BC John Frost
Lt. Jeremy Fronczak
FF/P Mike Landgraf
FF/P Luis Zamora-Martinez
FF/P Jason Helmlinger
FF/EMT Nathan Christensen
FF/EMT Matthew Boss (I)
FF/EMT Gabriel Alyousef

Red Shift

BC Kurt Egner
Lt. Andrew Mahn
FF/P Ryan Kurz
FF/P Ryan Behling
FF/P Ryan Miksa
FF/EMT Kevin Schneider(I)
FF/EMT Bryan Groshek
FF/EMT Ryan Nelson

Resigned

Lt. Ryan Wendt 3/1/2024



Special Assignments

Battalion Chief Kurt Egner	EMS Coordination Fire Investigation Apparatus / Facilities Maintenance HIPAA Compliance
Battalion Chief John Frost	Community Relations / Fire Prevention & Education Fire Inspection Radios / Communications / Records Operations
Battalion Chief Nathan Fager	Training / Safety Personnel Protective Equipment SCBA Maintenance
Lt. Andy Mahn	EMS Supplies / Equipment Training – Assistant SCBA Maintenance – Assistant
Lt. Jeremy Fronczak	Training – Assistant MSDS Online
Lt. Jared Rentmeester	Training – Assistant Bldg. & Grounds – Assistant Health & Fitness Coordinator
Lt. Andy Mahn	EMS Supplies / Equipment Training – Assistant SCBA Maintenance – Assistant
FF/P Craig Boschke	Fire Inspection
FF/P Kevin Schneider	Fire Inspection
FF/EMT Matt Boss	Fire Inspection

Check out our website <https://smfdwi.org>

Apparatus Report

One of the most frequent compliments paid to members of our department is the extremely clean and well-kept appearance of both our apparatus and fire station. Visitors are often impressed at the condition of our apparatus and are shocked to learn their vintage and high level of use. Members of our department take great pride in the care and maintenance of both the apparatus and fire station. We proudly care for the equipment and building that the citizens of South Milwaukee have entrusted us with.

Below is a list of our current apparatus and their relative condition:

ID	Type of Apparatus	Make / Model	Year / Age of Vehicle	Condition
E165	Engine	Pierce Enforcer – 1250 GPM Pump, 750 Gal. Water Tank	2003 22 years old	Fair
E163	Engine	Pierce Enforcer – 1250 GPM Pump, 750 Gal. Water Tank	2007 18 years old	Fair
T161	Aerial Ladder	Pierce Lance 105' Heavy Duty Ladder – 1500 GPM Pump, 300 Gal. Water Tank	1995 30 years old	Very Good (Refurb 2021-2022)
A160	Ambulance	Osage (Dodge) Type I	2016 9 years old	Very Good
A161	Ambulance	Osage (Dodge) Type I	2014 11 years old	Good
Z164	Rescue Raft	14' Mercury Inflatable 25 HP Outboard	2006 19 years old	Good
Med 10	Ambulance	Ford	2022 3 years old	Very Good
V165	Rescue Boat	25.6' Steiger Craft Twin 150 HP Suzuki 4 stroke	2010 15 years old	Fair
C166	SUV	Ford Explorer	2015 10 years old	Good
U167	Pick-up Truck	GMC ¾ Ton Utility Truck	1995 30 years old	Fair
U168	Mini-pumper	Pierce (Ford) – F550 150 GPM Pump, 250 Gal. Water Tank	2008 17 years old	Very Good
U169	Rescue Trailer	14' Pace American	1993 32 years old	Good
Car16	Command Vehicle	Ford F-250	2022 3 years old	Very Good
V163	UTV	Polaris Ranger	2023 2 years old	Very Good

Training Report

The Training Bureau, led by Battalion Chief Nathan Fager, is responsible for developing, organizing, and scheduling training for all department members. Each Fire Lieutenant delivers scheduled training topics to their shift members daily, ensuring that all personnel are fully trained to operate every piece of apparatus and equipment. Because of our cross-staffing model, training must be well-rounded and comprehensive, challenging our members to stay sharp and proficient in their duties.

In 2024, department members participated in a wide range of fire and EMS training sessions totaling over 4,000 training hours. The goal is simple: provide our firefighters with the knowledge and hands-on experience they need to perform their jobs effectively and confidently.

Developing Acting Lieutenants

Early in the year, we partnered with Conway Shield to help develop our Acting Lieutenant position. When only one promoted fire officer is on duty, an eligible firefighter steps into the role of Acting Lieutenant, taking on company officer responsibilities during emergencies. This includes making command decisions, maintaining crew safety, and ensuring accountability on scene. The training focused on decision-making, leadership, and real-world scenarios to help prepare these firefighters for the challenges they'll face in the role.

Tactical Training and Multi-Agency Collaboration

June was a busy training month for the department. Once again, we teamed up with Conway Shield to put all three shifts through a "Three-Dimensional Tactical Drill." This hands-on workshop provided realistic, relevant training that focused not just on physical tactics but also on the mental and decision-making aspects of firefighting. The goal was to reinforce that success in emergency situations depends on preparation—physically, tactically, and mentally.

Interagency training remains a priority for the department. Also in June, the Milwaukee Fire Department, led by members of Rescue 1, utilized the vacant former Caterpillar buildings for a unique training opportunity. These buildings featured multiple elevator types, expansive office spaces for search drills, and multi-story stairwells for high-rise fire operations. Leveraging the expertise of Rescue 1, our members benefited from hands-on training in these challenging environments.

Vehicle Fire Investigation Training

In May, the South Milwaukee Fire Department hosted a vehicle fire investigation class, bringing together over 20 fire, police, and insurance professionals for an in-depth one-day course. Presented by Rayburn Fire Scene Investigations, the training included classroom instruction and a live burn of two scrap vehicles. Understanding how fires start and behave is critical, not just for investigations but also for fire prevention and safety. This training

gave our firefighters a better framework for recognizing fire patterns, preserving potential evidence, and contributing to more accurate investigations.

Polaris UTV Training

Late in 2023, the South Milwaukee Fire Department took delivery of a new Polaris UTV. With the arrival of spring and summer 2024, all members completed UTV training to ensure familiarity with its capabilities and limitations. Multiple training sessions were conducted to build proficiency in operating the vehicle safely and effectively.

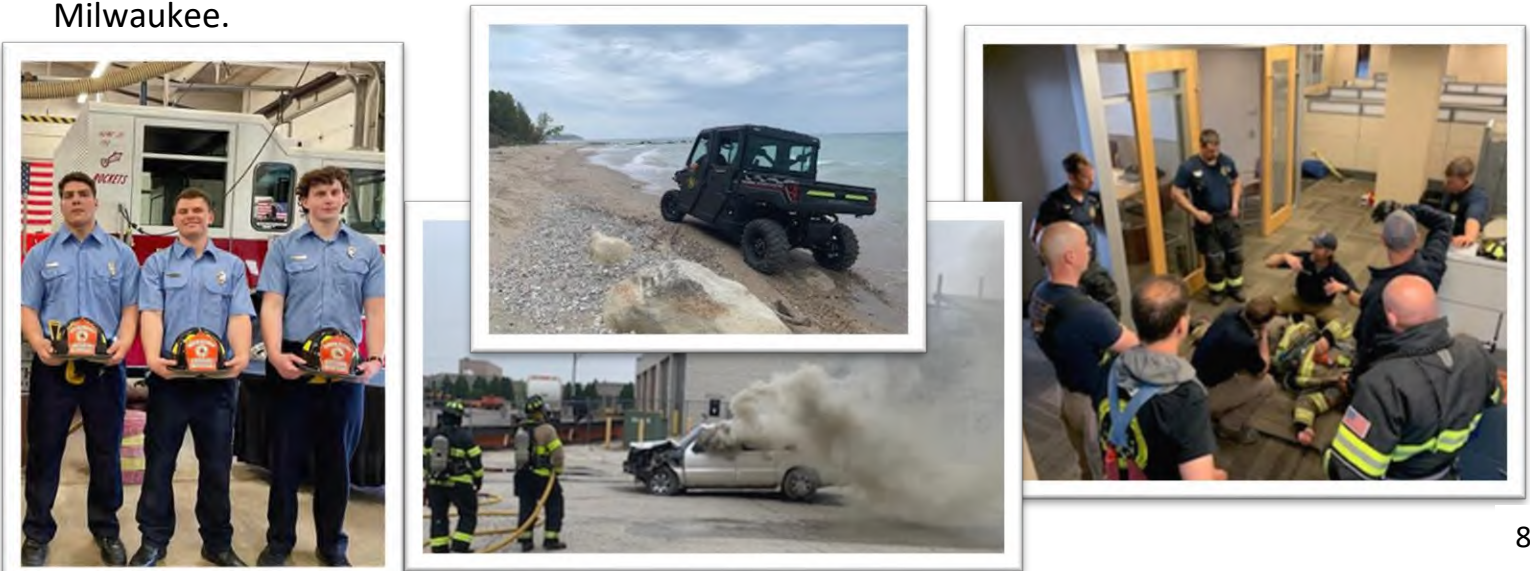
You may have seen us on the beach, in the parks, and throughout town as we tested and practiced with this new addition to our fleet. The UTV is a valuable asset, enhancing our ability to respond to emergencies in hard-to-reach areas. It improves access for patient care in off-road locations, supports search and rescue operations, and provides rapid medical response during large events. As we continue to refine our operations, you may see our crews utilizing the UTV in real-world scenarios, from responding to medical calls in Grant Park to assisting at community events like Heritage Days. We are excited to integrate this resource into our daily operations and appreciate the community's support as we work to enhance our capabilities.

Welcoming New Firefighters

In 2024, the South Milwaukee Fire Department welcomed three new firefighters: Gabe Alyousef, Ryan Nelson, and Carter Zawacki. These probationary firefighters began their careers with four weeks of intensive 10-hour training days, preparing them for full-time duty. Under the direction of daily shift officers, they trained in vehicle extrication, vehicle fires, forcible entry, search and rescue, fire hose advancement, fire attack, high-rise operations, vertical ventilation, and more. This foundational training was invaluable in setting them up for success.

Commitment to Training

All of these training opportunities and programs reflect the city's commitment to maintaining a highly skilled and prepared fire department. Along with the countless hours of daily training that occur, these initiatives demonstrate our department's dedication to delivering the best-trained, highest-quality emergency services to the citizens of South Milwaukee.



Grant Awards and Fundraiser

Grants and community partnerships are of paramount importance in the fire service, as they serve as the backbone of enhanced safety, preparedness, and community engagement. Grants provide essential financial resources to fire departments, enabling them to acquire advanced equipment, implement critical training programs, and improve their overall efficiency and effectiveness in responding to emergencies. These funds are instrumental in maintaining up-to-date technology and equipment, crucial for both firefighter safety and effective emergency response. Furthermore, community partnerships play a pivotal role in building trust and cooperation between fire departments and the neighborhoods they serve. Collaborations with local businesses, schools, and community organizations help create a more resilient and informed citizenry. These partnerships often result in community-based initiatives like fire safety education programs, disaster preparedness, and community outreach, fostering a sense of unity and shared responsibility in addressing fire-related challenges. Together, grants and community partnerships fortify the vital role of the fire service in safeguarding lives and property, highlighting the invaluable synergy between public resources and community involvement in ensuring a safer, more resilient community.



Public Education / Community Outreach

The South Milwaukee Fire Department prides itself on having an interactive community presence. "Rocket Rules" has been a colossal success during our K4, K5, and 1st grade outreach programs. With the help of Christina Garcia, focusing on our community's young school-age children, award incentives were built into our curriculum to engage and encourage participation during fire education programs. We are a proud partner with the American Red Cross and the Professional Fire Fighter of Wisconsin (PFFW) to provide free smoke detectors to our citizens. Our department also continues to deliver lightweight and easy-to-use fire extinguishers at no extra cost to our senior population, along with one-on-one fire extinguisher training via prerecorded instruction.



**FIRE SAFETY
FOR SENIORS**

Along with Safety Days, hosted by our local McDonalds, and our ride to school in a fire engine, we continue to provide close and personal interaction with our community. We continually look to deliver more community interaction by bringing back the much anticipated "Spaghetti Dinner" along with implementing a new tradition of "Brats and Tots" which gives the opportunity for firefighters and community members to come together at the fire department.

While we believe fire safety deserves year-round emphasis, our philosophy remains that it must start early, building solid educational foundations. Each fall, our firefighters visit students in local schools. Elementary students in kindergarten and 1st grade are provided with fire safety programs during the annual National Fire Prevention Week in October. When students reach 5th grade, they are provided with a more advanced Fire Safety Program that focuses on preparation for their adolescent years and the importance of home fire safety. The 5th graders are assigned take-home projects where family involvement is encouraged. The students are also taught general home safety, such as general first aid and burn care, as many children are reaching babysitting age.

Additionally, SMFD provides timely public awareness and educational posts on our social media page. Please visit us at: <https://www.facebook.com/southmilwaukeefd/>



Fire Inspection Report

Fire inspection duties are completed by shift members assigned to each of the three shifts and are conducted during their regular duty day. This arrangement often presents a formidable scheduling challenge due to an increased call volume, ever-increasing training requirements, and other obligations to our community.

FF/EMT Matt Boss, FF/P Jeremy Fronczak, and FF/P Craig Boschke, who is replacing FF/EMT Kevin Schneider, who is currently attending paramedic school, who are State of Wisconsin Certified Fire Inspectors, each conduct fire safety code inspections in accordance with Chapter 27 - Fire Prevention, Protection, and Control of the City's Municipal Code and the State of Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter SPS314, which adopts NFPA 1 as the "official" fire prevention code of the State. Ultimately, these efforts are overseen by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services. The Inspection Bureau also works closely with the City's Building Inspection and Health Departments to address other health and safety code violation matters that impact the residents' and visitors' quality of life in the City of South Milwaukee. FF/P Craig Boschke is tasked to oversee inspections of new and modified sprinkler systems on all inspectable properties within the City based on a change within the Wisconsin code requiring inspectors to have extra training during their schooling. To provide time for inspectors to focus on properties with a trend of always having violations, inspectors are allowed to inspect properties once annually that have had zero violations over three inspection cycles; if a property has a violation that was being inspected only once a year will be put back on the bi-annual inspection cycle. This has had a positive impact on the efficiency of lowering found violations. This program still meets the State of Wisconsin requirement for inspecting properties.

Inspection Activities

469

Bi-annual fire inspections conducted

147

Violations identified
(All were corrected in 2024)

Inspection Responsibilities

FF/P Craig Boschke

Commercial

Residential attached to Commercial

FF/EMT Kevin Schneider

Residential

City, County & Federally owned
Schools

FF/EMT Matt Boss

Industrial

Manufacturing

Nursing Homes

Doctor / Dental Offices

2024 By the Numbers

Protecting South Milwaukee with Pride, Compassion, and Professionalism

Total Calls for Service

3,246 total incidents responded to in 2024.

Every call represented a moment of need — and a chance to make a difference.

Emergency Medical Services

2,650 EMS calls answered across the city and region.

1,252 Basic Life Support (BLS) incidents.

1,209 Advanced Life Support (ALS) incidents.

189 EMS responses provided to communities outside South Milwaukee.

Fire Response

57 total fire incidents throughout 2024.

20 building fires contained and extinguished.

3 cooking-related fires controlled before spread.

6 rubbish and dumpster fires managed.

3 grass or brush fires mitigated.

25 other fire-related emergencies addressed.

Hazardous Conditions

91 total hazardous incidents handled.

19 chemical spills or leaks safely contained.

15 natural gas leaks mitigated before escalation.

16 electrical and power line hazards resolved.

Service & Good Intent Calls

222 service and good intent calls.

Includes smoke or odor investigations, detector activations, and public assists.

False Alarms & System Activations

181 false alarms investigated and cleared.

Majority due to system malfunctions or unintentional activations.

Other Notable Responses

41 motor vehicle crashes.

4 water-related incidents.

Every response underscores our mission to protect life and property.

Regional Response & Collaboration

Active participant in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS).

Collaborative support under the Milwaukee County Shared Services Agreement.

Together, we strengthen emergency response across the region.

Every Number Represents a Neighbor

Emergency Medical Services Report

Fire department-based Emergency Medical Services (EMS) continues to be a major part of our response profile. The central location of the fire station allows for minimal response times of specialized equipment and well-trained personnel. By utilizing a flexible staffing model, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is able to provide emergency care to the Paramedic level on any given call. Citizens in South Milwaukee benefit from a high level of service when requesting emergency medical care.

EMS Calls by City		
South Milwaukee	2081	92.82%
Cudahy	71	4.93%
Saint Francis	20	0.80%
Oak Creek	47	1.41%
Milwaukee	10	0.04%

*Includes fire / service responses where no EMS report was generated and/or cancelled prior to an EMS report being generated

Total EMS Calls*	Transports
2229	1663

Disposition of Calls	
Patient Refused Transport (AMA)	264
Treated, Transported by Another EMS Unit	81
Evaluated, No Treatment, No Transport	94
EMS Cancelled Prior to Arrival	2
EMS Cancelled on or after Arrival	1
Dead at Scene – Resuscitation Attempted	12
Dead at Scene – No Resuscitation	21
Patient Refused Evaluation, Care, Transport	38
Patient Refused Evaluation, Transport Provided	103
Lift Assist	129
Treated, Referred to Law Enforcement	4
Treated, Transported by Private Vehicle	5
Other	125



Transport Destination	2229	100%
Aurora Med Ctr-South Shore	1304	61.47%
No Destination: Transport Refused AMA, treated on scene, Canceled	535	21.04%
AURORA ST LUKES MEDICAL CENTER	147	6.60%
WHEATON FRANCISCAN HEALTHCARE-FRANKLIN	2	0.08%
FROEDTERT MEMORIAL LUTHERAN HOSPITAL	45	2.02%
FROEDTERT COMMUNITY HOSPITAL – OAK CREEK	44	1.97%
MILWAUKEE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER	3	0.13%
CHILDRENS HOSPITAL OF WISCONSIN	40	1.79%
ASCENSION SE WI – FRANKLIN	54	2.42%
CLEMENT J ZABLOCKI VETERANS AFFAIRS	19	0.85%
ASCENSION HEALTHCARE-ST FRANCIS HOSP	12	0.53%
COLUMBIA ST MARYS HOSPITAL MILWAUKEE	7	0.31%
ASCENSION HEALTHCARE-ALL SAINTS SPRING ST	3	0.13%
Aurora West Allis Medical Center	9	0.43%
Aurora Sinai Medical Center	5	0.23%

SMFD on the Scene



Accomplished Department Goals in 2024

Increase Overall Job Satisfaction

(Accomplished)

Implemented Sharp Performance

Implemented Ready Rebound

Paramedic Training for one Firefighter

Improve Fire Safety, Prevention and Education Programs

(Accomplished)

Installation of 21 smoke and 9 carbon monoxide detectors within the community

Delivery of 13 lightweight fire extinguishers to the senior population

Improve Children's Fire Safety Programs

Improve Safety at Grant Park Beach locations

(Location signs/ throw-rings)

100% of trainee UTV program

Whole blood deployment

Increase Community Partnership Programs

(Accomplished)

South Milwaukee Fire Department Toy Drive

Heritage Days Brats and Tots

Create a career path to the Fire Service for the citizens of South Milwaukee

Warm Up Winter Coat Program

Introduction of Community Cardiac Care Program

South Milwaukee Firefighters Protective Association

Local 1633

As we review the past year, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the consistent effort and dedication shown by the members of our department throughout 2024. Day in and day out, our crews remained focused on responding to calls, supporting each other, and continuing to serve our community with professionalism and care.

This year, our firefighters responded to 3,246 emergency calls, including structure fires, medical emergencies, hazardous incidents, water rescues and everything in between. Our team's adaptability and wide range of skills allows us to maintain a high standard of service while responding to a large variety of incidents.

We worked closely with the department leadership in collaborating to address key challenges and laid the ground work for our mobile integrated health unit to get up and running in 2025. Another area of focus was the well-being of our firefighters. We made important strides in supporting both physical and mental health resources, recognizing that keeping our members healthy and ready to serve is critical to the department's success.

On the community front, our union remained active, participating in several local events, charity efforts, and outreach initiatives. It's a privilege to be part of a department that values its connection to the community, and we look forward to continuing these programs for years to come.

Looking ahead to 2025, our focus will remain on maintaining high standards for safety, continuing to advocate for our members' needs, and ensuring that the department is well-equipped to face the challenges that the city of South Milwaukee throws our way.

Thank you to all our members for their continued hard work and dedication. It's an honor to serve as your union president, and I look forward to what we will accomplish together in the coming year.

Jared Rentmeester

President, South Milwaukee Firefighters Protective Association, Local 1633