



# **NEW RICHMOND FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT**



**2024**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department is to preserve life and property, promote public safety, and foster economic growth through leadership, management, and actions as an all risk life safety response provider. The Department focuses on responding rapidly to emergencies and providing appropriate intervention and community education.

## **OUR COMMUNITY**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department proudly provides fire prevention, fire suppression, fire inspections, extrication, and rescue operations for a 150-mile radius consisting of the following local units of government:

City of New Richmond  
Village of Star Prairie

Town of Erin Prairie  
Town of Star Prairie

Town of Richmond  
Town of Stanton

## **FIRE BOARD**

Tom Weinmeyer  
Ron Volkert  
Mike Montello  
Rita Keating  
John Van Dyk  
Tom Heintz  
Dave Naser  
Dave Stephens  
Dick Hesselink

## **CITY COUNCIL**

Mayor Jim Zajkowski  
Craig Kittel  
Greg Gartner  
Mike Montello  
Tom Weinmeyer  
Ron Volkert  
Pete Vrieze

## **POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION**

Jon Hailey, Kirk Lindell, Andrea Kier, Michael Hedges,  
Shawn Demulling

## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Tom Weinmeyer, Ron Volkert, Greg Gartner,  
Bill O'Connell, Shawn Demulling



## OUR FIREFIGHTERS

Josh Bell  
Chris Bendix  
Daryl Chute  
Andrew DeShane  
Shaun Henke  
Josh Hines  
Noah Hughes  
Brad Johnson

Kiel Kwiatowski  
Tony Leblanc  
Dan Maslowski  
Tristen Mortel  
Brad Olek  
Vivian Roberts  
Santiago Ruiz  
Jerry Smith

Mike Strey  
Jeff Swanson  
Rick Swanson  
Jeremy Sylvester  
Madisson Sylvester  
Tasha Tourville  
Josh Walczak  
Oliver Wettstein

## OUR EXPLORERS

Local youth ages 14-18 who are interested in learning more about firefighting are encouraged to join our Explorers Program to participate in some classroom training and hands-on lessons. Explorers can also participate in many of our community events throughout the year. Students who

earn certifications in EMT, EMR, Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and/or Fire Inspector can earn a \$500 Career and Technical Education Incentive Grant per certification from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) upon their high school graduation.



VEHICLE	DESCRIPTION	YEAR
3261	Engine	2003
3262	Engine	2017
3263	Ladder Truck	2010
3264	Chief's Vehicle	2017
3265	Rescue Pumper	2006
3266	Brush Truck	2009
3267	Brush Truck	1999
3268	Tender	2006
3269	Tender	2001
3270	Rescue	1996
3271	Engine	1997
3272	Assistant Chief's Vehicle	2021
N/A	UTV	2018

## OUR VEHICLE FLEET

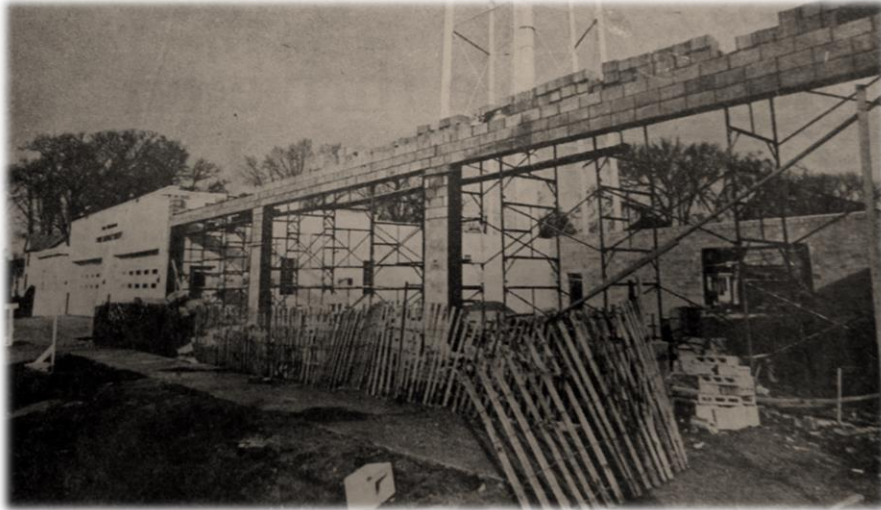
The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department uses a variety of specialized vehicles to respond to vehicle accidents, structure fires, grass and off-road events, and water/ice rescues.



## OUR HISTORY

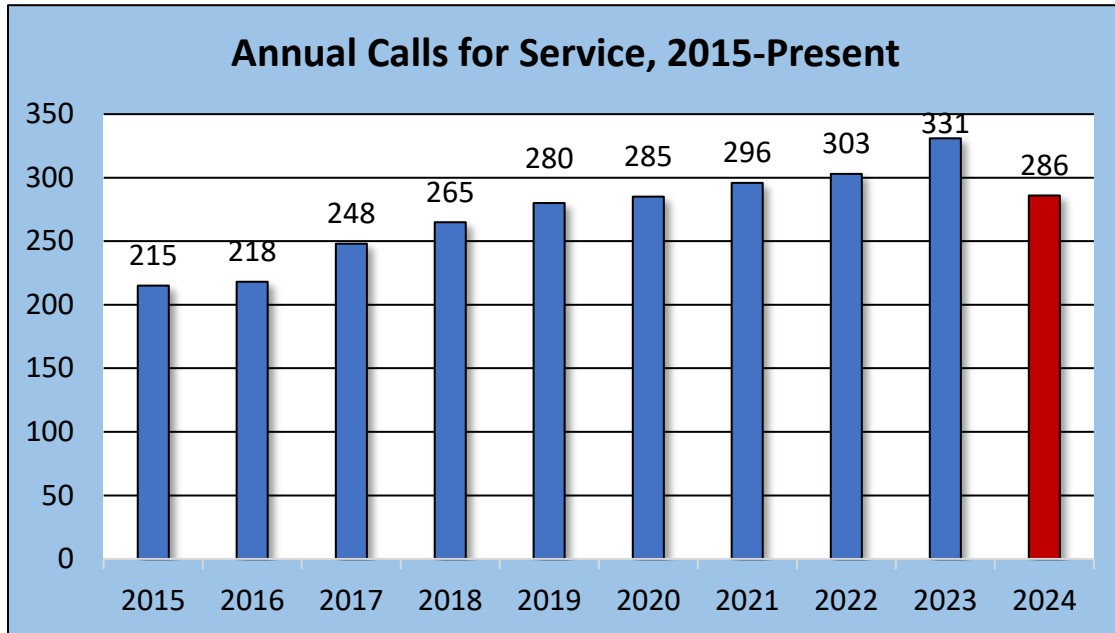
A fire department was established in New Richmond in 1875, with the establishment of what was first known as “The Minne-ha-ha Engine Company No. 1.” A “truck house” for the first fire truck – a hook and ladder truck twenty feet long with pails on both sides – was constructed in 1880. Fires wiped out much of the City in 1892, and again in 1899 following the infamous cyclone that destroyed much of the city. Early bucket brigades advanced thanks to the invention of water-pumping engines and municipal water supplies. Common citizens selflessly participated on the fire department to help protect their communities and their fellow citizens, and this tradition continues to this day. We are appreciative of the hundreds of citizens who have served on the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department over the years and helped their fellow citizens during a time of need. The fire station, trucks, and specialized equipment have certainly changed over past 150 years, but the principle at the core of the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department – service to the community – has not changed.



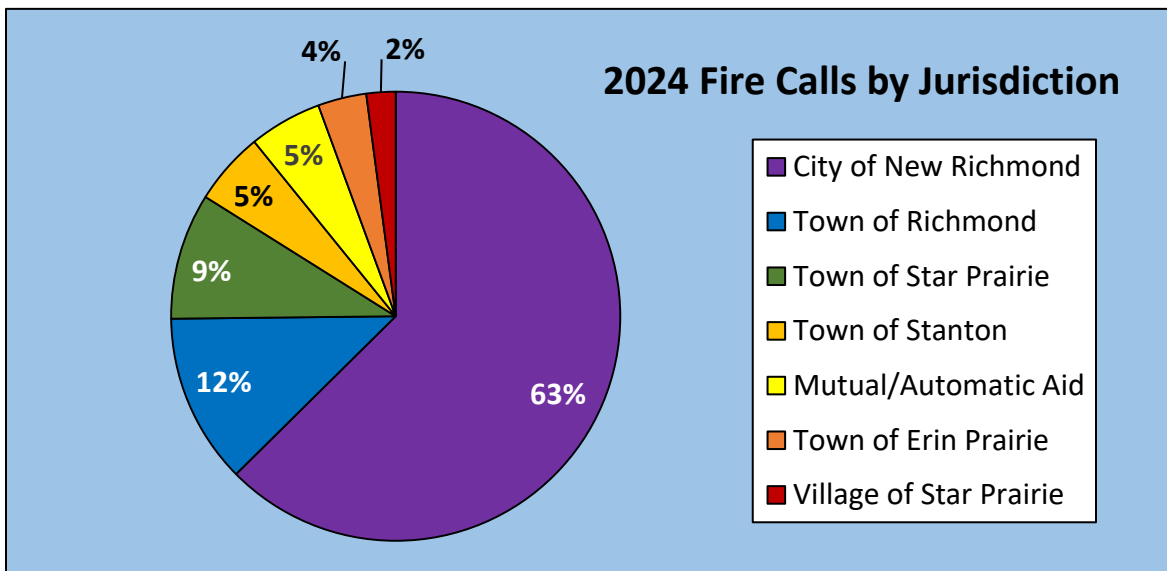


## **2024 CALL VOLUME & INCIDENT SUMMARY**

As St. Croix County continues to grow, so too has the number of calls for service. In 2024, the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department received 286 calls for service, a decrease from the year prior after previously responding to a steady increase in calls each year since 2015.



The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department directly serves residents and businesses in the City of New Richmond, Town of Star Prairie, Town of Richmond, Town of Stanton, Town of Erin Prairie, and Village of Star Prairie. The graph below illustrates the 286 calls for service received in the 2024 calendar year sorted further according to jurisdiction.



## 2024 INCIDENT SUMMARY CONTINUED

Department and Type of Aid	Count
<b>Allied Emergency Services</b>	
Mutual Aid Given	1
<b>Deer Park</b>	
Automatic Aid Given	3
Mutual Aid Received	1
<b>Dresser/Osceola/Garfield</b>	
Mutual Aid Given	1
Mutual Aid Received	1
<b>Roberts/Warren</b>	
Mutual Aid Given	1
<b>Somerset</b>	
Automatic Aid Received	6
Mutual Aid Received	2
Mutual Aid Given	2
<b>Spring Valley</b>	
Mutual Aid Given	1
<b>St. Joseph Township</b>	
Automatic Aid Received	1
Mutual Aid Given	1
<b>United Fire</b>	
Mutual Aid Received	1

Call Type	Count
Cancelled in Route	64
Motor Vehicle Accident	37
Alarm System Notification	35
Carbon Monoxide	28
Public Assist	23
Gas Leak	22
EMS Assist	21
Grass Fire	15
Electrical	12
Miscellaneous	11
Building Fire	10
Miscellaneous Fire	8

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department has a positive working relationship with its neighboring agencies, who assist each other when the need arises. “Automatic Aid” refers to when the St. Croix County Communications Center (Dispatch) pages more than one fire department simultaneously for a single incident, without a request initiated by a fire department. Automatic aid agreements are especially beneficial to get the necessary resources to the edges of the respective jurisdictional boundaries. “Mutual Aid” refers to when Dispatch pages a fire department after the first responding fire department requests assistance. Mutual aid is most common when there is a very large incident that requires considerable resources, and/or one fire department might be responding to multiple calls at the same time.



After calls being cancelled in route, the most frequent type of call for service in 2024 was to assist with motor vehicle accidents, followed by alarm system notifications and carbon monoxide calls. It might surprise some people to learn that building fires make up a relatively small number of the total calls received by the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department. Firefighters are asked to assist with an increasingly wide range of emergency situations, thus they require a variety of specialized equipment, tools, and training.

## **FIRE INSPECTIONS**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department performs annual inspections of commercial and industrial businesses, office buildings, nursing homes, apartment buildings, etc. to identify possible fire hazards. In 2023, the City Council adopted an ordinance requiring emergency access boxes be installed near the front entrance of new commercial buildings, to allow for faster and safety entry into the building for first responders and reducing property damage. Since 2024, a re-inspection fee of \$50 can also be imposed for third and subsequent re-inspections, to further encourage voluntary compliance.

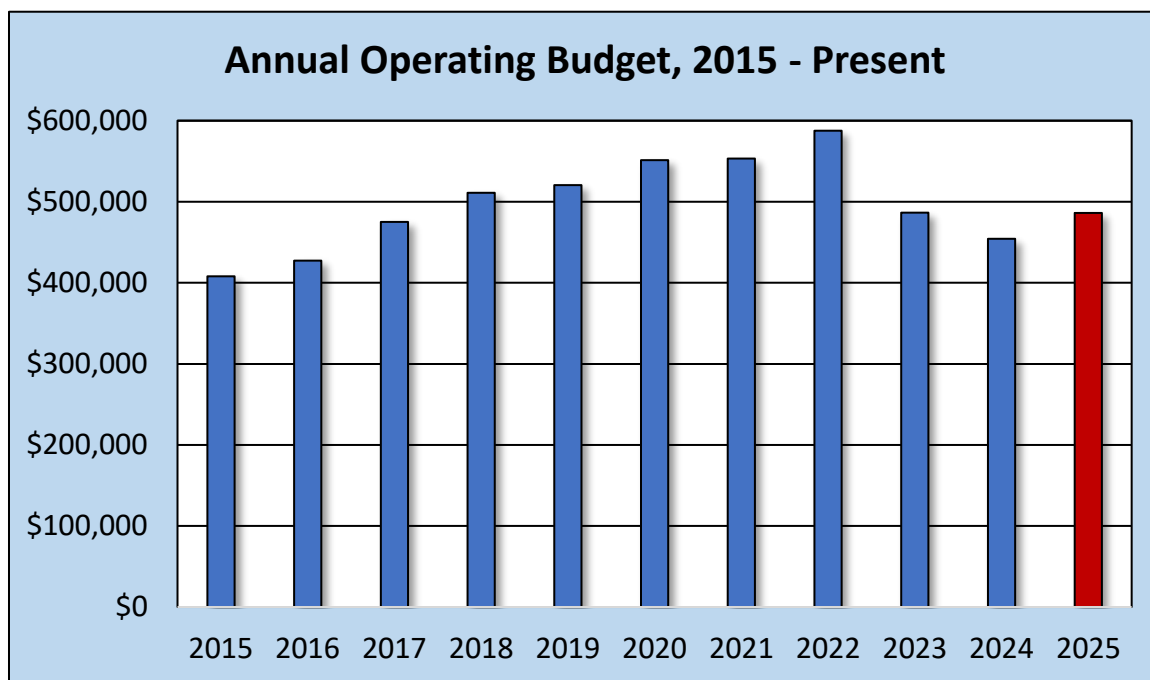


### **Current Fire Inspectors:**

Josh Bell, Daryl Chute, Marc Chute, Brad Olek, Mike Strey, Jeremy Sylvester, and Nick Watters

## **HISTORICAL OPERATING BUDGETS**

Due to greater operational efficiencies, the 2024 operating budget was the lowest operating budget since 2016, despite inflationary pressure. The 2025 budget represents an increase of 7% in operating expenditures from the year prior; major drivers include increases related to health screening, worker's compensation insurance, wages, and vehicle repairs and maintenance.





# **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Recent investments in capital projects include the following:

- Replacement of airbags and harnesses
- Reconstruction of the fire station parking lot
- Installation of a diesel exhaust removal system at the fire station
- Replacement SCBA cylinders
- Hose drying racks
- Rescue boat motor
- Replacement of large diameter hoses
- Grain bin rescue equipment
- Forcible entry prop
- Fire extinguisher demonstration tool

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department is currently planning for the replacement of Rescue Engine 3265, so efforts have been made in recent years to build a replacement fund to reduce the amount of borrowing necessary. It's anticipated that a request for qualifications will be published in 2025 to ultimately identify the vendor who will be used.

# **EXPLORERS COMPETE AT THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR**

The New Richmond Explorers participated in the Governor's Fire Prevention Day at the Minnesota State Fair, and for the second year in a row, they received fourth place overall in the Explorers Competition.



# **TRAINING**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department has regular trainings throughout the year and encourages firefighters to obtain additional certifications and complete additional continuing education courses. Some of the highlights from 2024 include hosting a grain bin rescue training, ice water rescue training, and three firefighters completing a ropes rescue training.



# **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department was once again very active in engaging with the local community throughout 2024. Some of the highlights included:

- Ice cream give-away following the St. Patrick's Day Parade
- Annual "water fights" during Fun Fest for local kids to experience what it's like to be on the fire hose line
- National Night Out, in partnership with the New Richmond Police Department and the New Richmond Area Ambulance Service
- Community chili feed (special thanks to Captain Ken's Foods for their donation of 250 pounds of chili to go with all the fixings) along with a silent auction and raffle
- Visits to more than 1,300 children at local schools and childcare centers to help educate youth about fire safety during National Fire Prevention Week
- Annual open house night during National Fire Prevention Week, including a vehicle extrication demonstration and free fire truck rides
- First-ever "Pumpkin Drop" event in November, where community members could bring pumpkins to be dropped from the ladder truck, with free-will donations to Love Baskets



## **FAQS – PROSPECTIVE FIREFIGHTERS**

### **Do I have to be a City resident?**

No. Firefighters must reside within fifteen miles of the City boundaries; several firefighters reside in the surrounding townships/villages. Many of our firefighters also work outside of New Richmond and even in Minnesota.



### **Do I need advance training to be hired?**

No. While we certainly welcome firefighters with previous experience and training, most new hires have little or no previous training or experience. Probationary firefighters must complete over 100 hours of coursework offered through Northwood Technical College (or another college) including *Firefighter I*, *Hazmat*, *Auto Extrication*, and *Emergency Medical Responder* to gain the basic knowledge and skills necessary to safely perform firefighting functions. Registration fees and the cost of books/materials are covered.

### **What is the time commitment?**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department has regularly scheduled meetings and trainings on Monday nights. Both the initial Firefighter I training and continuing education are significant commitments. In terms of responding to calls, some professions may not allow for a firefighter to leave work, and some firefighters commute for work and may only be able to respond to calls on nights/weekends, so while call percentages vary, firefighters shall respond to a minimum of 25% of fire calls per calendar year (which equates to roughly 6 calls per month).

### **What are the benefits of serving as a paid per call firefighter?**

Firefighters make a direct impact in their community and find it rewarding to serve others in a time of need, and to interact with and educate their fellow citizens about fire safety. Firefighters develop strong relationships with fellow firefighters and first responders in New Richmond and neighboring agencies. Serving as a firefighter is also a great opportunity to further develop one's leadership skills, confidence, and abilities to communicate and work together on a team.

### **Are firefighters paid?**

While firefighters receive some monetary compensation for their efforts, they serve first and foremost to help the community. Probationary firefighters who have not yet completed their coursework earn \$15 per hour. After moving to non-probationary status, firefighters earn between \$18 and \$21 per hour for calls, trainings, and meetings. The City also contributes to a 457(b) employer-sponsored retirement plan.

### **How do I apply to join?**

Contact Human Resources Manager Sarah Reese at 715-246-4268 or [sreese@newrichmondwi.gov](mailto:sreese@newrichmondwi.gov) to complete an application form and to learn more. Applicants will be invited to participate in an interview. New probationary firefighters are approved by the Police & Fire Commission, pending completion of a background check and physical exam.

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP US**

You can help the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department in several different ways – big and small. We appreciate the continued support from our local community!

### **Serve As a Firefighter**

We are always looking for high-character, service-minded individuals who are interested in becoming firefighters. We welcome new recruits year-round and provide all necessary training. If you are a local employer, encourage and support your employees to serve as firefighters – it's a great way to give back to the community and your employees will become stronger leaders. If you or someone you know might be interested in learning more about serving as a firefighter, please contact us! We would be glad to meet with you and answer any questions that you or someone else might have.



### **Support Fire Safety Education**

Consider making a financial contribution to support our National Fire Prevention Week visits to local schools and childcare centers. Teach your children and grandchildren the dangers of fire and how to respond if there is a fire. Plan and practice escape routes from your home. Teach the importance of closing doors before going to sleep to prevent fires from spreading.

### **Adopt a Fire Hydrant**

Hydrants can easily get buried in snow and ice during the winter months. If there's a hydrant near your home or business, please clear at least three feet around the hydrant and clear a pathway to the street. Every second matters during an emergency, and keeping the hydrants clear saves our firefighters considerable time if they need to access them.



### **Participate in Our Community Events**

Consider attending our various community events throughout the year, including our pancake breakfast, Fun Fest water battle, National Night Out, and Fire Prevention Week Open House. We always welcome donations, sponsorships, silent auction items, and volunteers.

### **Install Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

It sounds simple, but installing smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors and replacing the batteries at least once a year is critical for the early detection of a fire in your home or business. Offer to assist an elderly neighbor or parent/grandparent as well.

