2022 Annual Report

Compiled January 2023

Letter from The Board Chair

On behalf of the Board, staff, and volunteers of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District, we would like to present the following annual report to the community. It is important that the Estes Valley Fire Protection District keeps its community members informed about the budget, operations, strategic planning and other facets of the district.

Our volunteer-based fire department was formed in 1907. The recognition of the need for fire protection in our valley predates both Rocky Mountain National Park and the formation of the Town of Estes Park, and our dependency on the willingness of volunteers to protect the lives and property of the residents and visitors to our District continues today.

We are proud to report to the community that the District is in a strong financial position. We work hard to be accountable and transparent stewards of your tax dollars and then we work to maximize every dollar toward protecting residents, local businesses and visitors. We are a debt free District that also maintains a high level of training for our staff and the most state-of-the-art equipment for responding to emergencies such as structure fires, wildfires, vehicle crashes, health issues and many other situations.

Our community is growing, and over the past 10 years, population growth, increases in visitors and changes in wildfire risk have put pressures on the District to keep pace and maintain its high level of preparation, prevention and response. To address these challenges, the District has been working on its Strategic Plan. An important part of this annual report is information about the Strategic Plan and how we are working to continually evolve and improve the District.

Looking forward to 2023, we will be asking voters to approve sustainable funding through a mill levy to fund the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan. A key part of this process has been gathering feedback from the community to understand your priorities for the District. We look forward to this process and continuing to engage our community members in the District's future.

We are lucky to have an excellent staff and a highly trained and dedicated group of volunteers that stand ready. Your support for the Estes Valley Fire Protection District makes us all safer and is very much appreciated.

Thank you again for reviewing this annual report. And please, go thank a firefighter.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Jon Hodde
Board President

Letter from The Fire Chief

I am pleased to share the 2022 Estes Valley Fire Protection District Annual Report with our community. Inside, you will find information about the department's structure and divisions, statistics from the previous year, information about the budget and finances, and much more.

The Estes Valley Fire Protection District is a combined career and volunteer organization dedicated to serving our community and visitors through a highly trained and equipped team of firefighters and District staff. The department strives to provide an exemplary level of public safety and service to the residents and businesses here in Estes Park and Larimer County, as well as the many visitors who come to enjoy the Rocky Mountains and amenities of our region.

Since this annual report is a new format from the past, we felt that it was important to provide background information on the District's history, service area, and population base. The annual report begins with an overview of the District, organizational structure, revenue and expenses. As a public entity that is funded by local taxpayers, we want the community to have easy, transparent access to how the District prioritizes and spends your tax dollars to protect our homes and businesses and respond to emergency calls. As you make your way through the report, you will find information on the department's core responsibilities, including operations, training, prevention, and support services.

While this report primarily serves as a review of the 2022 calendar year, it also highlights the District's Strategic Planning work. Over the past two years, we have identified strategic goals that will strengthen the District's core service areas and support the volunteer and career members of the District. We then shared the Strategic Plan with the District's employees and the public, receiving feedback through surveys. We are looking forward to using the feedback to present a funding initiative that we will work on with the community during the coming year.

Finally, if you have questions about the information in this annual report or want to know something about the District that is not addressed here, please feel free to contact me at any time at chief@estesvalleyfire.org. We look forward to continuing to serve our community and helping to ensure the highest level of public safety and service.

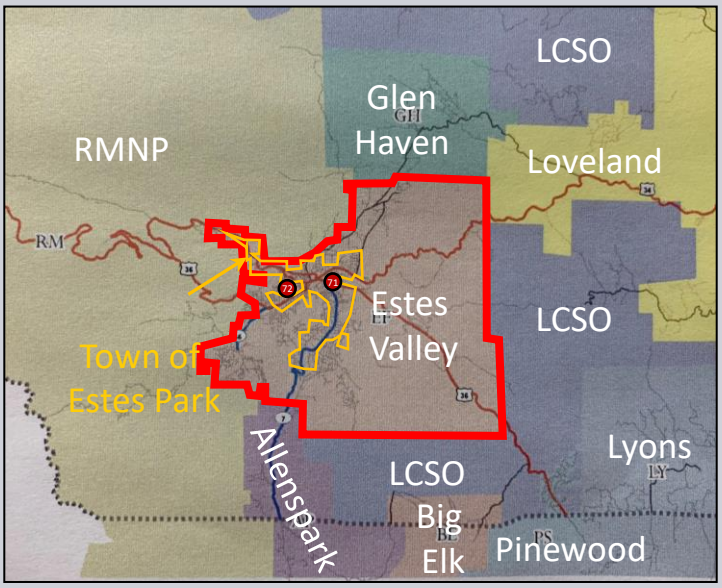
Sincerely,

David Wolf, Ph.D.
Fire Chief

District Overview

The Estes Valley Fire Protection District covers nearly 70 square miles of the Town of Estes Park and surrounding unincorporated Larimer County. We protect a mix of urban municipality, suburban neighborhoods, rural homesteads, and forest. This includes critical infrastructure for the Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

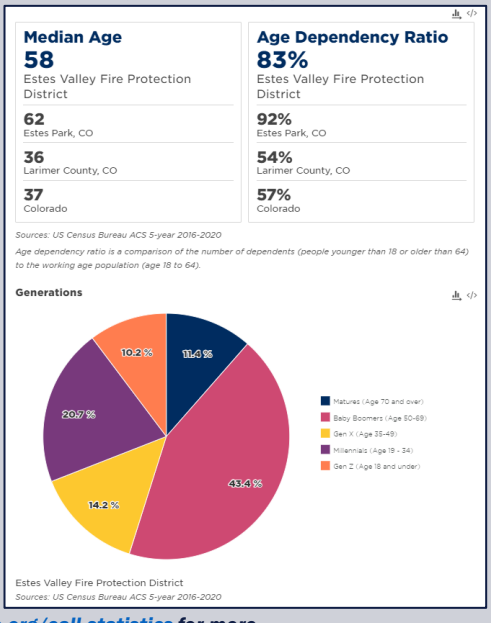
The region had been protected since 1907 by the Estes Park Volunteer Fire Department. Once incorporated in 1917, the Town of Estes Park brought this organization on as a Town department. In 2009, voters approved the formation of the Special District and in 2010 the Estes Valley Fire Protection District began.



The District is considered "combination," currently served by eight employees and nearly 40 volunteers. We border Rocky Mountain National Park to our west, and the 100% volunteer fire agencies of: Glen Haven, Loveland (Canyon Battalion), Pinewood Springs, Big Elk, and Allenspark. Our nearest career fire agencies are Loveland (Masonville station) and Lyons.

Per 2020 Census data, our community includes 11,504 full-time residents, up nearly 2,000 people in the past 10 years. Summer visitation can bring as many as 40,000 overnight guests and up to 80,000 daytime visitors.

The Town of Estes Park has one of the oldest populations in Colorado, with a median age of 62, and 92% of the population within the Census-defined "dependency ratio," including those under 18 or over 65. Across the entire Estes Valley we have a median age of 58 and an 83% dependency ratio.



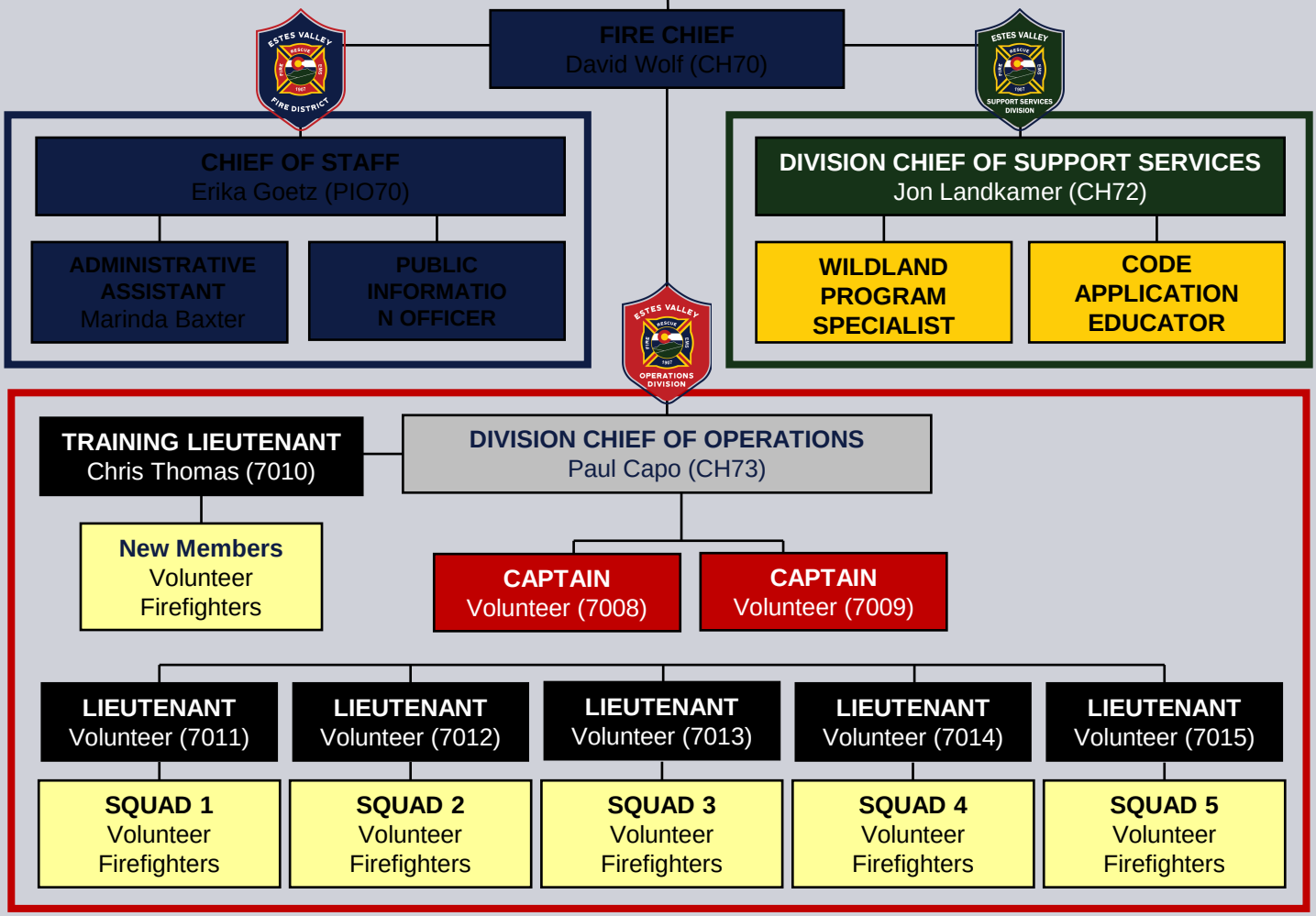
Visit https://www.estesvalleyfire.org/call-statistics for more

District Organization

The District is overseen by a five-member Board of Directors. Directors are elected through odd-year public elections to four-year terms. Directors must live within the District boundaries, not be actively working for or volunteering for the District and may serve a limit of two consecutive terms.

District personnel are organized into three divisions. Our eight full-time staff are:

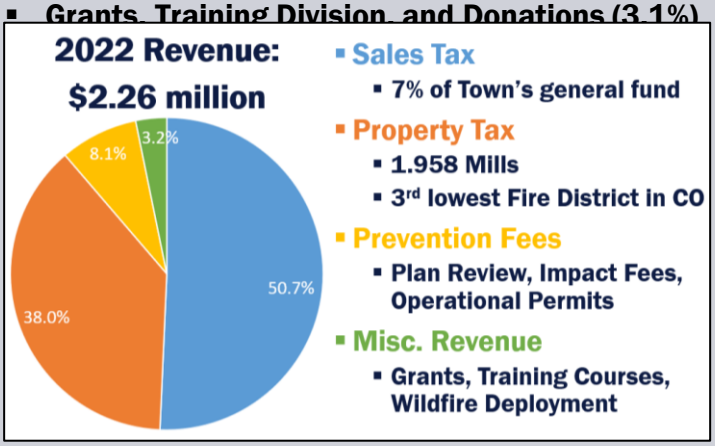
- **ADMINISTRATION (3): Fire Chief, Chief of Staff, Administrative Assistant**
- **SUPPORT SERVICES (3): Division Chief of Support Services, Wildland Program Specialist, Code Application Educator**
- **OPERATIONS (2): Division Chief of Operations & Training, Training Lieutenant.**
- **Volunteers are the heart of our Operations Division, and also support our Public Information Officer role and Prevention programs.**



District Revenue

Funding Sources: There are four main sources for the Fire District:

- **Sales Tax collected by the Town of Estes Park (54.5%)**
- **Property Tax levied by the Fire District (37.2%)**
- **Fire Prevention Plan Review & Impact Fees (5.2%)**
- **Grants, Training Division, and Donations (3.1%)**



Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGAs)

Since creation of the District, the Town of Estes Park has supplied 7% of its collected sales tax to support the Fire District. This revenue has helped keep property taxes low and ensures our visitors help with the cost of fire protection.

What Does The Fire District Cost Me?

If you own property in the Estes Valley, you pay property tax to support the Fire District.

Larimer County sets your Property Value (PV), which is then multiplied by an Assessment Rate (AR) of 7.15% for residential or 29% for commercial to get your Assessed Value (AV). Property taxes are levied against your Assessed Value. Estes Valley Fire levies 1.958 mills of property tax.

To calculate your taxes:

Property Value (PV) x Assessment Rate (AR) = Assessed Value (AV)

Assessed Value (AV) x 0.001958 (mill levy) = Your Annual Taxes

Tax Rate Comparison	
Fire Agency	**Mill Levy**
Lyons	16.400
Loveland Rural	8.708
Allenspark	7.507
Pinewood Springs	6.271
Estes Valley	**1.958**

Even after accounting for sales tax, Estes Valley receives less per resident than any fire agency in Larimer or Boulder County

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY (Assessment Rate of 7.15%)		
Property Value (PV)	**Assessed Value (AV)**	**Annual Property Taxes**
$100,000	$7,150	$14.00
$250,000	$17,875	$35.00
$500,000	$35,750	$70.00
$750,000	$53,625	$105.00
$1,000,000	$71,500	$140.00

This means that if you own a $1 million dollar house in the Estes Valley, you pay $140 per year for fire protection.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY (Assessment Rate of 29%)		
Property Value (PV)	**Assessed Value (AV)**	**Annual Property Taxes**
$100,000	$29,000	$56.78
$250,000	$72,500	$141.96
$500,000	$145,000	$283.91
$1,000,000	$290,000	$567.82

District Expenses

What are the costs to run a fire department?

- **PERSONNEL – $923,182 (41.9%)**
  - Salaries, insurance, and benefits for eight full-time employees
  - Average benefits are $25,000 per employee, not including salaries

- **OPERATIONS & TRAINING – $362,978 (16.5%)**
  - Supplying and maintaining equipment, including firefighting gear, hose, tools, foam, air packs, radios, etc.
  - Maintenance of our fleet of nine heavy apparatus, including fuel
  - Annual testing/certification of required equipment (e.g., pumps, ladders, hose, air packs, extrication tools)
  - Offering in house and outside training for all members

- **CAPITAL EXPENSES & RESERVES – $361,716 (16.4%)**
  - We maintain a 25% Operating Reserve as a "rainy day" fund
  - We maintain a Capital Reserve to be able to replace our fire engines/trucks at 20 years of age. A single fire engine can cost $400,000 - $800,000 and we have nine heavy apparatus.
  - Upgrades to our fire station and training site. In 2021 we replaced the roof on the station and resurfaced the driveway, and in 2022 renovated to create offices inside the station.
  - We have built a state-of-the-art facility off Elm Road to provide high quality training here in Estes Park.
  - In 2022, we: replaced an engine and tender without incurring debt thanks to long term savings, added additional props and equipment to maintain our training site, and replaced our 25-year-old breathing air compressor for filling air packs.

Engine 723

Tender 72

- **OVERHEAD – $303,019 (13.7%)**
  - All costs associated with operating the business of the fire District
  - Utilities, accounting, legal, IT, insurance
  - Membership dues/subscriptions for online training platform
  - Maintenance of facilities, including 25-year-old primary station

- **VOLUNTEERS – $224,297 (10.2%)**
  - Incentive and benefit programs to support our volunteer firefighters
  - Volunteer pensions, Length-of-Service programs, call reimbursement, gym membership, cell phone incentives, training opportunities, etc.

- **PREVENTION – $30,548 (1.4%)**
  - Educational materials, outreach
  - Support for fuels mitigation, slash removal

Operations

Estes Valley Fire is an all-hazards department. Not only do we respond to structure and wildland fires, but also motor vehicle crashes, water and rope rescues, hazardous materials calls, alarm calls, and assisting Estes Park Health on medical calls.

Call volume continues to increase as our full-time population grows and we see more visitation within the Estes Valley.

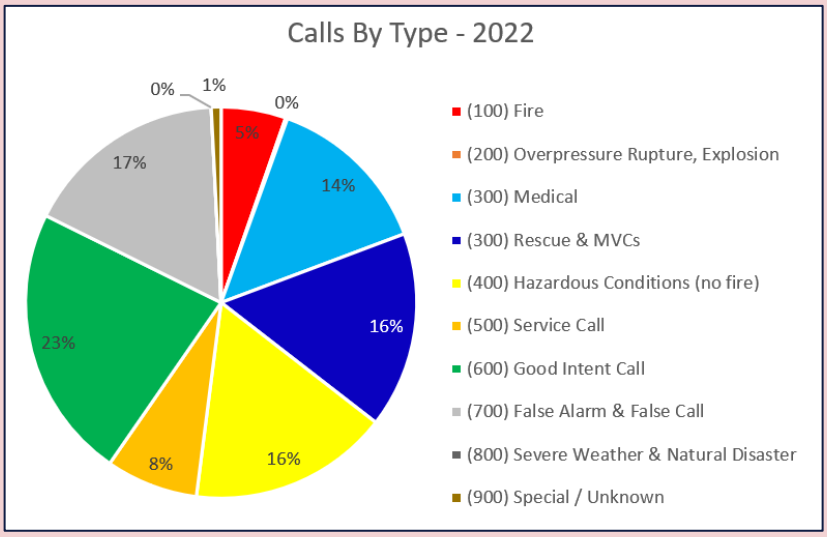
When an emergency occurs, volunteers are paged from home to respond. In 2022, our average enroute* times for our first engine were:

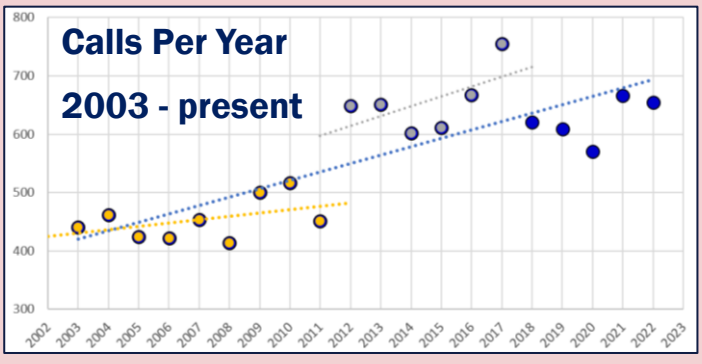
- **Structure Fires: 7 minutes**
- **Wildland Fires: 10 minutes**
- **Motor Vehicle Crash: 9 minutes**

** Enroute time is from when we are paged until the first apparatus leaves the station. Travel time depends on location within our 70 sq mi district.*

Notable Call Types in 2022:

- **Structure Fires: 19**
- **Wildland Fires: 9**
- **Other Fires: 4**
- **Vehicle Crashes: 87**
- **Technical Rescues: 8**
- **Water Rescues: 3**
- **Smoke Invest.: 90**
- **Fire/CO Alarms: 99**



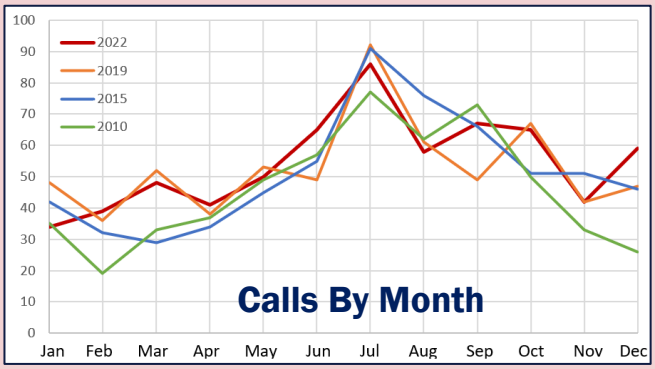


Until 2011, we averaged around 450 calls per year (yellow line). Since 2012, we have averaged closer to 650 calls per year (gray and blue).

After 2017 (gray), we reduced our call volume by decreasing the number of medical calls we ran with the ambulance.

Emergency response is very seasonal, increasing from ~40 calls per month in the winter to over 90 calls per month in July.

In 2022, our personnel spent a total of 1,900 person-hours on emergency scenes. This works out to over 30 hours per volunteer on average.



Training

Building and maintaining competence in our response force is a major focus for our agency. Being all-hazard, our members must train on a range of potential topics from structure fires, wildland fires, technical rescue, medical, and more.

The agency hosts training every Tuesday night for 3 hours, plus additional training opportunities throughout the year.

Major Training Accomplishments:

- 7,359 hours of training by all members
- 5,626 hours of training by volunteers
  - Average of 117 hours per volunteer
- Hosted our 6th Regional Firefighter Academy

Certifications / Qualifications:

- Firefighting
  - Interior Firefighters: 26
    - State Certified: 15
  - Wildland Firefighters: 29
- Technical Rescue
  - Swiftwater Swimmers: 14
  - Ice Rescue: 17
  - Rope Rescue: 4
- Medical Certifications
  - EMR: 3
  - EMT: 11
  - Paramedic: 4

Regional Academy Class 6

	Tuesday (Firefighter Training)
1/4	Patient Assessments
1/11	Equipment Familiarization & Use
1/18	EMS Scenarios
1/25	Man Vs. Machine
2/1	FF Rescue
2/8	FF Survival
2/15	RIT/Survival Scenerios
2/22	Pack Test / Shelter
3/1	Wildland Refresher (RT-130)
3/8	EVFPD Strategic Planning
3/15	Hose and tool deployment, skills
3/22	Size Up, Scenarios, Table Top (classroom)
3/29	Scenarios (hands on)
4/5	Ropes, Knots, Anchors
4/12	Low Angle Haul System / Pt Packaging
4/19	Low Angle Lower System / Stokes Wheel
4/26	Ropes Scenario
5/3	EVOC Classroom / Cone Course
5/10	EVOC Driving / Cone Course
5/17	Pump Ops & PDP Classroom
5/24	Exterior Scenerios & Drop Tanks
5/31	EVFPD Strategic Planning
6/7	Swift Water
6/14	Swift Water
6/21	Swift Water
6/28	Swift Water
7/5	"Rig 2 Door", Moving the Line & Fire Attack
7/12	Standpipe Ops / Vertical Stretches
7/19	Fireground Scenerios
7/26	Live Fire
8/2	Forcible Entry
8/9	Ground Ladders
8/16	Search
8/23	Rescue
8/30	EVFPD Strategic Planning
9/6	Extrication I,Vehicle Stabilization
9/13	Extrication II
9/20	Extrication Scenerio
9/27	Ropes scenario
10/4	Wildland Scenario
10/11	Gas Prop
10/18	Vehicle Fires
10/25	Large Area Search
11/1	HazMat Ops Refresher (all JPRs)
11/8	CPR/ EVOC/ Station Duties
11/15	**EVFPD THANKSGIVING POT LUCK (1800)**
11/22	EVFPD Strategic Planning
11/29	Leadership
12/6	IC worksheet /Size Up/Scenarios
12/13	**EVFPD HOLIDAY PARTY (1800)**
12/20	Station Projects
12/27	HOLIDAY BREAK - NO TRAINING

Wildland Program

We strive to prevent fires and disasters in our community for many reasons. First and foremost is to protect life and property. Another major goal is to avoid impacts to our local economy, supporting everyone who lives, works, and visits.

Our community is no stranger to wildfire. The Cameron Peak and East Troublesome Fires hit in 2020, forcing an evacuation of the entire community. In 2021 the Kruger Mountain Fire again displaced residents, and we experienced the unfortunate death of pilot Marc Thor Olson.

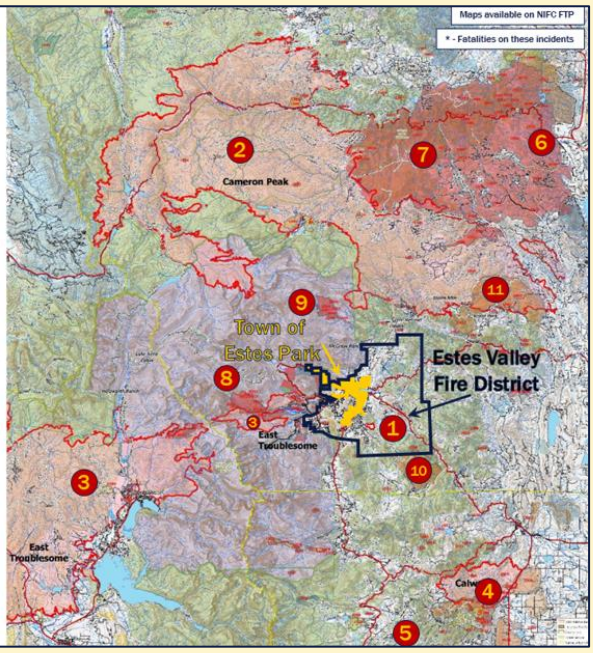
Thanks to help from the Estes Valley Watershed Coalition and Town of Estes Park, we updated our CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan). This plan outlines the risk areas across our community and provides a framework to address these risks at the (1) homeowner, (2) neighborhood, and (3) community level.

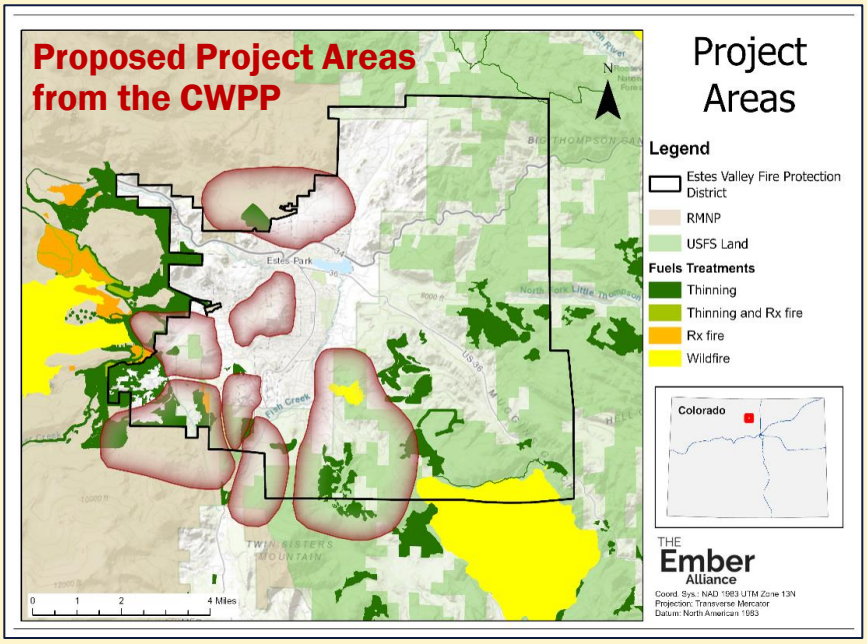
Implementation of the CWPP will help our community decrease the chance of these events and lessen their impacts when they do occur.

Wildfire History

- **2021**
  1. Kruger Mountain* 147
- **2020**
  2. Cameron Peak 208,663
  3. East Troublesome 192,560
  4. Calwood 10,106
  5. Lefthand Canyon 460
  6. Lewstone 165
- **2012**
  7. High Park 87,284
  8. Fern Lake 3,500
- **2010**
  9. Cow Creek 1,500
- **2002**
  10. Big Elk* 4,800
- **2000**
  11. Bobcat Ridge 10,599

(EVFPD ≈ 45,000 acres)





As we continue to develop our prevention programs, we have a focus on education, outreach, and getting the right information into the hands of our residents and guests.

We hope everyone continues to reference guides and resources on our website and seeks the information to be part of the solution, making our community safer.

Community Risk Reduction

The economy of the Estes Valley is supported by nearly 1,000 unique businesses and nearly 5,000 households. In addition to existing businesses and homes, there are remodels of existing structures and new construction throughout the year.

While the Town has long applied the International Building Code, Residential Code, and others, most of these structures were built before the community adopted any fire safety standards such as the International Fire Code (2011). We strive to help make our community safer while recognizing the challenge of legacy construction.

Our program is focused on applying the 6 E's of community risk reduction (CRR):

- Education
  - Makes the public aware of risks and how to mitigate them.
  - Provide resources on our website, social media, and through educational programs.
- Engineering
  - Ensure appropriate codes and design standards are used in new construction and remodels.
  - Work with contractors and builders to apply these standards.
- Economic incentives
  - Work with insurance providers to identify where mitigation work can reduce costs.
  - Pursue grants and funding opportunities to improve safety.

- Enforcement
  - Identify conditions that threaten life or property and work with the owners to address and mitigate.
- Empowerment
  - Support residents, guests, business owners, and all others to see the role they play in providing for safety in the community.
- Emergency Response
  - When all prevention measures have failed, maintaining a strong response force to strive and keep problems small.

Ongoing work within the Program:

- Plan review for new construction and major renovations (72 in 2022)
- Safety assessments of existing businesses (1,000 businesses in the Estes Valley)
- Resources available on our website, social media, and in presentations
- Partnerships with Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation

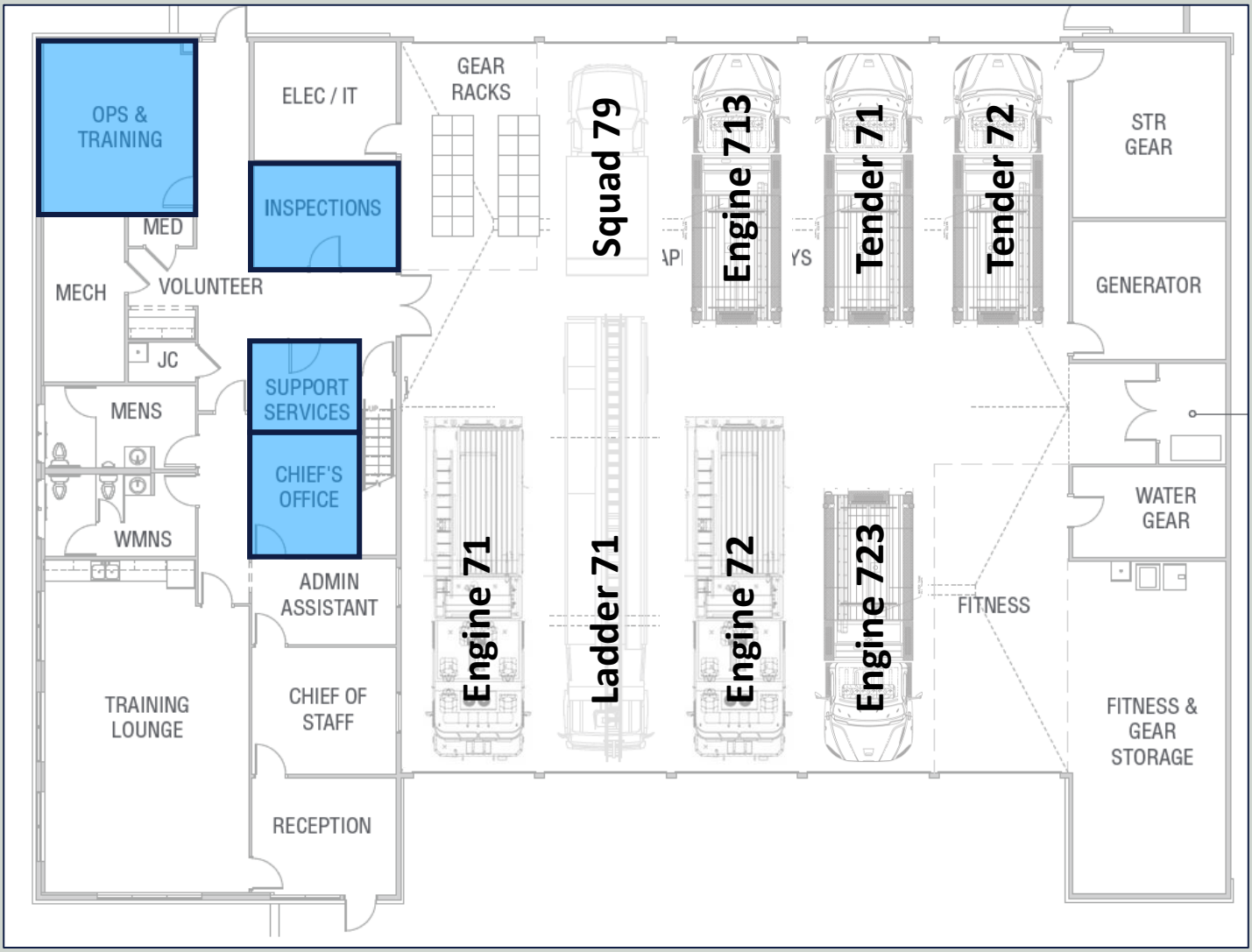
Support Services

Our Division Chief of Support Services is a redefined role starting in 2022. In addition to overseeing our prevention programs, this includes the oversight and management of our facilities and equipment.

Estes Valley Fire maintains a fleet of engines for fighting structural and wildland fires, as well as responding to technical rescues and other emergencies. Responsible budgeting has enabled us to maintain this fleet at under 20 years old without debt.

Station 71, located at 901 N. Saint Vrain Avenue was built in 1996 when we were 100% volunteer. In the last few years, multiple spaces have been repurposed to provide office space for our current employees (highlighted in blue below). We use our training room for all agency trainings/meetings.

We contract with the Town of Estes Park for maintenance of our engines and trucks.



Strategic Objectives

Our mission is to serve the residents and guests of the Estes Valley with superior fire prevention, fire protection, and emergency services in a safe and efficient manner.

In late 2021 and early 2022, we worked to outline our various strategic objectives, which includes:

- Support our personnel through strategic direction and management of all resources (human, physical, and financial)
  - Provide effective leadership for our organization and community
  - Be fiscally responsible with strong ethics and integrity
  - Transparency in government, through open and honest communications with all stakeholders (internal and external)
  - Demonstrate sustainable yet continual improvement

- Proactively increase safety through reduction or elimination of risks.
  - Reduce potential conditions hazardous to life and property
  - Maintain and apply a Community Risk Reduction Plan based on the pertinent threats
  - Provide quality customer service based on good communication
  - Decrease the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) risk

- Support our personnel so that they are consistently competent.
  - Develop and maintain competencies to respond to all emergencies
  - Keep ahead of evolving threats and challenges
  - Seamless integration of our emergency response capability with other service providers (medical, law, mutual aid)
  - Facilitate and provide relevant training for all members

- Reliably respond to fires and emergencies in a professional manner.
  - Ensure our agency is reliable in responding to all emergencies in the District
  - Have equipment and facilities that will be dependable, capable, and consistent with the needs of the community
  - Maintain volunteers capable of safely and successfully meeting the needs of the District
  - Support our mutual aid partners - local, state, and federal
  - Maintain a team whose members are enthusiastic, diverse, empowered, and effective

Plan Components

Our goal is to fund these opportunities for increased and improved services through a modest property tax increase and additional sales tax funding through the Town of Estes Park.

Specific programs that are currently being considered:

Wildland Fire Prevention & Mitigation

- Offering fuels reduction assistance to homeowners and HOAs with:
  - Increased outreach and education
  - Fuels removal through slash collection and chipping
- Increased coordination for district-scale projects addressing wildfire risk creating fuel breaks and opportunities to stop fires within the District

Fire Training & Response

- Continue and enhance our current volunteer program
- Resident volunteer program that would provide housing to potential volunteers in exchange for on-duty shifts, providing more consistent response at minimal cost
- Creating a 24/7 presence in the fire station to ensure trained personnel are always available to aid in emergencies with minimal delay in response

Business & Homeowner Safety

- Expand educational opportunities and resources to support homeowners and business
- Expand relationships with the Chamber of Commerce to ensure business needs are being met
- Provide timely support for ongoing construction and growth already occurring

Continued & Enhanced Government Efficiencies

- Pursue additional grant opportunities to keep costs down for residents while providing the best services possible
- Maintaining and improving our aging facilities to ensure they can serve our community for many years to come
- Proactively address risks and challenges before they become significant

Intended Results

Through 2022, we identified steps our agency could take to ensure continued performance in service of our community and opportunities to further increase the safety of the Estes Valley through our actions.

These plans were discussed and reviewed within the organization, and put out to the community for input through a public survey. The results of that survey were presented to the District Board at their regular meeting in December, 2022.

The goals of our strategic plan are to best meet the current and future needs of our community and fulfill our mission. This includes:

1) Continue to serve our community at the highest level through emergency response and community risk reduction
2) Continue to provide our citizens with the exceptional value they have come to expect, keeping costs to our taxpayers low while providing professional response
3) Continue to engage and listen to our community members and stakeholders, providing the information necessary to make the best decisions for all we serve
4) Look forward and anticipate challenges, while proactively addressing them

The relationship between the timeline of an emergency and our proposed strategic plan elements

Detection Time
How long until someone knows there is a problem. Witnessed car crash – this is fast. Medical emergency home alone or fire in unattended structure – could be lengthy.

Reporting Time
Time for someone to act and initiate call for help. With cell phones, can be fast. In areas without cell coverage (e.g. canyons), can be lengthy.

Call Processing
Time for Dispatch to collect caller information and page appropriate agencies. For emergency calls, this is now around 1-2 minutes.

Enroute Time
Time for responders to start moving toward emergency. Medical calls, firefighters go direct from home. On fire calls, responders must come to station to get gear and apparatus.

In 2022, average times were:
- Structure Fire: 7 minutes
- Wildland Fire: 10 minutes
- ~~Car Crash: 9 minutes~~

Travel Time
Time required to travel from responder location to incident. This can be up to 20 minutes within the Estes Valley.

Strategic Plan Proposals Related to Emergency Response

Prevention

Keep emergency from occurring at all through prevention & education programs. Proposed increase of prevention services.

Decrease detection time through utilization of alarms / monitoring systems. Proposed increase of prevention services.

Decrease reaction time through utilization of sprinklers and emergency phones. Proposed increase of prevention services.

Relationships

Continue progress with Dispatch center to decrease call processing times and improve dispatch information.

Operations

Decrease enroute time by having firefighters in the station. Typical enroute time for on-duty crews is 1-2 minutes. Proposed full-time shift officers and addition of resident volunteer program to enhance existing volunteers.

Decrease travel time by increasing facilities with apparatus. Use of Station 72 and proposed addition of Station 73.

Ensure responders have proper training, tools, and tactics to engage immediately.

District Contact Information

Website: www.estesvalleyfire.org

- **https://www.estesvalleyfire.org/administration**
- **https://www.estesvalleyfire.org/wildfire**
- **https://www.estesvalleyfire.org/prevention**
- **https://www.estesvalleyfire.org/operations**

Email: Info@EstesValleyFire.org

Phone: (970) 577-0900

Interested in Serving Your Community?
https://www.estesvalleyfire.org/apply