

# Summit Fire & EMS



# 2020

## Annual Report





**Fire Chief Travis Davis**

It's my great honor to offer this annual report to our community to showcase the fine work conducted by the professional emergency-

response crews and staff here at Summit Fire & EMS.

With the retirement of Fire Chief Jeff Berino in July, I found myself trying to fill some big shoes and am proud to say that this organization has continued to show its strength, resourcefulness and resilience through a myriad of challenges in 2020.

Among the highlights, we officially completed the merger with the former Summit County Ambulance Service and significantly overhauled our role in out-of-county medical transports. We now have 24-hour medic units in service at each of our four response stations.

In addition, with the approval of voters in Copper Mountain last November, we have absorbed the property owners there into our property-tax district, which will be renamed as the Summit Fire & EMS Fire Protection District in 2021. This will be the culmination of consolidations of six former fire districts (Dillon, Dillon Valley, Silverthorne, Frisco, Snake River and Copper Mountain) plus the ambulance service. We're done with consolidations for a while!

Operating amid the specter of COVID-19, our firefighter and medic crews performed admirably, providing a high level of patient care while maintaining exceptional personal protection to avoid cross contamination. Limiting the number of responders having direct patient contact, strictly adhering to sanitization routines of our ambulances and engines and judiciously using personal-protective equipment allowed us to keep both our crews and the public safe. Reluctantly, we closed off our fire stations and our administration building to the general public, limiting our face-to-face interactions to the extent possible, all in favor of protecting public health. We have adopted these steps as part of our routine going forward, anticipating that this crisis will remain a part of our lives for the foreseeable future.

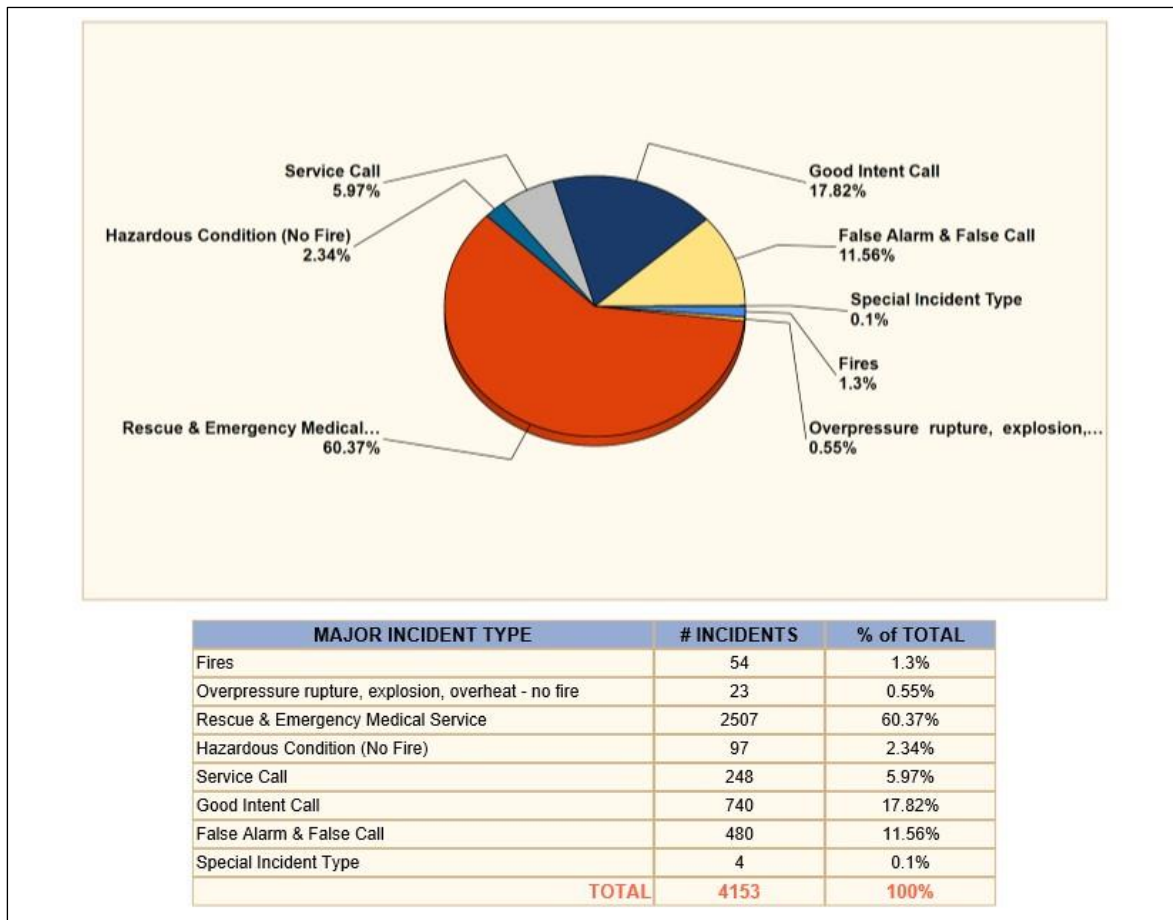
We made it through wildfire season relatively unscathed while assisting many of our neighboring communities fight catastrophic blazes. Our wildfire-education programs and support of efforts to minimize the threat continue to be priorities for the department.

Finally, we incurred significant changes in executive-level staff as well as made personnel realignments throughout the organization. Our aspiration going forward is recovery and stabilization both culturally and financially while working to stabilize our daily operations and business practices.

We want to thank you for your unwavering support of Summit Fire & EMS and wish everyone a safe 2021.

— *Fire Chief Travis Davis*

## OPERATIONS



Summit Fire & EMS staffs four 24-hour, 365-day all-hazards response stations in Copper Mountain, Dillon, Frisco and Keystone. Engine and ambulance crews and their supervisors operate on a three-shift schedule, which entails 48 hours on duty and 96 hours off. Each station is assigned a four-person engine crew, typically comprised of a firefighter/EMT, a firefighter/paramedic, a driver/engineer and a company officer, and a two-person ambulance crew.

Summit Fire & EMS crew responded to 4,153 calls for assistance in 2020, a 14.7 percent increase over the previous year.

Losses due to structure fires were limited to \$313,300, with more than \$5 million in associated property saved.

Each year, Summit Fire & EMS response crews train, practice and prepare for everything from wildfires to hazardous-materials responses, vehicle crashes to ice rescues, medical calls to severe-weather incidents. Together, engine and ambulance crews participated in more than 1,700 training opportunities in 2020, entailing more than 8,700 hours in an ongoing effort to provide the highest-quality response capabilities.

As usual, our fire and medic crews deployed to numerous wildfires around the state and throughout the West in 2020, providing them with valuable training while expenses to the department were covered by the fire-management teams.

## EMS DIVISION



As the COVID-19 pandemic swept into Summit County, our fire and medic crews redoubled their training in the proper use of personal-protective equipment, as shown in this photo of Engineer Tom Adams donning the full-contamination suit under the guidance of EMS Supervisor Bill Clark.

Medical calls, as always, made up a vast proportion of the Summit Fire & EMS emergency responses in 2020, comprising 60 percent of our call volume, or 2,507 incidents. Response was complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which required adherence to strict safety and decontamination protocols and use of personal-protective equipment to protect both patients and our crews.

Announced in 2020, Summit Fire was one of the top five emergency-response organizations in the nation for patient satisfaction in the previous year, according to surveys by the national Baldrige Group. Also in 2020, Summit Fire & EMS won an American Heart Association medal for high-quality CPR

in its Mission: Lifeline program, awarded jointly with the other EMS agencies in Summit County for the second year in a row.

With 50 percent matching funds from a state EMS and Trauma Grant award Summit Fire put into service a new ambulance – the first featuring our black-on-red graphics – in May. The new ambulance is the fourth in our fleet of nine that incorporates the new industry standards for crew and patient safety.

Although many of our traditional opportunities for public engagement were curtailed in 2020 due to the pandemic, we will be looking for new ways to reach the public in 2021 and beyond.

## FIRE PREVENTION



**Summit Fire & EMS fire inspectors ensure that the fire-safety equipment in buildings open to the public meet fire-code regulations. Bolstered by inspections of commercial buildings by firefighting crew, 102 inspections were conducted in 2020.**

The primary function of the Community Risk Division is to protect lives and property through risk reduction and planning. Division staff, under the direction of the fire marshal, includes four full-time fire-safety inspectors and full-time community-risk officer/public educator.

Some 288 permits were issued in 2020 for projects such as new construction, life-safety systems and business remodels. That generated \$380,537 in fees, a 52 percent decrease over the record 2019 but in line with 2018 and earlier.

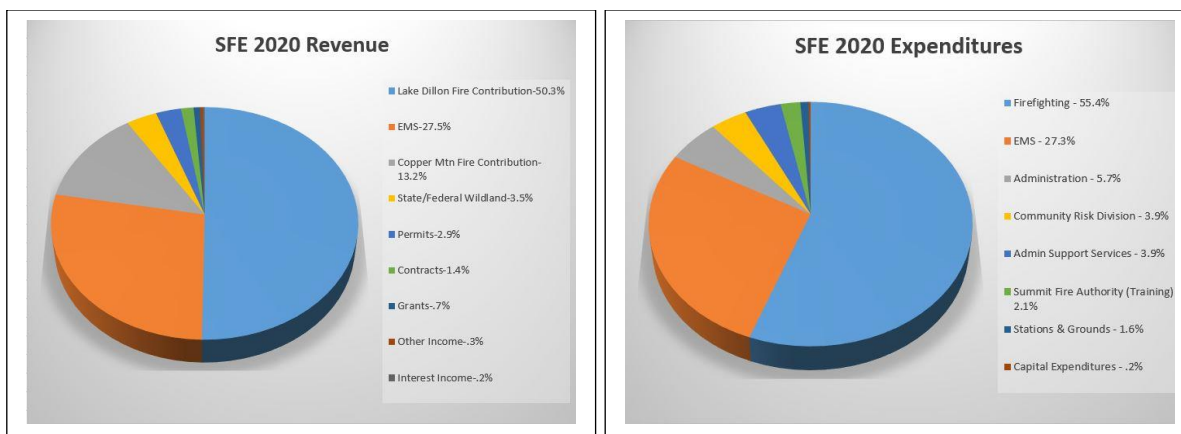
Additionally, Summit Fire & EMS issued 214 defensible-space permits for new homes and expansions, generating \$32,100 in fees. Inspectors completed 260 preliminary and final inspections to ensure that adequate

defensible space was created around new construction, as is mandated under Summit County ordinance.

Under a new county ordinance enacted in 2020, Summit Fire & EMS conducted 581 mandatory inspections and issued permits for all recreational “backyard” campfires on private property. The Community Connect link on the Summit Fire home page allows residents to apply as well as supply vital household information seen by first responders en route to an emergency call.

Summit Fire & EMS offers free wildfire consultations for homeowners, child car-seat inspections and fire-extinguisher training to businesses and civic groups among other services that may be scheduled by calling (970) 262-5100.

## FINANCE



Summit Fire & EMS ended 2020 financially sound, under budget in operating expenses with no debt incurred. The department’s reserve fund is currently \$4.7 million or 32 percent of total expenditures. The organization adheres to conservative budgeting principles and is audited annually.

The Summit Fire & EMS operating budget for 2020 was \$16.2 million which was a 57 percent increase over the previous year due to the merger with Summit County Ambulance Services effective Jan. 1, 2020. This increase allowed the organization to add a senior accountant, Jessica Fuller, to the Finance Department to help account for the larger number of transactions and employees.

Summit Fire & EMS has been funded predominantly by property taxes from the Lake Dillon Fire Protection District and the Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District. The property tax assessments dedicated to SFE fire protection is based on a 79/21 percent split between these two districts. For 2020, Lake Dillon FPD taxpayers will have contributed \$7.7 million and Copper Mountain tax payers will have contributed \$2.0 million.

The Lake Dillon Fire Protection District and the Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District previously established the Summit Fire & Emergency Medical Services Authority to provide emergency services within their joint jurisdictions. Subsequently, Lake Dillon and Copper Mountain sought to include the Copper Mountain area into Lake Dillon's jurisdiction so that a single fire-protection district is responsible for providing emergency services within the area currently served by each of them and the authority. At an election held Nov. 3, 2020, the inclusion of the Copper Mountain area into Lake Dillon's jurisdiction was approved by a majority of the eligible electors within the Copper Mountain area. It is anticipated that the formal change to a single entity, the Summit Fire & EMS Fire Protection District, will occur in 2021.

The Summit Fire & EMS Authority has been governed by a publicly elected five-member Board of Directors currently comprised of President Jim Cox, Vice President Dave Steele Treasurer Lori Miller and members Jim Lee and Ben Broughton.

## HUMAN RESOURCES



Spaced six feet apart and wearing masks to maintain good pandemic protocols, Summit Fire & EMS employees formally were sworn in to their new positions by Human Resources Manager Matt Scheer during a May 22 Board of Directors meeting.

Summit Fire & EMS employs 63 career firefighters, 22 full-time medics, 14 part-time medics and 16 full-time civilian staff members.

In 2020, Summit Fire & EMS welcomed Firefighter **Phil Flegner**; Fire Inspector I **Justin Farmer**; EMT **Sage Miller**; Fire Inspector/Permit Technician **Jessica Prill**; and Senior Accountant **Jessica Fuller** to the team.

The following Summit Fire & EMS employees earned promotions in 2020: **Corey Okes** to full-time paramedic; **Jacob Love** to full-time paramedic, and then to firefighter-paramedic; **Chiyo Crooks** to full-time paramedic; Scott Benson to fire inspector II; **Craig Bifano** to paramedic; **Ryan Grafmiller**, **Don Koogle** and **Eric Paradis** to firefighter-paramedic; **John**

**Wilkerson** to deputy chief of operations; **Brian Schenking** to battalion chief (and, slated for 2021, to deputy chief for administration); **Steve Wantuck** and **Paul Lawrence** to lieutenant; and **Jack Fredericks** to senior paramedic.

Finally, in 2020 the department saw the retirements and departures of Fire Chief **Jeff Berino**; Fire Inspector II **Mark Thomson**; Deputy Fire Marshal **Dan Moroz**; Fleet Technician II **Tom Baumgarten**; Firefighter Paramedic **Jim Levi**; PRN Paramedic **James Fountain**; Paramedic **Keith Hogan**; PRN EMT **Sarah Bennett**; and Firefighter **Conrad Scoville**.

Summit Fire & EMS is fortunate to have a pool of excellent, qualified applicants for the rare employee turnover that occurs.



Clockwise from upper left: Summit Fire & EMS crews responded to both the East Troublesome Fire in Grand County and to the Deep Creek Fire here in Summit County in October. SF&EMS also experienced a changing of the guard, with Chief Jeff Berino retiring and handing the reins to new Fire Chief Travis Davis in July.

