



ROARING FORK  
FIRE RESCUE

2023

# Annual Report



 [www.roaringforkfire.org](http://www.roaringforkfire.org)

SOLVING ◆ SERVING ◆ SAVING

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# LETTER FROM CHIEF THOMPSON

As we close out the first quarter of 2024, Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority is pleased to share its 2023 Annual Report. This report reflects on our successes, challenges, and opportunities to serve you with exceptional, professional services. Looking ahead, we are committed to further improving our response times, enhancing our training facilities, and expanding our community outreach programs.

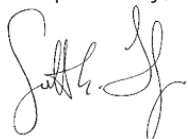
In 2023, our calls for service grew in line with the population and visitor numbers. We remain steadfast in our commitment to shortening our response times and responding with the necessary resources to mitigate emergencies. Despite the increasing call volume, we are dedicated to meeting the needs of the communities we serve. Ensuring your safety is our top priority.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Basalt community for their invaluable support of our bond initiative. This initiative, which is poised to finance several vital projects, including the renovation of Station 42 in El Jebel, the establishment of a much-needed training facility, a vehicle maintenance facility to service our fleet in-house, and the addition of more employee housing units, will significantly enhance our services. We are proud to announce that we are nearing our first milestone of this project, having acquired 5 acres of land in El Jebel. This significant stride brings us closer to completing these projects, which will not only benefit our staff but also the public for many years to come.

Due to an ever-changing political landscape, last year was a tumultuous year for setting our annual budget. State legislators called an end-of-year emergency session, which made changes to assessed valuations that delayed our final budget adoption well into January. This made for a lengthy budget cycle, which delayed our ability to make offers to hire staff and process promotions. After all was said and done, the Authority weathered the unknown even though we were sometimes making assumptions without hard numbers for our revenue for 2024. As assessed values are still very much on the legislators' minds, we expect more proposed changes that could impact our revenue for 2025. We are following this subject closely as 90% of the Authority's income is from property taxes, which has become a very volatile issue with the increase in home prices.

Our communities have been a pillar of support throughout our growth. We continually strive to make ourselves more efficient while saving lives and protecting property. The men and women of our department are ready for any challenge with their exceptional knowledge, abilities, and attitude. We sincerely appreciate your trust in us and allowing us to serve you.

Respectfully,



Scott Thompson, Fire Chief

# BOARD COMMENTS

The Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority (RFFRA) Board of Directors is the general governing body for both fire districts. It oversees all aspects of the District and carries out business in a public meeting forum. The RFFRA Board of Directors comprises six Members, three from the Basalt and Snowmass District Boards. The RFFRA board's primary responsibilities are to approve the Fire Districts and Authority policies, approve the budget, review expenditures, and provide direction to the Fire Chief.

The RFFRA board's significant achievements in 2023 include the successful voter-approved bond for improvements to the Station 42 campus in Basalt Fire District and the unanimous board approval of a budget prioritizing employee compensation and retention. These milestones are not just for us but also a testament to our commitment to the community's safety and well-being. These achievements pave the way for the Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority's continued success.

Thank you to all the employees of the Authority for their hard work, effort, and dedication.

Ed Van Walraven - Board President

Scott Arthur - Vice President

Elizabeth Striegler - Treasurer

Leroy Duroux

Dave Heivly

John Young

## DEPARTMENT FLEET

The RFFRA Fleet Division maintains all of the vehicles and small power equipment. Currently, one full-time fleet mechanic performs repair and preventative maintenance on 47 vehicles. This includes 18 utility vehicles, seven ambulances, seven engines, six wildland apparatus, and two aerials. In 2023, RFFRA received delivery of one new Ambulance, which was placed in service.



Above picture is of fire apparatus operating at a structure fire in Snowmass Village.

## FACILITIES

The RFFRA facilities division consists of six firehouses and 19 employee rental units. Three of our six firehouses are staffed 24 hours a day by full-time responders. Three of our firehouses have employee housing attached to them, totaling 13 units, some two-bedroom, one-bedroom, and studio apartments. The district also owns four two-bedroom apartments: two in Willits and two in the Town of Basalt.

The 19 employee housing units enable RFFRA to provide housing to existing employees at a reduced rate from the market and use these rental units to attract new hires.

# DEPARTMENT PROFILE

The Roaring Fork Fire and Rescue Authority is an all-hazards emergency services provider operating six stations with a combination of volunteer, part-time, and full-time staff. Three of our six stations are staffed. Station 41 is in the downtown area of the Town of Basalt.

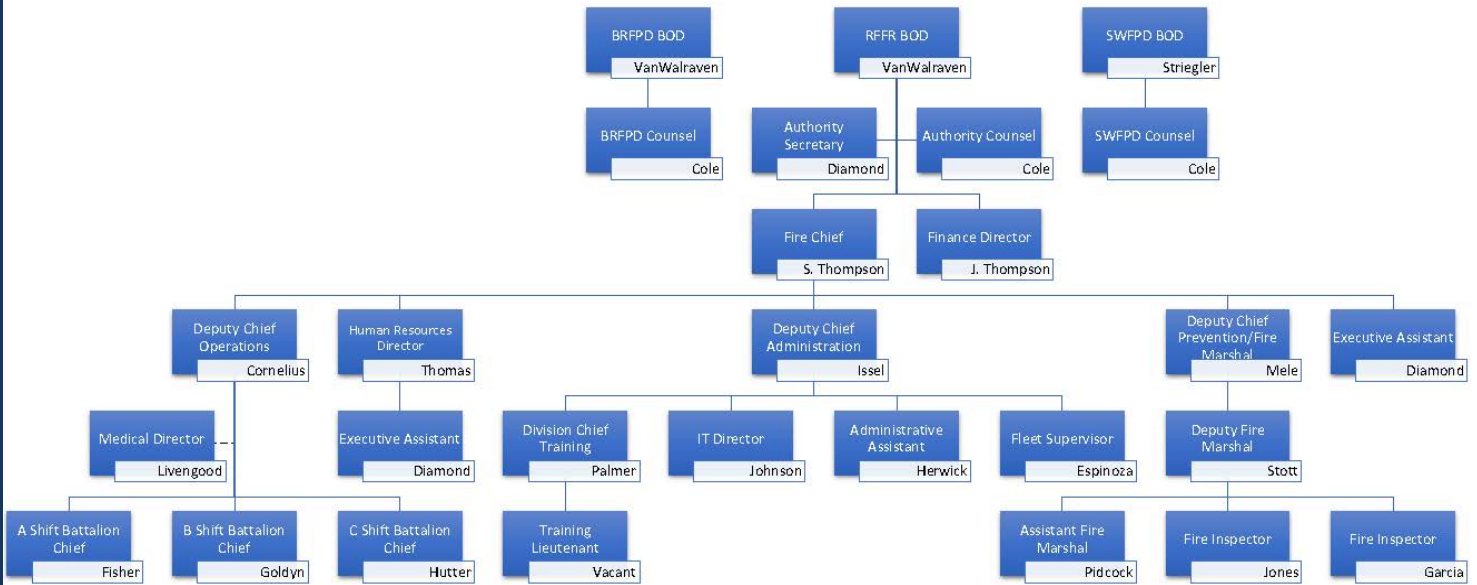
Station 42 is near the El Jebel business corridor, and Station 45 is in Snowmass Village. All three staffed stations were placed in these locations based on available property and proximity to local business districts. RFFRA also has three unstaffed stations.

Station 43 is 26 miles up the Frying Pan River in Thomasville, and Station 44 is two miles from Highway 82 on Snowmass Creek Road. Our newest station, Station 46, is near Sopris Mountain Ranch on West Sopris Creek Road.

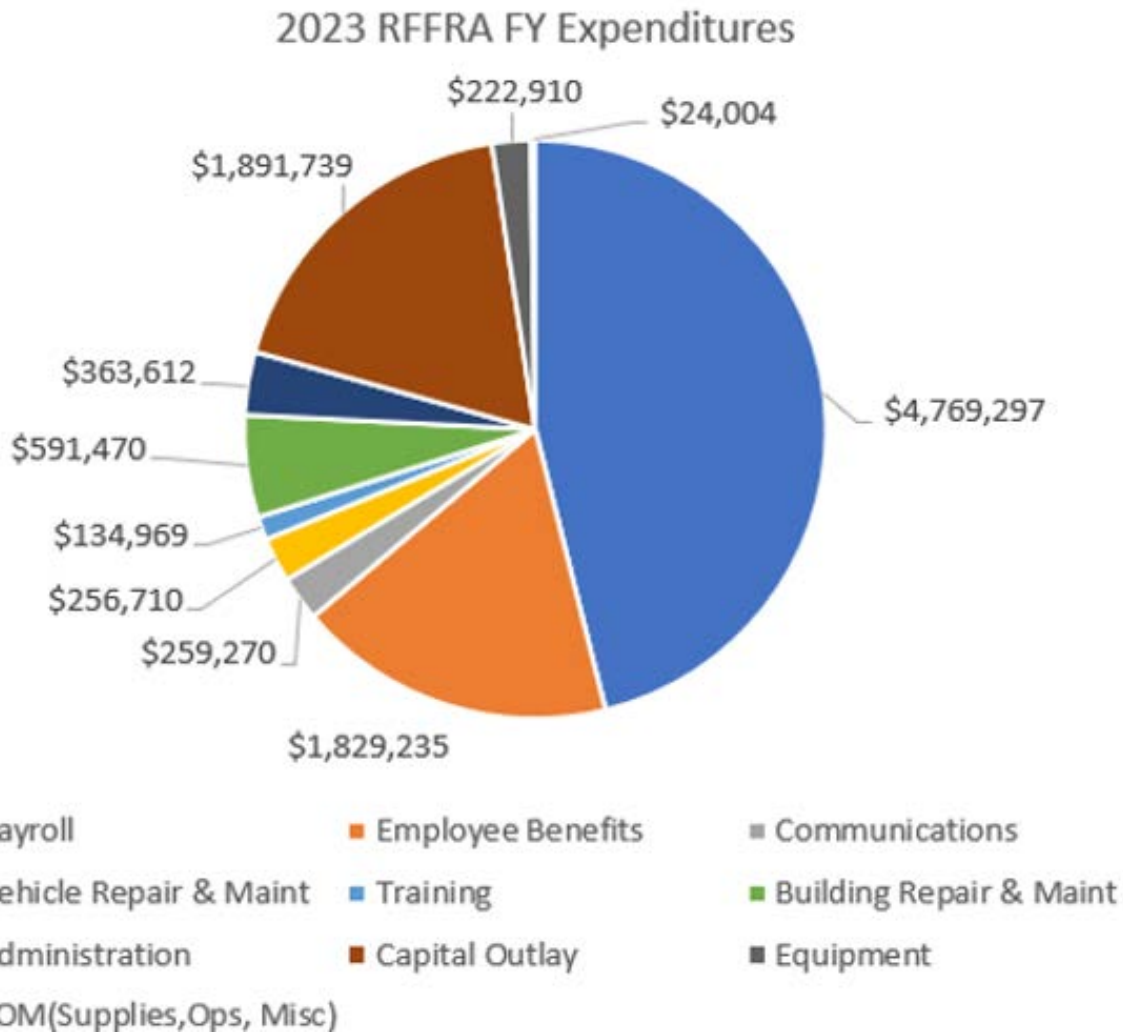
A Fire Chief and two Deputy Chiefs lead the Authority, supported by two dedicated Administrative Assistants who work 40 hours a week. One Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal, backed by a team of four committed full-time staff, ensures the smooth operation of the Authority. Our other administrative staff in Finance, Human Resources, Fleet Management, and Information Technology work tirelessly to support the organization's mission. The on-duty crew, comprising three Battalion Chiefs, six Lieutenants, and 21 full-time Firefighters / Paramedics, work a 48-hour on/96-hour off rotation (Ten full-time members assigned per shift) supplemented with Volunteer and Part-Time Firefighters, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to the community.

The Authority, a full-service Class 3 fire and emergency medical service agency, is equipped to handle various emergencies. We deliver suppression services, EMS as advanced life support, and various rescue services, ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. The Authority also provides comprehensive emergency management, fire prevention inspections, post-fire investigations, pre-plan review, and public fire and life safety education, demonstrating our commitment to proactive safety measures and community engagement.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

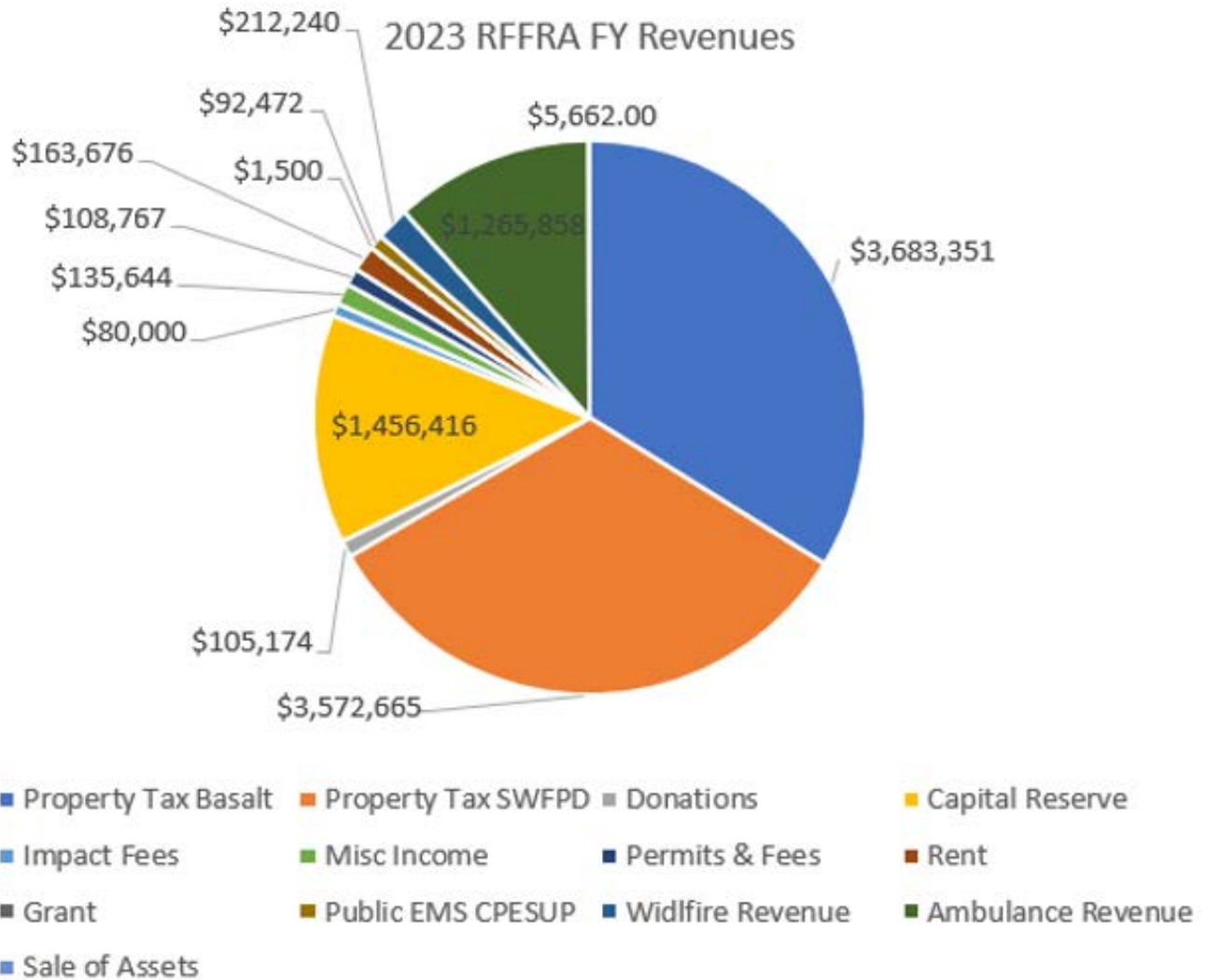


# FINANCE



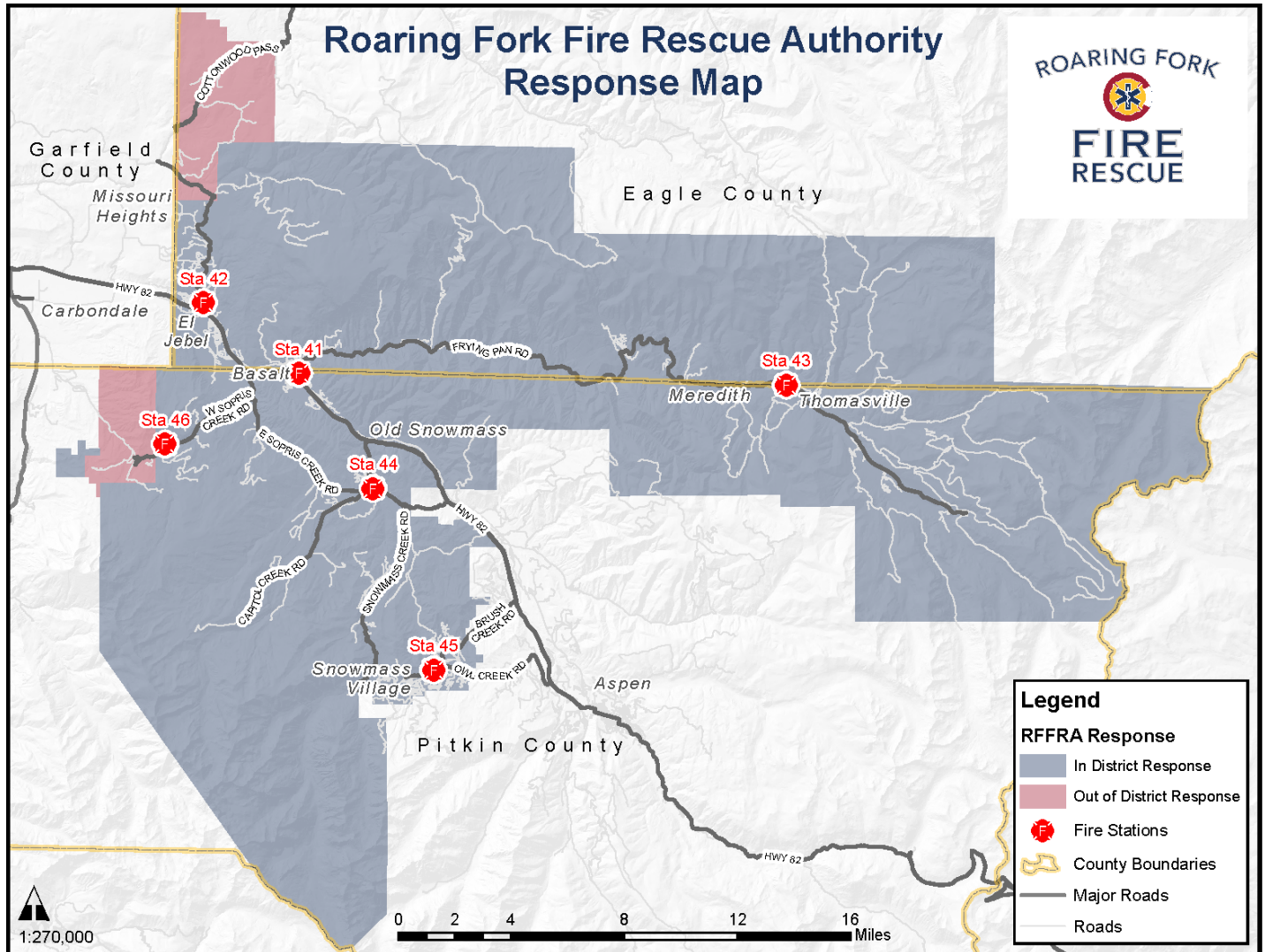
Approximately 70% of the Authority budget was spent on salary and benefits for our employees in 2023. This budget portion does not include the amount of the funding earmarked for continuous staff training and retention benefits. The most considerable non-personnel cost is associated with the ongoing maintenance of our growing infrastructure. By the end of 2023, the Authority will be served by six fire stations. These stations are located in El Jebel, Basalt, Thomasville, Old Snowmass, Snowmass Village, and West Sopris Creek. The Authority acquired two new employee housing units in Basalt, bringing the total of units to 19 employee rental units, with 7 in Snowmass Village, 1 in Old Snowmass, 6 in the Town of Basalt, 2 in Willits, and finally, 3 in our newest station located on West Sopris Creek Road.





The Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority is funded by the Basalt & Rural Fire Protection District and the Snowmass Wildcat Fire Protection District property taxes. This accounts for \$7,256,016 in property tax revenue, which the Authority receives from both Districts. In 2022, the Authority initiated a Wildfire Severity program of 4 seasonal firefighters. The Authority has continued this program and, in 2023, sent out teams on two separate fires, resulting in \$212,340 in additional income for 2023. This program is slated to continue in 2024 due to its continuing success. Fire Preventions' permit fees have become a staple in our revenue budget, bringing in \$108,676 this year. Another significant source of the Authority's revenue is ambulance transport. After a complete and extensive analysis of our ambulance transport and treatment costs in 2022, the ambulance revenue continues to support the cost of our EMS service. The Authority is continually looking to create new paths to increase revenue and offset the growing costs associated with protecting communities in our area.

# DISTRICT MAP



Pitkin County GIS | 2/2023

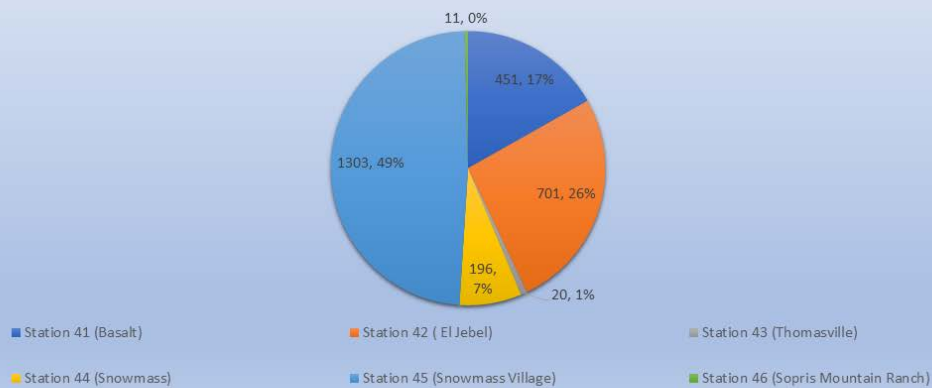
# DEPARTMENT RESPONSES

JANUARY 1, 2023, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023

## Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority

January 01, 2023 to December 31, 2023

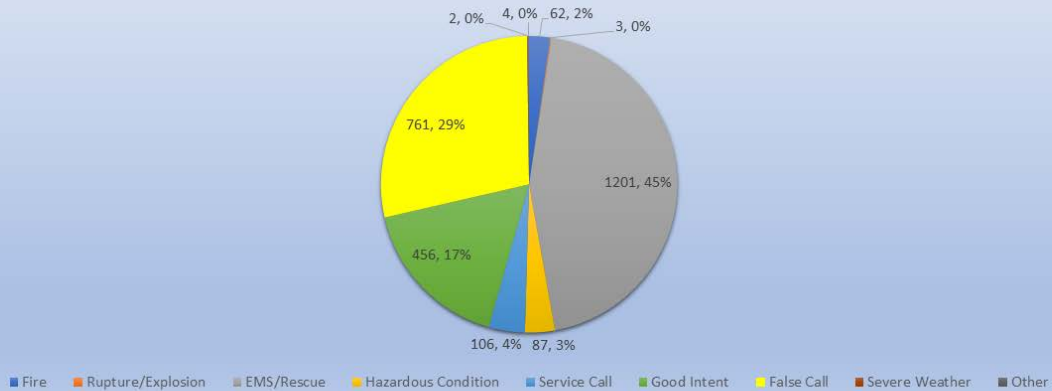
Incidents by Station, 2023



## Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority

January 01, 2023 to December 31, 2023

Incidents by Incident Type, 2023



# Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority

January 01, 2023 to December 31, 2023

### Incidents by Day of Week, 2023



# Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority

January 01, 2023 to December 31, 2023

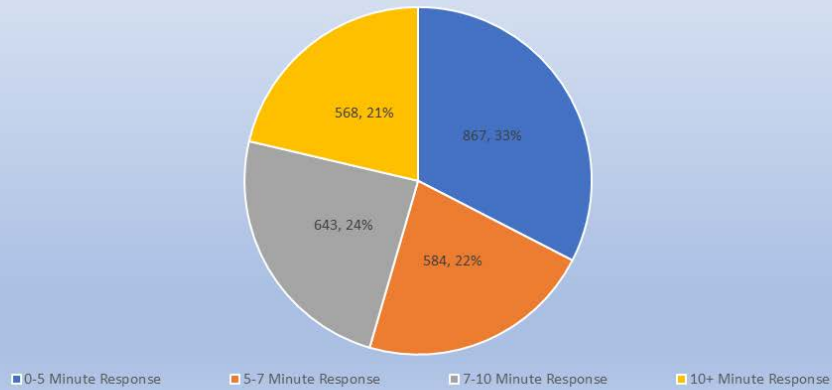
### Incidents by Month, 2023



# Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority

January 01, 2023 to December 31, 2023

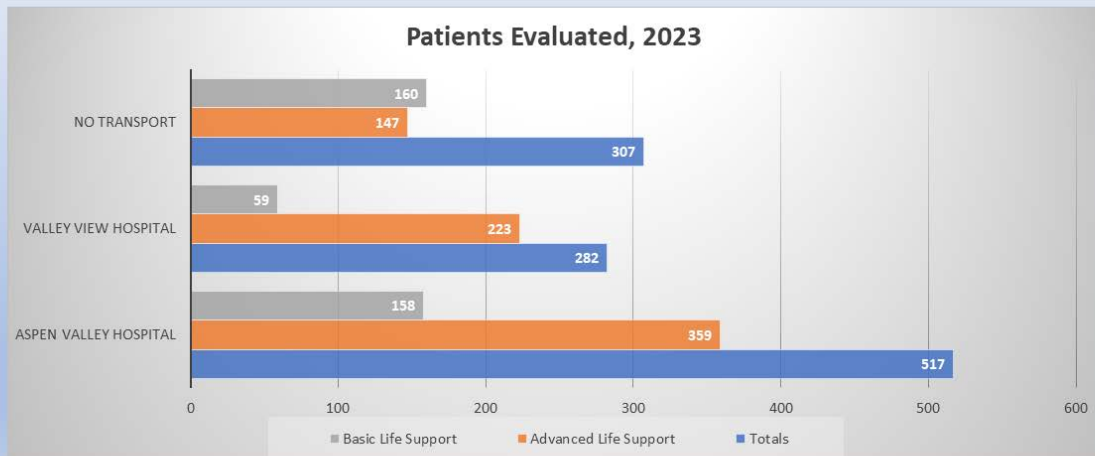
Response Times, 2023



# Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority

January 01, 2023 to December 31, 2023

Patients Evaluated, 2023



# TRAINING DIVISION

The Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority provides highly skilled firefighters, emergency medical technicians, company officers, and chief officers who respond to emergency calls in the community. We cross-train in various disciplines because we respond to a diverse range of calls. This prepares us to meet the needs of the citizens we are sworn to protect. Our members participate in year-round weekly training in areas such as self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), search and rescue, fire attack, ventilation, and auto extrication. Our members attend classes throughout Colorado and nationwide to stay on top of current trends, new equipment, and advanced methods. The Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority also trains with our mutual aid partners to ensure smooth operations and seamless transitions when working on multi-agency calls for service. Many Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority members receive specialized training to serve on Specialized Response Teams in Pitkin and Eagle Counties. These disciplines include ice rescue, swift water rescue, rope rescue, wildland, hazardous materials, and incident management teams.

The Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority's commitment to excellence is recognized by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, which has designated us as an Education Group at various levels, including Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT), EMT-Intermediate and Paramedic. This recognition underscores our ability to provide high-quality continuing education for Colorado and NREMT certification renewal.

RFFRA members receive continuing education each month. Topics vary but generally cover medical or trauma emergencies. The RFFRA Medical Director also provides annual training and case reviews. RFFRA members can earn approved distributive education online at any time through our training platform. Various outside continuing education programs are also available to RFFRA members.

In 2023, the unwavering dedication of Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority members was evident as they completed an impressive 9,500 aggregate training hours. This commitment to maintaining the necessary skills and knowledge is a testament to their resolve to Solve, Serve, and Save our valued community.

Training Highlights from 2023:

Digital records management will be done by implementing the Vectors Evaluations+ Platform.

Switching from paper to digital training records allows for more efficient and accurate means to capture training data.



# FDIC 2023





## Roaring Fork Rescue Swiftwater Certification and Refresher Class

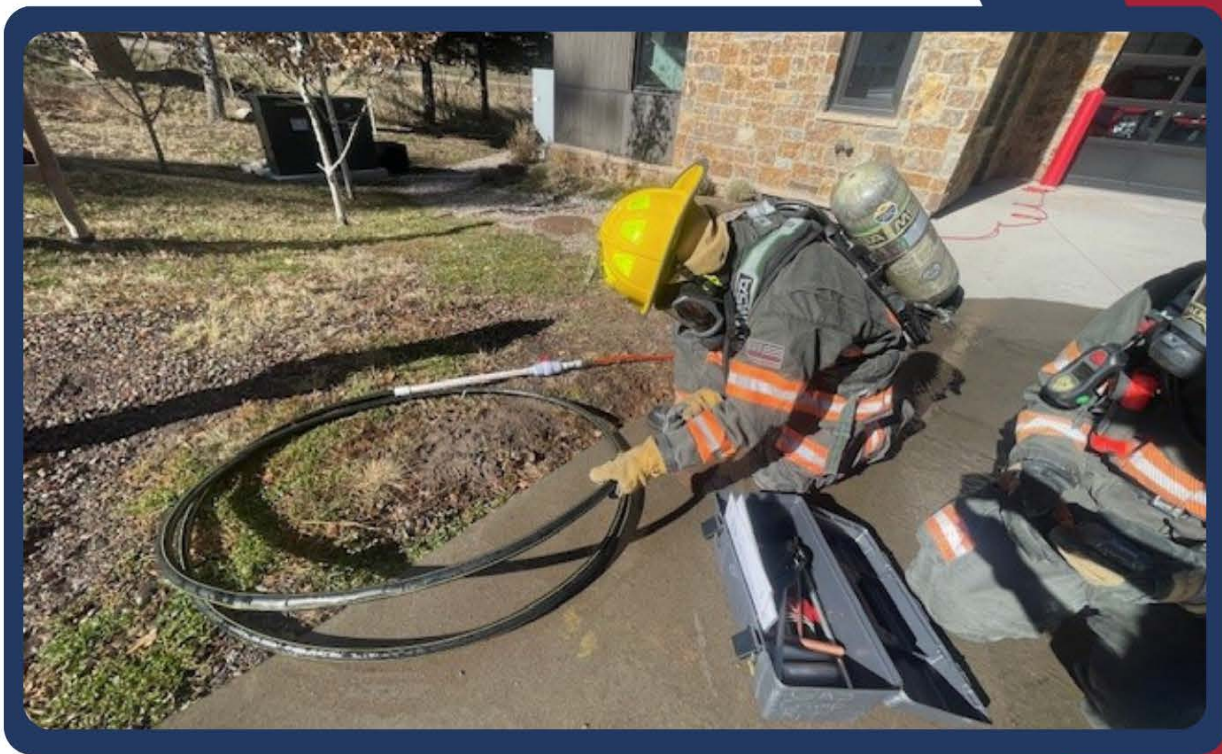








# Flammable Gas - Black Hills Energy



# Wildland S-130/190 Field Day





## Dive Rescue Swiftwater Instructor Training



# FIRE PREVENTION

2023 was certainly busy for our fire prevention team. We saw an increase in new development, including commercial businesses, residential and multi-family projects, and large mixed-use projects in both the west end and the Town of Snowmass Village. We also collaborated with the Town of Snowmass Village to complete 30 acres of wildfire mitigation.

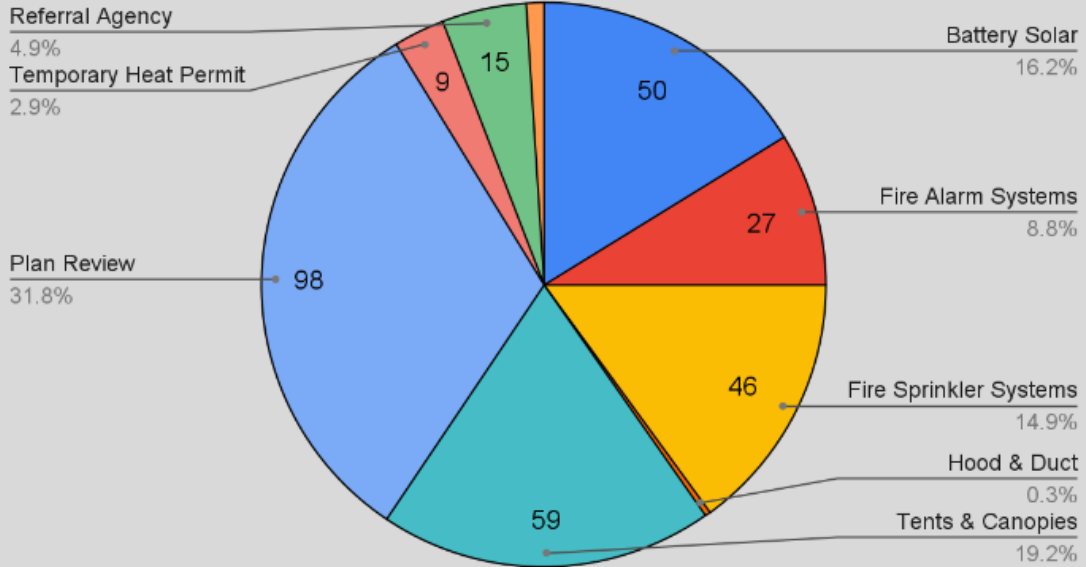
Our fire prevention team attended community events like National Night Out, Aspen Snowmass Treehouse Summer Camp, Latino Conservation Week (shared with the Red Cross), and Shop with a Cop, and they spent time with elementary school kids for Fire Prevention Week.

In August 2023, we adopted the 2021 International Fire Code, a testament to our commitment to staying updated and ensuring the highest standards of fire prevention. We also attended quarterly Fire Marshal Meetings with our neighboring fire districts, fostering a spirit of collaboration and shared learning. Our fire prevention team is dedicated to ongoing training and building familiarization in Base Village and Tree Farm, a testament to our unwavering commitment to the safety of our community and firefighters.

Thanks,  
 John Mele, Fire Marshal  
 Brooke Stott, Deputy Fire Marshal  
 Jim Pidcock, Assistant Fire Marshal  
 Brad Jones, Fire Inspector  
 Jesse Garcia, Fire Inspector

Fire Prevention Activities	2021	2022	2023	Increase
Inspections- General Fire & Life Safety	272	427	570	33.4%
Pre-Construction Reviews & Referrals	137	146	152	4.10%
Knox Installs	19	29	38	31%
School Inspections	10	17	14	-17.6%
Home Wildfire Risk Assessment	11	21	15	-28.5%
Fire Extinguisher Classes	4	1	1	0.00%
Fire Investigations Observations (OCI called out)	4	6	13	116.6%

## Types of Permits Issued 2023



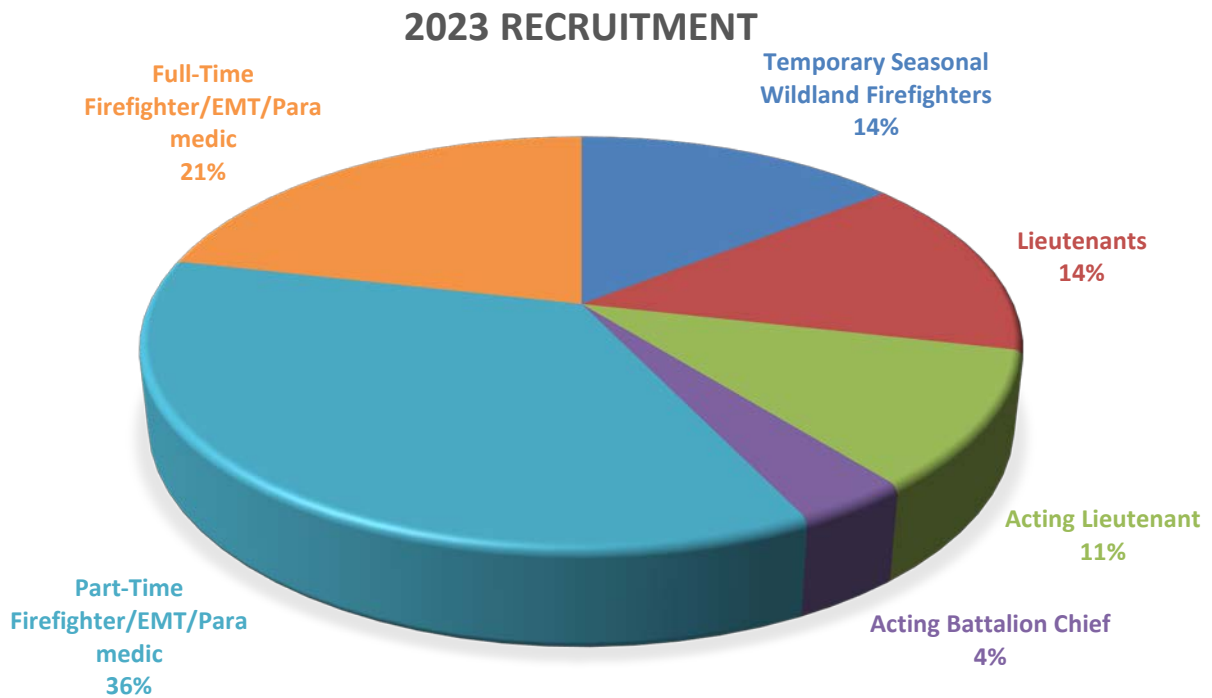
## Wildfire Mitigation 2023, Snowmass Village



# HUMAN RESOURCES

## RECRUITMENTS

The graph below represents the Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority recruitments in 2023. The Authority held eight separate recruitments, including full-time, part-time, acting, and temporary positions. The Authority processed 85 applications and hired or promoted 28 people. We recruited internally and externally for these positions.



## Bi-Annual Harassment Training

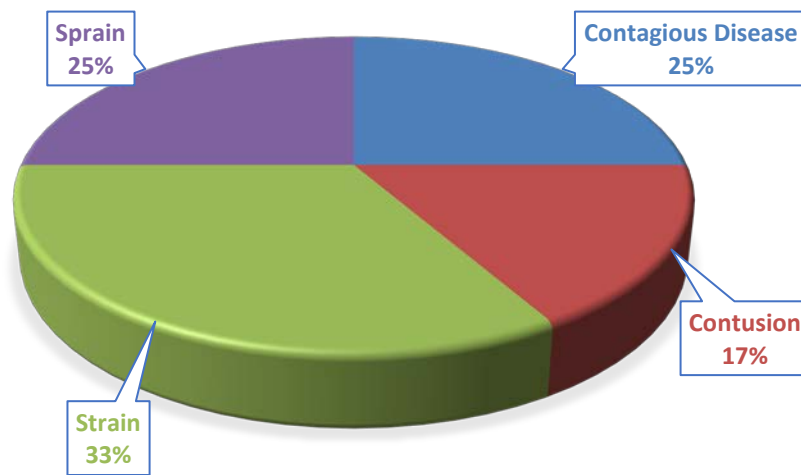
In August, the Authority brought on Attorney Charles Passaglia to conduct Legal Issues training for supervisors and Harassment Prevention for all staff members. The Authority provides harassment training to all members every other year, and all new employees are assigned this training during their onboarding process.



## Work Related Injuries

The graph below represents the overall causes of the Authority's work-related injuries/illnesses in 2023. The Authority had 12 injuries/illnesses whose overall cost was \$11,801. Strains resulted in the highest cost, totaling expenses of \$10,539; contagious disease cost \$726; and \$536 for contusions.

### WORKERS COMPENSATION 2023



## STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

In 2020, the Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority embarked on a strategic plan to create a forward-thinking, cohesive roadmap for its future. Many strategic plan initiatives came to fruition in 2023. The following describes all the progress made in 2023 for the strategic plan.

The **Cultural Committee** rolled out the Cultural Handbook and Values for 2023. It established a quarterly and yearly award for the membership recognizing their cultural values.

### The RFFR Way

#### RFFR Cultural Vision

"Driven to be better, to serve others."

#### RFFR Cultural Mission

“RFFR is dedicated to creating a just culture that benefits both internal team members and external stakeholders, through our collective passion of service others, solving problems and saving lives.”

**Respect \* Trust \* Integrity \* Accountability \* Gratitude \* Humility \* Team-Oriented**

**Nominated Individuals:**

Jesse Garcia	Renee Thomas	Rachel Thomas
Wes Blasberg	Ryland Babcock	Richard Cornelius
Sander Olson	Andy Fisher	Susan Herwick
Jennifer Diamond	Erik Johnson	Dave Klebes
Brad Jones	Jesse Tanner	Paul Blangsted
Maureen McPhee	David Herera	Jason Smith
Marcus Gerbaz		

1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Winner	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Winner	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter Winner
Paul Blangsted & David Herrera	Brad Jones & Dave Klebes	Jesse Garcia	Dave Klebes (annual)

The **Employee Recognition Team** was another team to complete their strategic initiative. The team spent 2023 focusing their efforts surveying staff on the type of recognition that is meaningful and taking the information to create new recognition awards for our internal and community members. The program was rolled out in December 2023 to be able to present awards at the annual awards banquet in January 2024. The following awards categories were identified and approved.

Citizen Recognition Award: *Vince Nichols and Scott Condon*

A citizen who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, selflessly given time and talent, and positively benefited the Authority and the community.

Outstanding Mentor: *Paul Bangsted*

A member of the Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority who has demonstrated a personal commitment to the professional development of their peers. This member will have encouraged and motivated their peers to develop and grow in ways both professional and personal.

EMT/Paramedic of the Year: *David Klebes*

A person who exemplifies a great attitude, adaptability, and professionalism. This person is knowledgeable and can impart that knowledge as a mentor while exhibiting and implementing the most consistent medical care solutions and high-quality patient care.

Firefighter of the Year: *Jessica Waltenburg*

A person who exemplifies a great attitude, adaptability, and professionalism. This person has put in the time and effort to acquire the skills, knowledge, and tools to be a force in the field. They can impart that knowledge to others meaningfully as mentors while exhibiting the most consistent firefighting skills and performing at a high level throughout the year.

Volunteer of the Year: *Captain Steve Howard*

This Volunteer has exhibited outstanding dedication to the Authority by going above and beyond the expectations of volunteer members. By dedicating time and talent to building up the Authority,

this Volunteer serves as an example of the culture of Roaring Fork Fire Rescue.

Outstanding Staff Support to RFFR: Jesse Garcia

An employee of RFFR who provides exceptional support to internal staff and the public. This person has a positive, can-do attitude, demonstrates initiative, and anticipates the needs of others. Helps implement strategies that improve the efficiency of RFFR.

2023 RFFR Way Annual Award: David Klebes

Which of these team members has consistently throughout the year been able to live the values, actions, and beliefs outlined in The RFFR Way Cultural Handbook and is deserving of the 2023 RFFR Way Annual Award?

The **Compensation Team** also completed its strategic plan initiative in 2023. The team worked diligently last year to develop a compensation philosophy and pay structure that provides the following to staff: 1) it's legal, 2) adequate, 3) motivating, 4) equitable, 5) provides security, and 6) is cost-benefit effective. The team felt that these objectives were influential in developing a sound compensation system based on feedback from the stakeholders.

The team met with the Roaring Fork Board of Directors and was approved to make the following compensation changes.

- Moving our compensation pay philosophy from 7% above market to 10% above market
- Request a higher number for our COLA increase this upcoming year to 5% and add 2% to help recapture some income, as the Authority will be unable to fund a full 5% in 2023.
- Provide premium pay for Officers with a paramedic certification.
- Request that longevity pay be extended through 35 years of full-time service.
- Move away from our current compensation salary structure to a structure that uses step increases based on performance (meets expectations of above). The purpose of this plan is to meet some core ideas of what the staff wanted, which was a plan that was 1) easy to understand and 2) would help them to better plan in their personal lives by knowing future compensation opportunities they had.

The team implemented the plan in 2024.

<u>Cultural Committee</u>	<u>Employee Recognition</u>	<u>Compensation Team</u>
<u>Team Members</u>	<u>Team Members</u>	<u>Members</u>
Chance Goldyn (team lead), Jim Pidcock, James Dirkes, Jessica Waltenburg, Paul Massey, and Craig Mackey	Eric Goldberger (team lead), Catherine Pieck, and Bryce Christensen	Renee Thomas (team lead), Brooke Stott, Jason Smith, Brent Perusse, and Nicholas Braun

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Annual IT Update for 2023 outlines the pivotal role of technology in supporting all facets of operations and administration at Roaring Fork Fire Rescue. A modern and efficient workforce, enabled by robust technological infrastructure, continues to drive the organization's effectiveness in Serving, Solving, and Saving throughout the community. With security as our top priority in an increasingly interconnected global environment, the IT department remains committed to maintaining the integrity and reliability of our systems.

## Key Achievements:

1. **Edited 2022 Annual Report:** Successfully completed the editing and publication of the 2022 Annual Report, showcasing the organization's achievements and initiatives.
2. **Lifesize Meetings:** Facilitated 2,350 Lifesize meetings totaling 102,301 minutes, enabling seamless collaboration and communication among staff members.
3. **Hardware and Software Upgrades:** Conducted hardware, software, and firmware upgrades in alignment with vendor support lifecycles, ensuring the reliability and security of our technology infrastructure.
4. **Security Measures:** Undertook regular reviews of security effectiveness and procedures, alongside ongoing security awareness training programs to mitigate risks and enhance cybersecurity posture.
5. **Strategic Contributions:** Contributed to RFFRA's Master Plan and continued work on RFFRA's Strategic Plan, aligning IT initiatives with organizational objectives.
6. **UAS Program:** Successfully obtained FAA certification for the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) program and conducted several planned and unplanned missions, enhancing emergency response capabilities.
7. **Ambulance Enhancement:** Equipped a new ambulance with Sierra wireless modem, iPad, Knox Box, and KeySecure, leveraging technology to improve emergency medical services.
8. **Digital Signage Rollout:** Rolled out digital signage using First Arriving Dashboards, enhancing communication and engagement across the district.
9. **Cellular Door Locks:** Converted to cellular-based door locks throughout the district, enhancing security and access control measures.
10. **Starlink Integration:** Implemented Starlink outfitting on brush trucks and command vehicles, improving connectivity and communication capabilities in remote areas.
11. **Community Partnerships:** Continued collaboration with various community partners to support mutual objectives and initiatives.

## Challenges Faced:

While progress has been made, challenges persist in maintaining alignment with evolving technological landscapes, ensuring adequate resource allocation, and addressing cybersecurity threats.

#### Future Initiatives:

1. **Continued Modernization:** Prioritize ongoing modernization efforts to keep pace with technological advancements and meet the evolving needs of the organization.
2. **Enhanced Cybersecurity:** Invest in advanced cybersecurity measures, including threat intelligence, incident response capabilities, and employee training, to safeguard against emerging threats.
3. **Data Management:** Implement robust data management strategies to ensure the security, integrity, and accessibility of organizational data assets.
4. **Cloud Integration:** Explore opportunities for cloud integration to improve scalability, flexibility, and cost-efficiency of IT infrastructure.
5. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Foster collaborative partnerships with vendors, community stakeholders, and industry peers to leverage collective expertise and resources for mutual benefit.

#### Conclusion:

IT remains committed to driving innovation, enhancing security, and leveraging technology to achieve organizational objectives at RFFRA. By prioritizing strategic initiatives and fostering collaborative partnerships, we are poised to continue serving our community effectively in the years ahead.

# CONTACT INFORMATION

Station 41 20 School Street Basalt, CO 81621-8247	Fire/EMS Emergency: 911
Station 42 1089 JW Drive Carbondale, CO 81623-9587	Fire Department: (970) 340-7040
Station 43 24265 Frying Pan Road Meredith, CO 81642	Chief Scott Thompson: (970) 340-7031
Station 44 1909 Snowmass Creek Road Snowmass, CO 81654	<a href="http://www.roaringforkfire.org">www.roaringforkfire.org</a>
Station 45 5275 Owl Creek Road Snowmass Village, CO 81615	
Station 46 3705 W Sopris Creek Road Basalt, CO 81621-9181	