



FIRE · EMS · RESCUE

## 2020 Year End Report

For the Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District, 2020 proved to be very challenging and rewarding at the same time. Like everyone else, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted almost everything that we do. In addition, we responded to more emergency calls than ever before while dealing with another unprecedented wildfire season. In the midst of this we continued to move forward with our capital projects with the construction of two station expansions and purchasing and equipping new fire and EMS apparatus.

### The District

Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District encompasses the towns of Carbondale, Redstone and Marble. Additionally, the Fire District extends to the Eagle County line along the Highway 82 (MM 17) corridor, up onto Missouri Heights, to the west to Spring Valley, including the CMC campus, and then toward Glenwood Springs along Highway 82 to mile 6. The District's area is approximately 300 square miles. There are five stations: Marble, Redstone, Carbondale, Missouri Heights, and in the Westend near the CMC turnoff at CR 114.

CRFPD provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service, Fire Suppression, Wildland Fire Suppression, Technical Rescue, Swiftwater Rescue, Backcountry Rescue, Hazmat Response, Public Outreach including: Community CPR/AED training, First Aid training, Public Safety Education, Community Event Standby Coverage, Life/Fire Safety Education for Schools, Wildland Fire Home Mitigation Consultations, Plan Review, Fire Inspections and Home Safety Inspections (if requested).

CRFPD is a Combination Fire District. This means that we are staffed with a combination of full-time paid members and volunteer members. Currently, we have 26 paid employees and 27 volunteers. Our people are our most precious resource and accordingly, we place a significant emphasis on ensuring that all of our people are well trained and equipped with modern, high quality equipment. The safety of our members is our number one priority.





**2020 BOND PROJECTS –**

**STATIONS** - Two building projects occurred during the year; Marble Station 83 and Westend Station 84 were expanded and remodeled.

The Marble station was completely remodeled and 2 additional truck bays were added. The remodel included: expanding the training/operations room, adding a kitchen, two bathrooms, turnout gear room, and additional storage. This project will set the fire district up for the next 15+ years and enable us to train and operate in ways that we have never been able to until now.

The Westend station project added two additional truck bays along with a bathroom and turnout gear room along with additional storage. The expansion allows the fire district to place an ambulance and brush truck at this station. CRFPD is working to be in a position to staff this station full-time and be able to respond to any type of incident with “First Due” apparatus. We have known for a number of years that the Highway 82 corridor between Carbondale and Glenwood Springs is the area experiencing increasing calls for service. Now we will be able to take steps to address this need.

**APPARATUS –** CRFPD formed several apparatus committees to develop specifications, obtain pricing, and purchase apparatus identified in the 2018 bond issue. The committees worked through many months long processes and our board of directors approved the purchase of a number of upgraded vehicles. The delivery of some of the apparatus was delayed in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic.

<u>Apparatus</u>	<u>Expected Delivery Date</u>
3 – 4x4 Fire Engines	1/2021
2 – 4x4 Tactical Tenders	1/2021
1 – 4x4 Wildland Brush Truck	4/2021
1 – Type 1 Ambulances	7/2020





## **COVID-19 –**

The COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely difficult for our communities on almost every level. At CRFPD, everyone has been committed to providing a high standard of care throughout this pandemic. Early on, our Board of Directors understood the significance and impact that the pandemic was having on our organization. The Board of Directors immediately began coordinating with the fire chief and staff on planning and response for both the immediate and longer term. The Board of Directors quickly began meeting every other week in order to stay informed and authorize necessary spending and policy changes in order to keep up with the ever-changing conditions and responses to this pandemic. Our communities are fortunate to have this group of dedicated and engaged people on the CRFPD Board of Directors.

CRFPD's volunteer and paid staff have all been a part of the enormous effort to respond safely and effectively to emergencies in the district. The effort has included: staying current on ever changing COVID safety guidelines from the CDC, State of Colorado, and local governments. Developing equipment, response and decontamination protocols while receiving changing guidance over time has required a significant effort from our people. In addition, CRFPD has participated in a number of grant opportunities to mitigate the increased cost related to the pandemic. We applied for grants for everything from PPE to funding for overtime and increased staffing needs directly related to the COVID pandemic. Applying for and working through multiple grant processes is another time-consuming job but we have been successful with a number of grants that have helped to defray the added costs due to the pandemic.

As 2020 has progressed and we move into 2021, we have been able to access current testing for our members and in December, we began the vaccination process for all CRFPD volunteers and staff. In 2021, we will no doubt continue to deal with the COVID pandemic and it will test our organization once again. So far, we believe that our volunteers and paid staff have not only endured but they have excelled in their response to the pandemic. Our communities can be proud of the efforts and work of this outstanding group of individuals.





### **WILDFIRE SEASON/DEPLOYMENTS –**

**Local Fire Season.** The wildland fire season in 2020 was unprecedented as our state experienced a number of the largest wildfires in our history, all in the same season. CRFPD responded to our share of local fires, along with deployments to regional and national calls for assistance. Fire behavior during 2020 was at a level that no one had ever experienced before in this state. Veteran firefighters and fire managers were all surprised and awestruck at the fire behavior in 2020.

During the summer season, CRFPD increases staffing to provide for daily wildland fire patrols. In 2020, we staffed 2 wildland engines 7 days per week to patrol both the north and south ends of the district. The number one goal of these patrols is to “Keep Small Fires Small” by responding as quickly as possible to fire calls. While on patrol, our crews extinguished numerous campfires that were left unattended. This was a particular problem in dispersed campsites in both the Crystal Valley and Thompson Creek areas.

Locally, CRFPD responded to approximately 25 wildfire incidents in and around the district. The largest of these fires was the Grizzly Creek Fire. CRFPD provided mutual aid during the initial attack period of the fire and then later deployed apparatus and personnel to the ongoing firefighting effort. While the Grizzly Creek Fire was burning, CRFPD responded to a fast-moving wildfire in the Fisher Creek area in Spring Valley.

**Deployments –** In addition to local fires, CRFPD responded to the national need for engines and crews by going on 7 deployments to large wildfires in Colorado and California. These deployments call for a commitment of up to 14 days (plus travel time) for each crew. 2020 was a year in which almost all of our national fire assets were deployed at times and managers of large fires experienced difficulty in getting adequate numbers of engines and firefighters. It was a very good thing that CRFPD was able to help on as many incidents that we could.



## Employees

Officers/Promotions – in 2020, we again had a number of folks transition into new leadership positions at CRFPD.

Operations Chief – Longtime CRFPD member and Operations Chief Allan Ingram retired from CRFPD in early 2020. CRFPD conducted an internal application and assessment center for the Operations Division Chief position and Mike Wagner was promoted to the position. Mike was tasked with many difficult projects in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, busy fire season, and all the normal things that go with being the Ops Chief. He has really done an outstanding job and has proven to be an excellent choice for Operations Chief.

EMS Coordinator – Captain Garrett Kennedy was promoted the position of EMS Coordinator. This is a big job as Emergency Medical Services accounts for the lion's share of responses at CRFPD. Garrett has jumped in with both feet and done a great job during 2020, dealing with all of the issues of the COVID pandemic and ensuring that our standard of care is excellent.

Shift Captain – Ashley Buss was promoted to the position of Shift Captain in 2020. Shift Captains are responsible for our emergency response crew during their 48 hours on duty. Ashley has taken the Shift Commander role and run with it, ensuring that the crew and equipment are ready to respond. The Captain and Lieutenant positions are one of the most important positions at CRFPD as they truly are the boots on the ground that take care of people and put out fires. Our shift crews are the face of the fire district.

Lieutenants – in 2020, CRFPD established lieutenant positions on each of our 48/96 shifts. The lieutenants are part of the shift crew and assist the captains in the day to day operations, training and response of our responder crews. We are fortunate to have 3 outstanding people who became lieutenants in 2020. Mike Gandolfo, Aaron Luttrell and Karl Oliver have done an excellent job of establishing the position here and ensuring that we provide the best service possible.

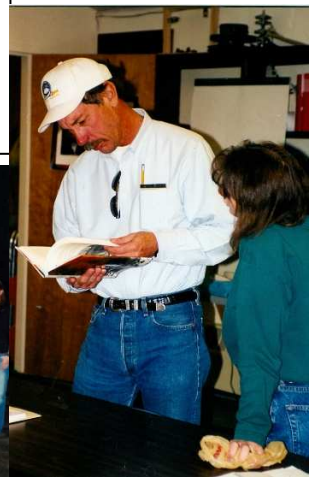
Training Captain – at CRFPD, we believe that training is the “Golden Key” to enable us to operate safely and provide excellent, appropriate care to sick and injured patients. Providing training to 65 volunteer and paid staff in the areas of structural fire, wildland fire, EMS with advanced life support, swiftwater rescue, technical rescue, and hazardous materials response is a monumental task. In 2020, Brandon Deter became our Training Captain, working with our Training Chief to improve our ability to deliver great training to every member. Brandon is doing an outstanding job and we are grateful to have him in this position.



## Volunteers

The Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District has a rich history of volunteerism and community service.

Today, we stand on the shoulders of the great people who came before us and laid the firm foundation for what we are today and what we will become in the future. Our communities should be very proud of the people who paved the way over the past seven decades. They were and are our neighbors, friends and loved ones. We owe a great debt of gratitude to them all.



Volunteers – 2020 has been a year where we have leaned heavily on our volunteer members. Specifically, the summer season was extremely busy and we dealt with the challenge of staffing two wildland engines each day for our patrols. In addition, we responded to a number of large incidents and concurrent incidents that stretched our ability to adequately staff for response. CRFPD volunteers stepped up in big ways this year by either helping to staff wildland engines or by responding to the “All Call” pages when we were dealing with large or numerous incidents. The volunteers at CRFPD are truly vital to our success and we have an outstanding group of dedicated and talented folks that volunteer for their community. In 2020 our volunteers completed over 4300 hours of shift coverage. This is a testament to their commitment and dedication.

In certain areas of the district, volunteer recruitment and retention remains a challenge for CRFPD. In 2020, our recruitment efforts suffered from the COVID pandemic as we were unable to have larger public gatherings and informational community meetings. The south end of the district remains a focus for us in 2021 and we are planning informational and recruiting events in the first half of the year.

One area where we are having success is in the Carbondale and Westend areas of the district. We are planning on accepting and training 10 new volunteer members beginning in January of 2021. This is very exciting and we are looking forward to getting to know our newest members.





**District Operations**

**Calls for Service 2020**

In 2020 CRFPD responded to over 1230 calls for service. We are an All-Hazards response organization so, when someone calls 911 for help, we go.

**Incident Type**

Structure Fires		8
Other Fires		28
EMS/Rescue		593
Hazardous Condition		38
Service Call		68
Good Intent		285
False Call		160
Severe Weather		0
Special Incident		8
EMS Standby		45
<b>Total</b>		<b>1233</b>



**Emergency Medical Service** EMS or ambulance responses account for over 50% of our call volume and more than 75% of our personnel’s time spent on incidents. Our responders on shifts are called upon to provide help and expertise to a wide variety of emergency and non-emergent incidents and events.

**Seasonal Staffing** – The summer season regularly brings a significant increase in call volume. CRFPD incident response typically increases up to 40% during the summer season from mid-May through September. This increase in demand for service along with our annual Wildland Fire Patrol program requires us to enhance our staffing levels. CRFPD has an outstanding group of volunteers and paid staff that step in and fill the need in these areas. Not only are we able to expand our staffing for the season, but our members benefit by gaining valuable experience which makes us better throughout our organization.

**Incident Management** – CRFPD has a long history of being a part of local Incident Management Teams (IMT), and assisting our neighboring agencies on ad hoc IMTs when large incidents occur. During 2020, CRFPD members were part of the Pitkin County COVID IMT. This effort went on for several months as the initial pandemic wave made its way through the valley. In addition, we participated in local initial attack ad hoc teams during the wildland fire season. Incident management teams really are the only way to safely manage expanding incidents and events in the area. No single agency or organization is big enough to do this kind of work alone.



## Training 2020

At CRFPD, we call training “The Golden Key”. High quality, consistent training is vital to our ability to perform well in emergency situations. We train on many different subjects because we are called on to perform in many different emergency disciplines. In 2020, our members completed over 5700 hours of training in the various disciplines. 2020 brought with it a focus on leadership training along with wildland fire and rescue certification.



### Training By Category

### Hours

Administrative		863
Driver/Operator		321
Emergency Medical		1,609
Fire		1,856
Hazardous Materials		21
Incident Management		66
Operations		--
Rescue		488
Wildland Fire		564
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,788</b>







### 2020 Training By Members

Members	Hours
A-Shift	1072
B-Shift	958
C-Shift	1084
Admin Staff	1467
Volunteers	1300
<b>Total</b>	<b>5881</b>

### Outreach/Education

In 2020, CRFPD participated in a wide variety of public education and outreach events and programs. Public education is a vital part of our core mission. If we are able to educate and equip people in our communities so that they are able to be safer in their daily lives, then we will not have to respond to a 911 emergency. This concept of prevention and education drives our outreach programs.



Some of the areas we touched in 2020 include:

Hosting a “COVID Safe” Open House for the community. The annual open house is a well-loved event and we are to have been able to stay connected to our community, even during a crazy 2020!

Halloween and Santa Fire Engine community parade. Both events were big hits that had our engine lit up and playing music as it made its way around town. The turnout was huge this year especially with the restrictions caused by the pandemic. We plan to make this another annual tradition!

Wildfire home consultations were another part of our outreach programs this year. We performed quite a number of mitigation consultations with property owners and HOAs as well. The 2020 wildland fire year once again showed the importance of mitigation efforts and we thank everyone in the district who did their part to improve life and property safety.



CRFPD has built relationships with quite a number of organizations and groups including: Carbondale Senior Housing, CMC, Roaring Fork High School, Carbondale Rotary Club, and more. We intend to continue building partnerships throughout the district and neighboring counties. Partnerships are vital to our ability to provide premier levels of care to the people we serve. No one agency or organization can do it alone. We must work together so it makes sense we come together as partners.

### **Financial Management**

The Board of Directors and district staff work together closely to develop and manage the budget each year at CRFPD. The 2018 voter approved mil levy and bond issue were some of the first steps the directors took to ensure adequate funding for our community emergency services. In 2020, the successful revenue stabilization or “Gallagher” election question was another important issue the board of directors presented to the voters of the district. We feel very fortunate to have the support of the voters in the fire district.

The CRFPD board of directors have laid out a number of fiscal priorities over the past 3 years that will continue to guide the district in the future. They include:

- Adequate funding for competitive wages and benefits to retain high quality staff personnel.
- Adequate funding for up to date equipment and apparatus moving into the future.
- Ensuring reserves are funded appropriately each year.
- Establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund to pay for needed capital improvements in the future. This is funded with a \$200,000 per year transfer. \$400,000 is currently in the Capital Reserve Fund.
- Funding for volunteer recruitment and retention like Length of Service Awards program and maintaining current volunteer pension fund.
- Funding for training for all CRFPD members. This includes building a regional training building and grounds along with funding for training equipment, tuitions and courses.



### **Moving Into 2021**

As 2020 has proven, we don't really know what challenges we may face in the coming year. We do know that each year has its own challenges and opportunities. At CRFPD, we look forward to 2021 knowing that we have as much to do with shaping the outcome as the things that come our way. Knowing this, we can move forward with hope and optimism as we look toward the coming year.

The people of the Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District are the greatest asset we have. I believe that this group has succeeded and excelled in 2020 despite the great challenges that we have faced. Knowing who we have here as our community's caretakers and rescuers gives me great confidence in our ability to provide the help and care for the people of the fire district.

Moving into 2021, I have great confidence in the people at CRFPD and I am honored to work with each and every one of them. The volunteers, paid staff and board of directors have my great thanks and I hope yours as well.

Rob Goodwin  
Fire Chief