



Selfless Service. Integrity. Grit.

ANNUAL REPORT

VALLEY REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

2021



OUR MISSION

*We serve the whole community.
The VRFA saves lives and protects property
through reliable emergency services,
preparedness and prevention.*

OUR VISION

Creating the safest community to live, work and visit.

OUR GUIDING VALUES

Selfless Service. Integrity. Grit.

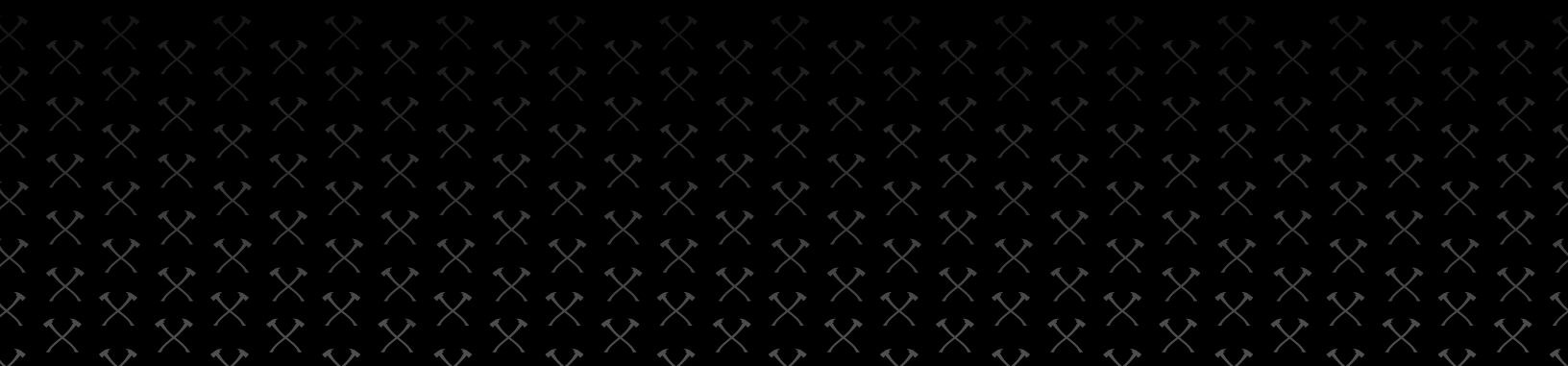


TABLE OF CONTENTS

IN THIS REPORT >>

Pg. 1	Fire Chief/Administrator's Message
Pg. 2	Board of Governance
Pg. 3	Fire Station Locations
Pg. 4-6	VRFA Overview - Who We Are
Pg. 7-11	Employee Recognition & Retirements
Pg. 12	Finance and Administration
Pg. 13-14	Operations
Pg. 15-16	Wildland Firefighting, Wildland Firefighting Definitions
Pg. 17	Technical Rescue Team
Pg. 18-19	Training Division
	Technical Services
Pg. 20	Support Services
Pg. 21	EMS, COVID-19 VRFA Timeline
Pg. 22	CARES
Pg. 23	Logistics Division
Pg. 24	Planning Division
Pg. 25	Fire Marshal's Office
Pg. 26	Fire Investigations
Pg. 27	Code Resolution, Community Risk Reduction Inspections
Pg. 28-29	Development Services, Fire System Maintenance and Testing
Pg. 30	Public Information and Education
Pg. 31	2021 Community Outreach
Pg. 32	Strategic Initiatives

FIRE CHIEF/ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE



BRAD THOMPSON

I am pleased to present the Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA) 2021 annual report. I am incredibly proud to work alongside all VRFA personnel and admire their dedication to delivering excellent fire and life safety services to our partner communities. We remain dedicated to excellent public safety service delivery while shifting and growing to meet

the needs of all whom we serve. We strive to exceed the expectations of our communities through a continuing dedication to purpose, professionalism, and compassion.

Within this report, you will find key performance indicators for all VRFA divisions, including annual reports for finance, response operations, training, and community risk reduction activities. This report communicates the VRFA's progress in meeting our strategic initiatives as determined through our 2020-2025 strategic plan. While key performance indicators give an overall measurement of year-over-year performance, the 2021 annual report also provides insight into all initiatives, activities, and people who tirelessly work to deliver sustainable public safety services. These activities are vital in building safe, vibrant, and resilient communities for all to live, work, and visit.

This past year we faced the new normal of living with COVID-19 and all the related effects on our communities. VRFA staff has demonstrated a level of resilience we may not have previously realized possible. The pandemic has changed how we operate in all aspects of service delivery, yet through innovation and relentless determination, public safety services continue to be safely and efficiently delivered.

Algona, Auburn, and Pacific are experiencing dramatic population and physical infrastructure growth, resulting in the corresponding increase in incident response demands. We are focused on our capital facilities plan, which outlines the path to meet our communities' increasing needs. You can expect to hear more about proposed capital facility improvements as we plan for the future.

We remain dedicated to excellent public safety service delivery while shifting and growing to meet the needs of all whom we serve.

We said goodbye to retired Fire Chief Brent Swearingen in August. The path he forged led to the completion of the agency's long-term goal of becoming an accredited fire agency recognized by the Commission of Fire Accreditation International. Accredited fire agencies are often described as community-focused, data-driven, outcome-focused, strategic-minded, well organized, properly equipped, staffed, and trained. We are forever grateful for Chief Swearingen's leadership, as the VRFA is in the top 1% of fire agencies to meet all specific accreditation criteria. We recognize our Board of Governance, and all VRFA personnel, whose support is integral to this significant accomplishment.

On behalf of all VRFA personnel, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your support. We are grateful for your trust in the VRFA and remain proud to serve our whole community.

In service,

Fire Chief/Administrator Brad Thompson



BOARD OF GOVERNANCE

2021 REVIEW

As your elected Board of Governance Chair, I am pleased to share with you some Valley Regional Fire Authority accomplishments during 2021. Again, COVID-19 impacted many of our services and programs. Despite the challenges, we adapted and continued to provide numerous services to our three communities. In addition to regular business services, emergency crews responded to over 15,000 incidents.

A significant accomplishment in 2021 was that the VRFA became an accredited agency. Accreditation is international recognition of achievement. Accreditation is a voluntary process where agencies demonstrate adherence to best practice standards and are held accountable through an external peer review. The accreditation process created many valuable documents for the agency; a five-year Strategic Plan, Standards of Cover/Community Risk Assessment, Capital Facilities Plan, and a comprehensive Self-Assessment Manual. Accreditation status is a five-year term.

The annual accountability and financial audit produced a report free of findings for the fourteenth consecutive year. The Washington State Auditor's office reviewed many of the VRFA's internal controls and financial practices. For 2021, auditors focused on overtime, leave cash outs, financial data security, and Open Public Meetings Act. The auditors found our work was fully compliant with state law and our policies/procedures. We strive to be responsible stewards of taxpayers' dollars and are pleased with our fiscal management.

One of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan goals was developing and implementing a plan for future facilities growth and improvement. The VRFA created a six-year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) to address the increasing demands for services. The purpose of the CFP is to anticipate future infrastructure needs. The VRFA is currently evaluating building a new fire station in the north end of Auburn and relocating Station 38 in Pacific. These strategic moves will provide better coverage and improve response times. The CFP also explores funding options for building these new facilities.

It is an honor and pleasure to represent the VRFA. The organization is grateful for the unwavering support of our three communities. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we serve the citizens of Algona, Auburn, and Pacific.

Be Safe,

Dave Hill

Board of Governance Chair
City of Algona Mayor



DAVE HILL
CHAIR
ALGONA



NANCY BACKUS
VICE-CHAIR
AUBURN



LARRY BROWN
AUBURN



CLAUDE DACORSI
AUBURN



KERRY GARBERDING
PACIFIC



LEANNE GUIER
MAYOR
PACIFIC



TROY LINNELL
ALGONA



LYNDA OSBORN
ALGONA



DAVID STORAASLI
PACIFIC

FIRE STATION LOCATIONS

STATION 31 | NORTH AUBURN
1101 D STREET N.E., AUBURN, WA



STATION 32 | SOUTH AUBURN
1951 R STREET S.E., AUBURN, WA



STATION 33 | LAKELAND HILLS
500 182 AVENUE E., AUBURN, WA



STATION 34 | LEA HILL
31290 124TH AVENUE S.E., AUBURN, WA



STATION 35 | SOUTHWEST AUBURN
2905 C STREET S.W., AUBURN, WA

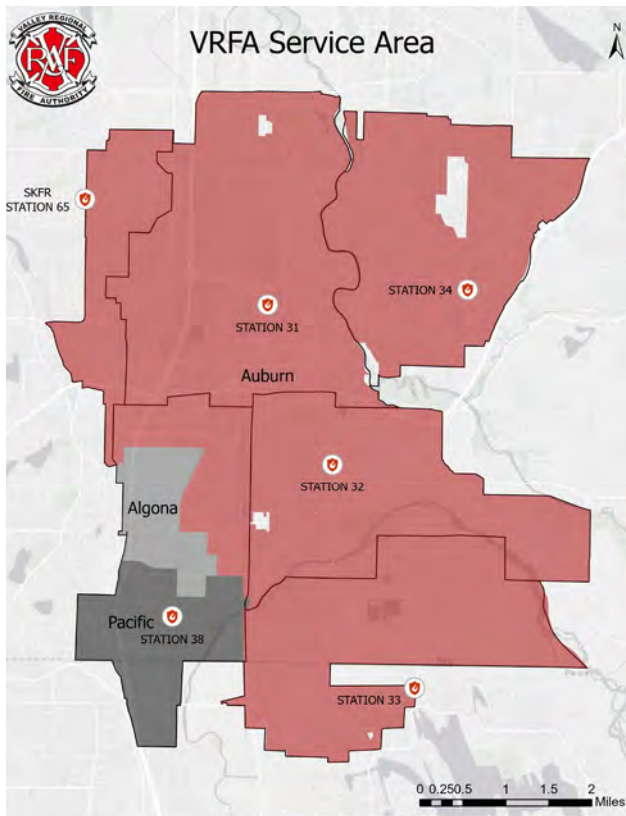


STATION 38 | PACIFIC
133 3RD AVENUE S.E., PACIFIC, WA



VRFA OVERVIEW

WHO WE ARE



The Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA) was established on January 1, 2007, and operates a legally organized Regional Fire Protection Service Authority (RFPSA) as authorized in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 52. A nine-member Board of Governance (BOG), consisting of the mayors and two city council members representing the three founding cities of Algona, Auburn, and Pacific, governs the VRFA. The VRFA also serves King County Fire District #31 by intergovernmental contract. The VRFA provides emergency and support services to 37 square miles in South King County and North Pierce County, commonly known as the Green River and White River Valleys. The 2020 Census estimates put the resident population at over 97,000 for the three cities.

Six fire stations provide service: 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 38. The VRFA also contracts with a neighboring fire department, South King Fire & Rescue (SKF&R), to provide coverage for the "West Hill Annexation Area." Fire stations 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, and SKF&R Station 65 are staffed 24/7 response stations. Station 35, the only non-emergent response station, houses Emergency Management, the Fire Marshal's Office, Support Services, and Public Information and Education.



VRFA OVERVIEW

WHO WE ARE

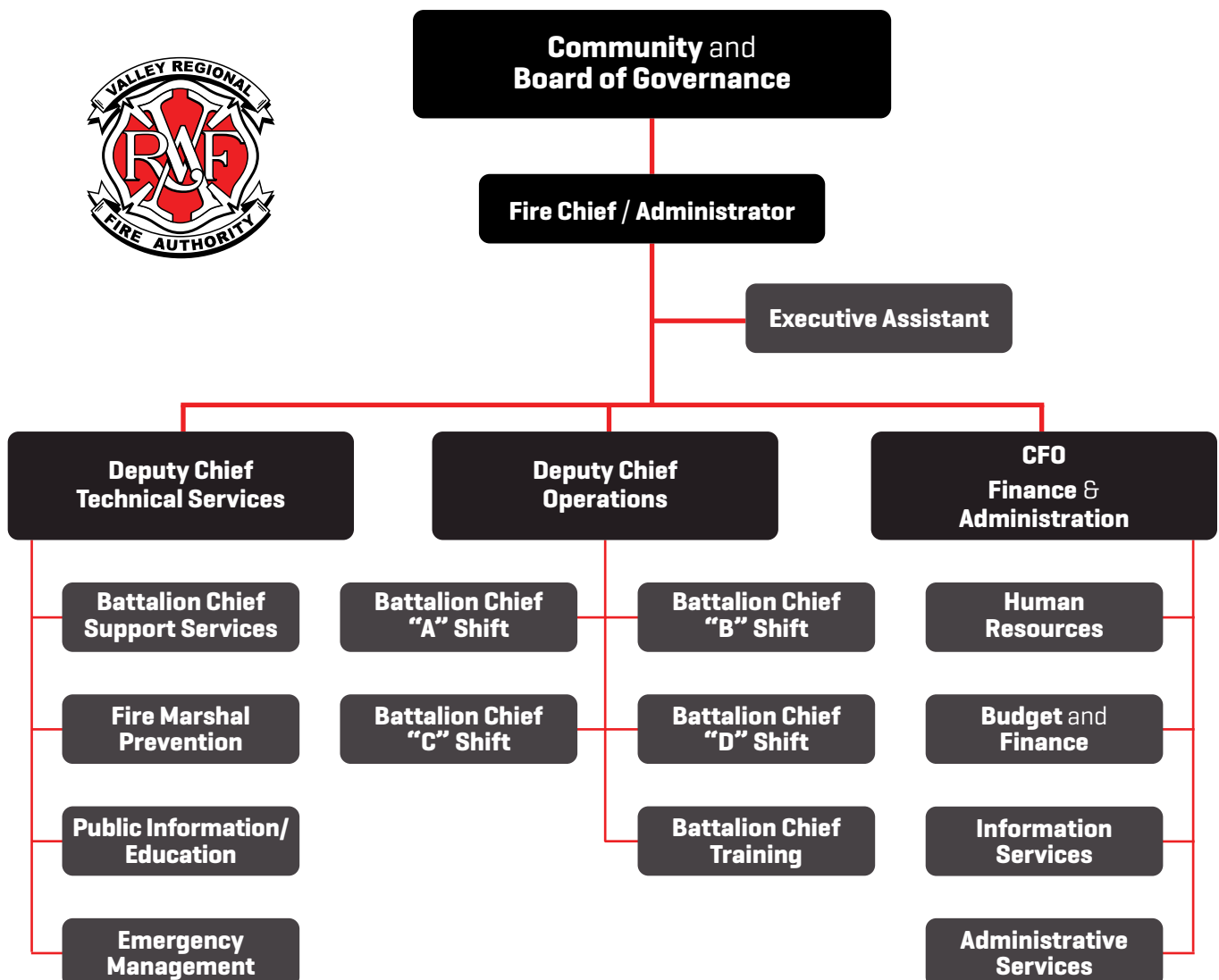
The VRFA operates a single battalion with five response zones and is organized into three divisions: Operations, Technical Services, and Administration. The Operations Division is responsible for all emergency response operations and is staffed by 108 uniformed first responders. These men and women staff fire apparatus in the response stations through a four-shift rotation that provides a constant staffing level 24/7. A battalion chief oversees each shift, and a deputy chief manages the entire division.

Technical Services encompasses various functions, including Fire Prevention, Public Information/Education, and Support Services. The Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for building safety inspection programs, building plan review, and fire investigations.

Support Services includes Planning, Logistics, EMS, and a Mobile Integrated Health program. The Fire Marshal supervises Fire Prevention, and a battalion chief manages Support Services. A deputy chief oversees the entire division.

The Administration Division, managed by the Chief Financial Officer, handles all financial matters, records management, human resources, and information technology. Clerical support and other administrative services are provided through the Administration Division. All personnel in the administrative division are non-uniformed positions.

The VRFA is an accredited agency by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.



VRFA OVERVIEW

WHO WE ARE



GROWING FACTS

ALGONA

Algona is a city located in King County, Washington. With a 2020 population of 3,188, it is the 141st largest city in Washington and the 6,066th largest city in the United States. Algona is currently declining at a rate of -0.31% annually, but its population has increased by 5.77% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 3,014 in 2021.

AUBURN

Auburn is a city located in King County, Washington. With a 2020 population of 80,814, it is the 16th largest city in Washington and the 438th largest city in the United States. Auburn is currently declining at a rate of -0.40 9% annually, but its population has increased by 15.15% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 70,180 in 2010.

PACIFIC

Pacific is a city located in King County, Washington. With a 2020 population of 7,148, it is the 109th largest city in Washington and the 3,916th largest city in the United States. Pacific is currently declining at a rate of -0.21% annually; however, its population has increased by 8.20% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 6,606 in 2010.

Reference: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities>



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

2021 HONORS



FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

MIKE HOMAN

DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL



FIRE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

ANTHONY RODRIGUEZ

CAPTAIN



INTEGRITY AWARD

BRAD THOMPSON

FIRE CHIEF/ADMINISTRATOR

MEDAL OF COMMENDATION

June 26-27, 2021 - Dispatched to two fires as the duty-fire investigator. Assisted in the initial operations of both fires locating, and evacuating residents, including a disabled person.

JOHN MONSEBROTEN

DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL



VALOROUS UNIT CITATIONS

July 24, 2021 - Rescued four residents at the MAX House Apartment Fire.

GERVASE HENSON

CAPTAIN

RACHAEL LABENDER

FIREFIGHTER/EMT

RYAN NAUER

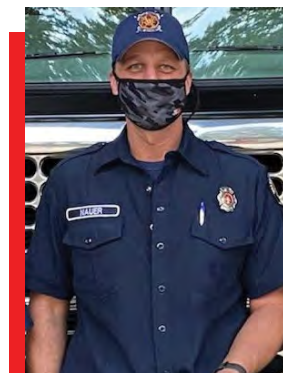
FIREFIGHTER/EMT

DARREL NORMANDY

FIREFIGHTER/EMT

RYAN SIMPSON

FIREFIGHTER/EMT



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

MERITORIOUS UNIT CITATIONS

September 14, 2021 - Fire investigation test burn alongside ATF and South Whidbey Fire/EMS. This particular burn aimed to test the potential impacts of heat and soot deposition on bloodstains, the findings of which could have national implications in the fire investigation field.

JOSH ROGERS
ASSISTANT FIRE MARSHAL

DEAN MCAULEY
DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL

JOHN MONSEBROTEN
DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL

ROBIN IRVINE
DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL



LEFT TO RIGHT: DFM IRVINE, DFM MCAULEY, DFM MONSEBROTEN, ASST. FM ROGERS

MEDALS OF MERIT

November 5, 2021 - Awarded for courageous decision-making and exceptional team performance in an imminent river rescue.

JEREMIAH MUSHEN
CAPTAIN

JOHN STIVERS
FIREFIGHTER/EMT



LEFT TO RIGHT: CHIEF THOMPSON WITH CAPTAIN MUSHEN



LEFT TO RIGHT: FF STIVERS WITH CHIEF THOMPSON

MEDALS OF VALOR

November 5, 2021 - For immediate and courageous effort to save a life while risking their own in an imminent river rescue.

RACHAEL LABENDER
FIREFIGHTER/EMT

STEVE RIERSON
FIREFIGHTER/EMT



FF RACHEL LABENDER



LEFT TO RIGHT: CHIEF THOMPSON WITH FF RIERSON

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

PROMOTIONS



BRAD THOMPSON
FIRE CHIEF



RICK OLSON
DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS



MATT KINNEE
BATTALION CHIEF



STEVE ZEHNDER
BATTALION CHIEF



DAVE CASSELMAN
FIRE MARSHAL



ANDREW BERGFORD
ASSISTANT FIRE MARSHAL



JIM ALLENBAUGH
CAPTAIN



TYLER ELIASON
CAPTAIN



DAVID REPNIK
CAPTAIN

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

YEARS OF SERVICE

30 YEARS

CAPTAIN **BILL AUSTIN**

PIEO **KIMBERLY TERHUNE**

25 YEARS

FF **KYLE FISHER**

FF **JIM FRANKLIN**

AFM **JOSH ROGERS**

20 YEARS

FF **TIM COLEMAN**

FF **KEVIN NOLD**

FF **JEREMY NYLUND**

CAPTAIN **ANTHONY RODRIGUEZ**

FF **ROSS TUCCI**

15 YEARS

FF **LUCAS BUTLER**

FF **SHAWN MILLER**

CAPTAIN **JEREMIAH MUSHEN**

10 YEARS

FF **DAVID DEVRIES**

CAPTAIN **JORDAN GUSTAFSON**

ADMIN ASST. **GWEN STREETER**

5 YEARS

EXEC. ASST. **STEFANIE HARPER**



RETIREMENTS

HONORING YEARS IN SERVICE

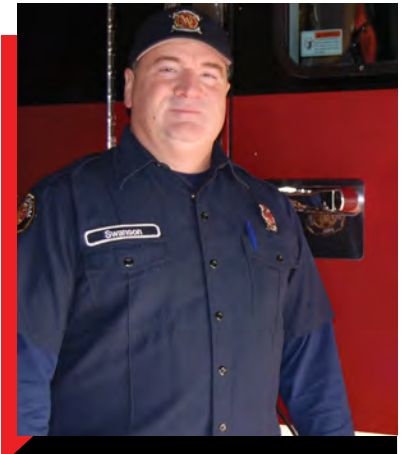
The Valley Regional Fire Authority would like to recognize the following individuals for their years of service:



CAPTAIN **DAVE BERG**
29 YEARS VRFA | 32 YEARS TOTAL



FIRE CHIEF **BRENT SWEARINGEN**
9 YEARS VRFA | 37 YEARS TOTAL



FIREFIGHTER **DAVID SWANSON**
20 YEARS VRFA | 27 YEARS TOTAL



FIREFIGHTER **NEIL PEDERSEN**
37 YEARS WITH VRFA



FIREFIGHTER **WILL HIGHLEY**
31 YEARS VRFA | 37 YEARS TOTAL



FIRE MARSHAL **KAREN STEWART**
13 YEARS VRFA | 28 YEARS TOTAL



ADMIN. ASSISTANT **GWEN STREETER**
10 YEARS VRFA | 32 YEARS TOTAL



FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

The VRFA Finance and Administration team remains committed to our core responsibilities; budget development, financial audits, and resource availability.

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Defined processes for budget development
- Continued use of independent financial audits
- Assurance that resources are available to maintain adopted levels of service

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

VRFA conducts a rigorous annual budget process to ensure that:

1. All programs are reviewed for need
2. New initiatives are considered in light of available resources
3. Our Board of Governance takes an active role in budget development

FINANCIAL AUDITS

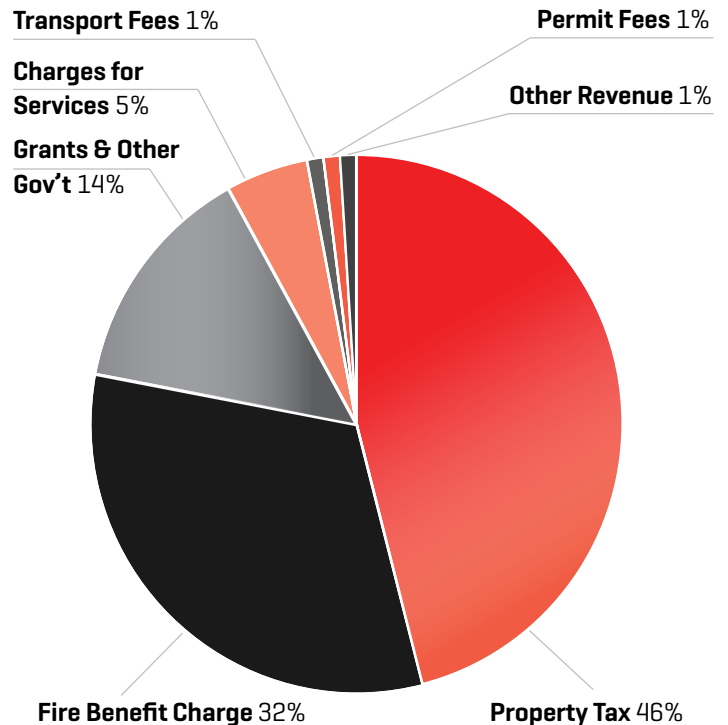
The Washington State Auditor reviewed the VRFA's financial practices and reported a clean audit for 2021. It is the fourteenth consecutive year with a clean audit. We are proud of our team and will continue to demonstrate our commitment to solid financial management and oversight.

RESOURCES

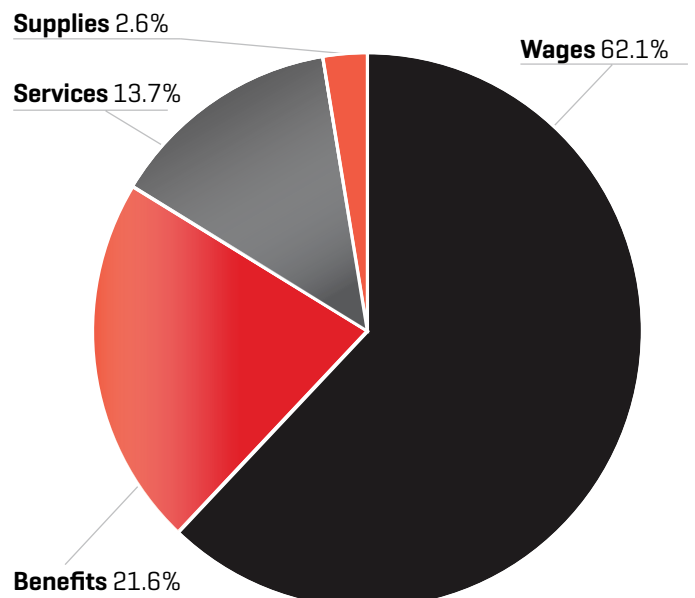
Resource availability remained strong. Thanks to a levy lift approved by our voters, which took effect in 2021, we dramatically reduced the Fire Benefit Charge. Continued maintenance of adequate financial reserves and increases in non-property tax-related revenue sources allow us to fund the comprehensive services provided by VRFA to the public.

We sincerely thank you for your continued support and look forward to serving you in 2022.

2021 REVENUE



2021 EXPENDITURES



OPERATIONS

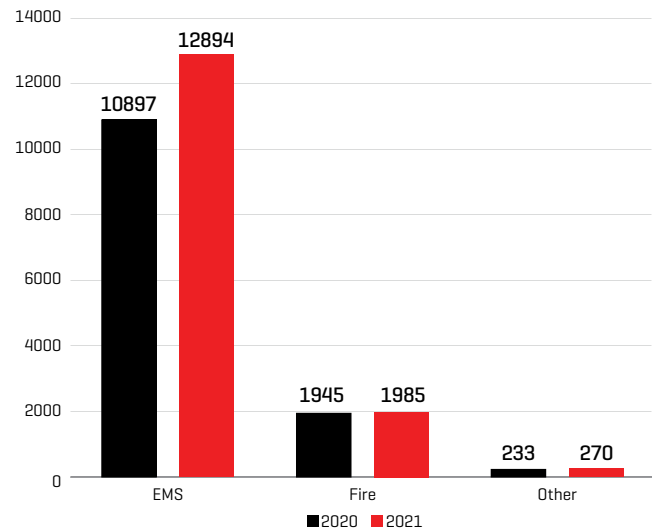
The Valley Regional Fire Authority provides all-hazards emergency response to the Algona, Auburn, and Pacific communities, with automatic and mutual aid from neighboring jurisdictions. Many of our calls are emergency medical aid. The remaining responses are for fires of all types, vehicle crashes, water rescue, hazardous materials, and other rescue and aid calls.

Twenty personnel respond to emergencies from five strategically located fire stations. These stations are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by four shifts. All VRFA firefighters are state-certified Emergency Medical Technician/Defibrillation Technician (EMT-B) and are International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) certified to the Firefighter II standard.

Valley Communication Center, the fire alarm center in South King County, dispatches the appropriate resources depending on the type of emergency to provide fire suppression, Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Life Support (ALS), and technical operations. King County Medic One responds with VRFA crews on calls requiring Advanced Life Support.

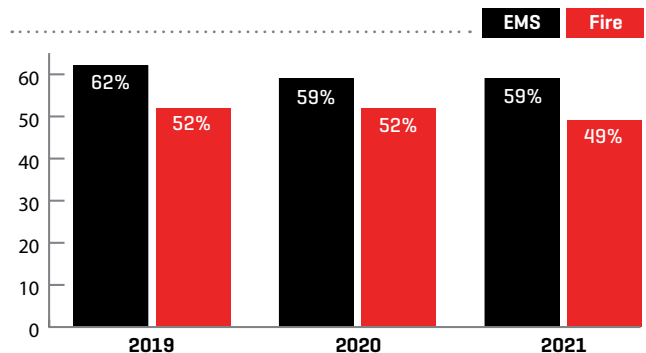


CALLS BY TYPE



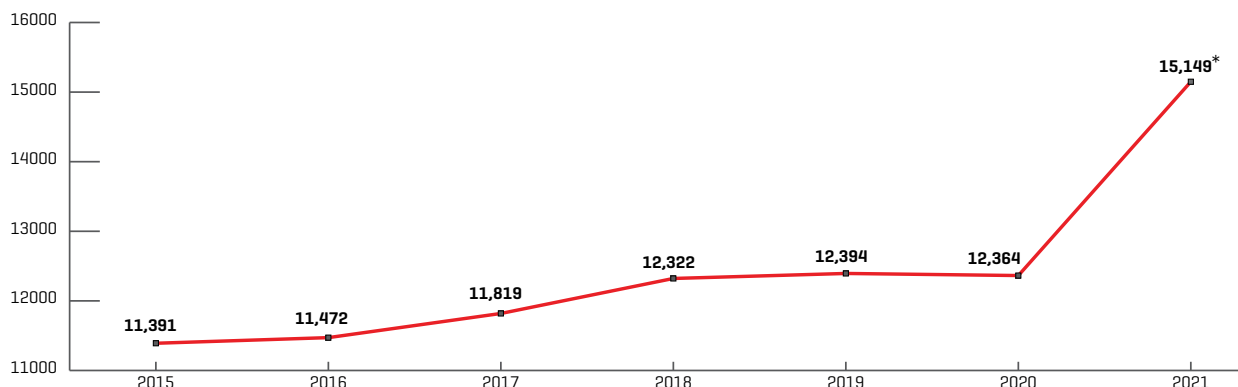
PERCENT RESPONSE TIME OUTCOMES

Total Response Time (TRT) is the amount of time it takes a unit to arrive at a scene once the call is received at the Fire Alarm Center. The VRFA has established a TRT benchmark of seven minutes and 34 seconds [7:34] for EMS calls and seven minutes and 49 seconds [7:49] for fire calls. The following graph shows how often we met those benchmarks in the last three years.



CALLS FOR SERVICE BY YEAR

*A new methodology to track calls was implemented in 2021.



OPERATIONS

COVID-19 influences continued into 2021, causing our staff to work through difficult decisions in an ever-changing pandemic. VRFA firefighters continued to provide the essential services that the citizens of Algona, Auburn, Pacific, and Fire District 31 have come to expect. We never wavered from our commitment to serve the whole community.



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- After several months of meetings, research, and presentations, the VRFA purchased a Tractor Drawn Aerial apparatus. This apparatus will increase response capabilities, including maneuverability and overall ladder reach when extended. This new apparatus will arrive in mid to late 2022.
- We upgraded extrication tools and fan equipment to all front-line apparatus. Over three years, we replaced gas-powered fans and extrication equipment with battery-powered equipment. U.S. Fire Administration grants and sound budgeting practices funded the upgrade. This helped improve performance on the emergency scene by reducing noise levels and improving communications with no performance loss.



2022 GOALS

- Complete training for new Tractor Drawn Aerial Apparatus.
- Upgrade staffing by adding an aid car crew to Station 31.



OPERATIONS

WILDLAND FIRE

The Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA) maintains a 20 person “Red Card” program. The members of this program train to the Northwest Coordinating Groups (NWCG) recognized standard for wildland firefighting. Team members complete wildland firefighting refresher training and an arduous fitness test annually. The program includes firefighters, captains, and battalion chiefs. Current red card members have NWCG credentials in; Firefighter 1 [Trainee], Firefighter 2, Engine Boss [Trainee], Faller 3, and Helicopter Base Manager.

The VRFA program provides Type-1, Type-5, and Tender response capabilities to King County/Zone 3 via mutual and automatic aid requests. Regional, statewide, and out of state requests are provided through the Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Fire Mobilization, and the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) agreements.

In 2021, the team responded to seven mobilizations. Eleven team members spent a total of 212 days in the field.

*See page 16 for wildland fire definitions.

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

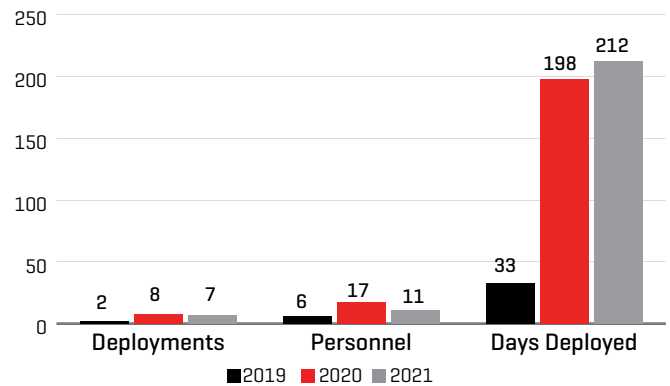
- Trained three members to Faller 3 status.

2022 GOALS

- Evaluate purchase of a Quad Cab Type-5 fire engine.
- Forecast the future replacement of the tender to an apparatus better suited to response demands.
- Evaluate a “Rapid Extraction” Module Support Unit [REMS].

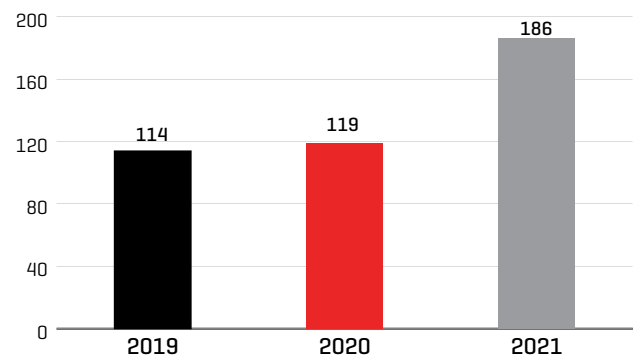


WILDLAND DEPLOYMENT HISTORY



BRUSH AND WILDLAND FIRE INCIDENTS

Included in these numbers are bark, grass, vegetation, brush, and forest fires.



OPERATIONS

WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING DEFINITIONS

ENGINE BOSS

The Engine Boss leads a single fire engine crew and is responsible for their safety on wildland and prescribed fire incidents.

RED CARD

The Incident Qualification Card, commonly called a Red Card, is an accepted interagency certification that a person is qualified to do the required job when arriving on an incident.

FALLER 3

Engages in low complexity fireline saw operations, including tree felling, bucking, brushing, and limbing.

TENDER

A wildland water tender is a specialized vehicle capable of bringing water, foam, or dry chemicals to fire trucks in the field that are engaged on the fireline.

FIREFIGHTER TYPE 1

The Firefighter Type 1 leads a small group (usually not more than seven members) and is responsible for their safety on wildland and prescribed fire incidents.

TYPE -1 RESPONSE

Engine company response in a Type 1 engine used for urban, rural, and suburban.

FIREFIGHTER TYPE 2

The Firefighter Type 2 [FFT2] serves on a hand crew, engine crew, or helitack crew, performing fire suppression and fuels management duties in adverse climate, fuel, and terrain conditions.

TYPE -5 RESPONSE

Company response in a brush truck type apparatus.



OPERATIONS

TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM

The VRFA Technical Rescue Team (TRT) provides resources to a regional response model that routinely responds throughout South King County and North Pierce County. The TRT consists of four captains and 12 firefighters who respond to land and water emergency incidents. The VRFA and Renton Regional Fire Authority (RRFA) are the only two agencies in South King County that provide SCUBA trained personnel for dive-rescue response incidents.

In 2021, the Technical Rescue Team (TRT) added team members and responded to 50 technical rescue incidents. Engine 333 [Squad 333] is now an essential component of a recently developed rescue and squad concept for technical rescue in South King County



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Added team members.
- Trained personnel on kayak use.
- Expanded technical rescue responsibilities to include; trench, confined space, and structural collapse.



2022 GOALS

- Purchase Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) with sonar capabilities.
- Purchase stabilization struts.



OPERATIONS

TRAINING DIVISION

The Training Division consists of three Valley Regional Fire Authority members working as part of the South King County Fire Training Consortium (SKCFTC). One battalion chief and two captains are part of a 28-member team comprised of 13 fire department agencies throughout South King County.

The battalion chief working in the SKCFTC is responsible for the Operations Division. The Operations Division oversees firefighter fundamentals, live-fire, ladder truck, quarterly training assignments, extrication, water rescue, technical rescue, hazardous materials, and pump academy training.

One of the VRFA captains at the SKCFTC is an instructor at the recruit academy to ensure proper training and certifications are completed by over 100 recruits each year. The other VRFA captain assigned to the SKCFTC is responsible for six technical rescue areas, including initial certification training and ongoing training to maintain certification. Those areas of technical rescue are:

- Trench Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue
- Rope Rescue
- Structural Collapse
- Heavy Rescue
- Elevator/Mechanical Rescue



OPERATIONS

TRAINING DIVISION



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- VRFA first responders logged over 17,000 hours of training in 2021.
- Provided six weeks of live fire block training with units rotating from all over Zone-3 and Eastside Fire & Rescue.
- **Live-Fire:** Multi-company operations included over two hundred apparatus rotating into the training over six weeks.
- Over two hundred apparatus from 12 fire department agencies rotated to the training tower to complete firefighter fundamentals training.
- The training division met all of the required training for 2021 to ensure our members retained their certifications in all firefighting areas including EMS and Live-Fire, plus specialty training such as Technical Rescue, Truck Operations, and Incident Command.



2022 GOALS

- Expand the incident command training to certify officers and acting officers by holding an additional certification class every year.



TECHNICAL SERVICES

SUPPORT SERVICES

The Support Services Division includes three sections; Planning, Logistics, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Working with internal staff and strategic partners outside the VRFA, Support Services purchases supplies and provides maintenance for facilities, vehicles, and equipment. EMS is an integral part of the VRFA response to 911 calls. The EMS Section ensures skills and competency are at a high level, and all required certifications are in order. The Support Services Battalion Chief is the Health Officer for the VRFA.



TECHNICAL SERVICES

EMS

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is responsible for coordination and compliance of Basic Life Support (BLS) emergency medical training. The EMS captain supervises the Medical Program Specialist (MPS) team and the Community Assistance, Referrals & Education Services (CARES) team. The captain is also the liaison to the South King County Fire Training Consortium (SKCFTC), King County Emergency Medical Services, American Medical Response (AMR), and Multicare Auburn Medical Center (MAMC).

In 2021, the EMS division continued to collaborate with the Planning and Logistics divisions with health team duties related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed all required EMS training for the year.
- Purchased child and infant QCPR feedback manikins.
- Completed review of 100 patient care records.

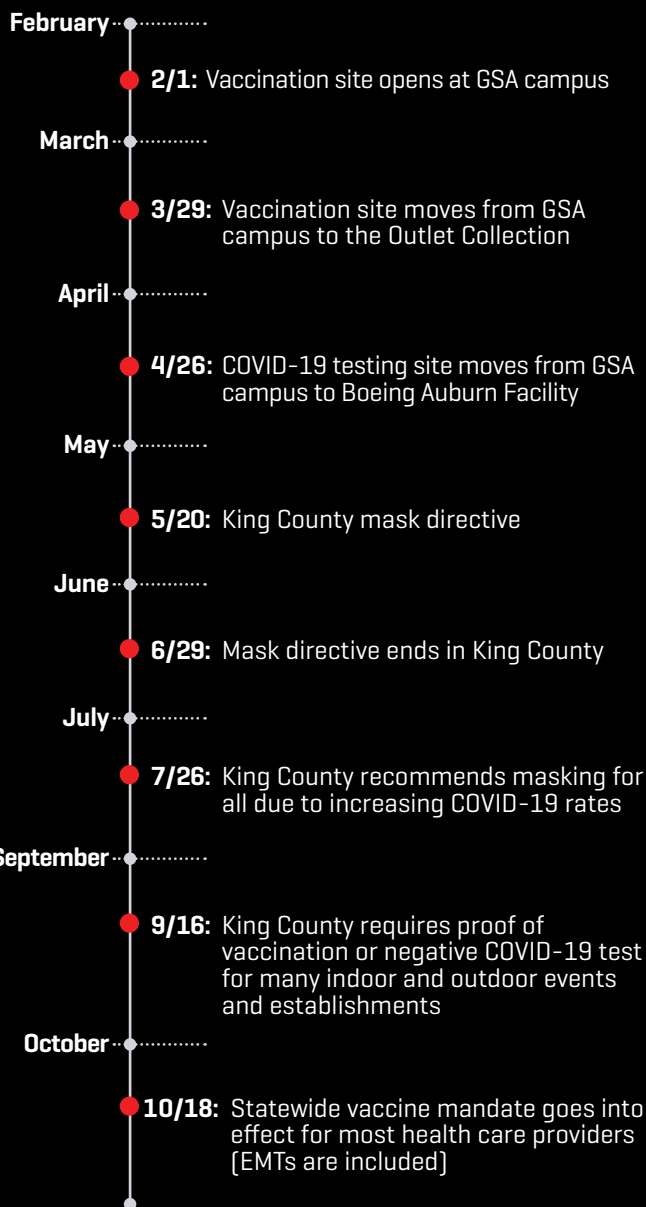


2022 GOALS

- Implement a more robust and user-friendly process to complete patient record run reviews and provide feedback to EMTs.



COVID-19 VRFA TIMELINE



TECHNICAL SERVICES

CARES

The Community Assistance, Referral, and Education Services (CARES) team is a collaborative effort between the Valley Regional Fire Authority and South King Fire & Rescue to assist patients with chronic health issues outside of a hospital setting. The team consists of a captain, a firefighter, and three social workers who work together to assess a patient's needs and connect them with services to improve their quality of life. In 2020, through Interlocal Agreements, the three social workers began receiving referrals and providing case management for patients in King County Fire District #44 (Mountain View Fire & Rescue) and King County Fire District #28 (Enumclaw Fire).

In 2021, our social workers resumed responding to 911 calls with the CARES team first responders after working remotely during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of cases managed continues to trend upward. There has been a 23.2% reduction in emergency department visits among enrolled CARES patients compared to 15.4% in 2020. We are also seeing a drop in 911 usage by enrolled CARES patients. 911 usage by CARES patients dropped by 42.3% in 2021, compared to 34.1% in 2020.



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Social workers Carrie Talamaivao and Brittany Padjen achieved "Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW)" from the State of Washington Department of Health.
- Ordered a new CARES vehicle to arrive in 2022.



2022 GOALS

- Fill vacant firefighter position.
- Develop a new CARES Strategic Plan

2021 CARES NUMBERS

**355
RESPONSES**

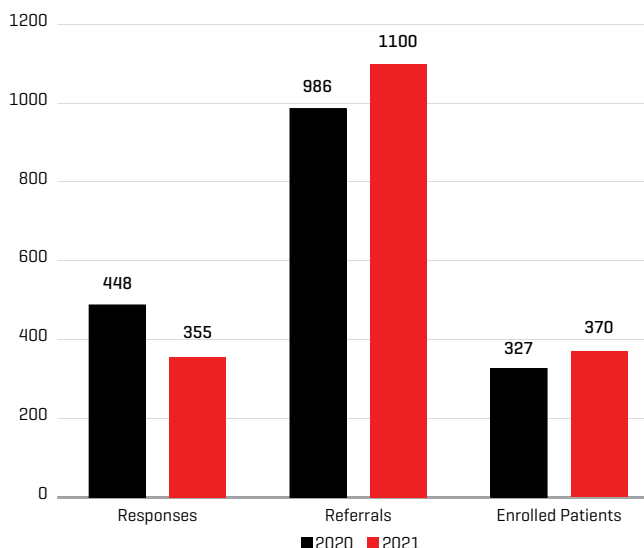
**1,100
REFERRALS**

Our referrals patients called 911 a total of 8,386 times

370 ENROLLED PATIENTS

Among enrolled patients, 911 usage dropped 42.3% based on a 60 day intervention period

CARES



TECHNICAL SERVICES

LOGISTICS DIVISION

The Logistics Division purchases and maintains most of the VRFA's supplies and equipment and works with vendors to maintain fire stations and support facilities. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the logistics captain serves on the VRFA health team. A logistics aide assists with station deliveries and other small projects.

The COVID-19 pandemic played a central role for the logistics division once again in 2021. Faced with COVID-19 related supply chain issues, staff found ways to work around those challenges to keep adequate supplies on hand.



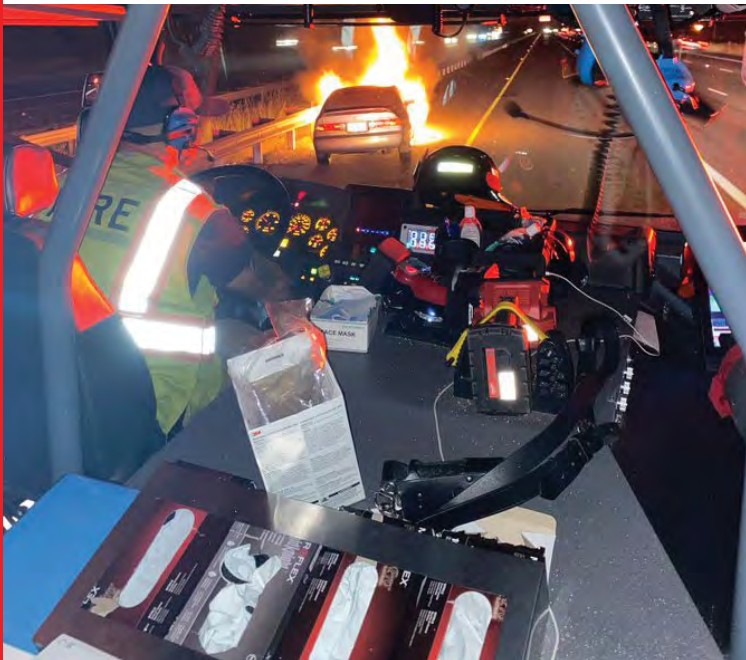
2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Built a designated delivery receiving area at Station 35.
- Worked through COVID-19 related supply chain issues.
- Served on the VRFA Health Team.
- Implemented Operative IQ and inventory tracking system.
- Purchased a new logistics vehicle (to be delivered in 2022).
- Replaced expired personal protection equipment (PPE) and fire hose.



2022 GOALS

- Implement Operative IQ and put inventory management controls in place.



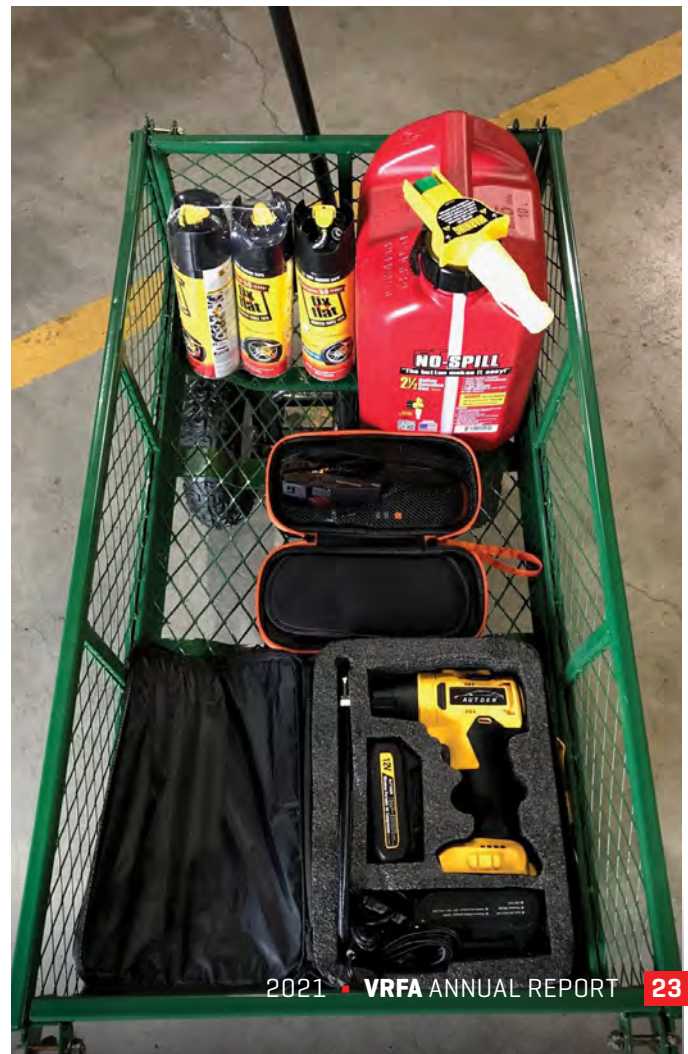
PPE LIFESPAN

NFPA specifies that firefighter protective equipment must be retired from service no more than 10 years from the date of manufacture.



FIRE HOSE LIFESPAN

Life span of hose is from 10-15 years depending on use, care, and quality. Fire hose is tested annually.



TECHNICAL SERVICES

PLANNING DIVISION

The Planning Division is responsible for project management, capital facilities, asset planning, grant writing, and other large-scale projects. The Captain of Planning focuses on the current and future growth of the VRFA.

In 2021, the VRFA worked with neighboring agencies to improve overall service. We made minor changes to the number and type of apparatus the VRFA sends to 911 incidents, drastically improving station order models and allowing dispatch from the nearest fire station. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the VRFA in 2021. The planning division assisted the VRFA health team in evaluating the impacts to the communities we serve, VRFA services, and the overall health and safety of VRFA personnel. As a health team member, the planning division captain helped develop directives, policies, and new procedures to reduce the negative impacts of COVID-19.



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Collected and shipped all communications equipment for a new ladder truck.
- Updated the response and station matrix.
- Completed identification of all radio equipment in preparation for Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network [PSERN].
- Developed a vehicle replacement plan.
- Purchased a set of extrication tools at a deep discount and completed outfitting all primary apparatus with E-tools.



2022 GOALS

- Continue PSERN compliance with an exchange of PSERN radio equipment with as little impact on operations as possible.
- Maintain analysis of fleet and staff vehicles for maintenance and repair, utilization, and replacement.



TECHNICAL SERVICES

FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

The Fire Marshal's office is an indispensable element in the VRFA's service model. The office provides professional services to our member cities and their citizens in several technical fields, including investigations, code resolution, life safety system testing and maintenance, and community development. In 2021, COVID-19 continued to adversely impact some services provided by the Fire Marshal's office. However, much of the work the office performs continued unrelentingly. The Fire Marshal's office and our member cities instituted cooperative efforts with businesses and developers to incorporate life safety requirements required by code with innovative approaches to keep reviews, inspections, and compliance on schedule. These efforts allowed safe community development and provided support and guidance to existing businesses that remained in operation during the restrictions.

The Fire Marshal's office successfully continued its mission within the VRFA in 2021. Many new programs were instituted aimed at operational efficiency and improving customer service.



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Instituted a private hydrant program to address hydrants not serviced by our member cities. This program allows for maintenance and documentation of privately owned hydrants with cost savings to our customers.
- Several new functions were added to the Fire Marshal tab in the VRFA website, enhancing friendlier,

centralized services. Customers can expect the website to provide accurate and updated information in one place for a variety of supportive interactions while keeping pace with changes in our service model over time. Fire Marshal personnel are always available to assist customers and citizens when inquiries, needs, or services extend beyond the website functionality.

- A 2020 goal for an internal investigator training program was developed and will begin with practical application starting in 2022. This training will fulfill a department goal and augment individual expertise and competence at fire incidents affecting our community.
- A new quality assurance program was instituted in 2021 as a department goal to address suspected gaps in tracking and process completion. This proved successful as tracking indicates. The Fire Marshal's office successfully resolved 65 code investigations throughout the jurisdiction in 2021 reflecting a 100% increase.



2022 GOALS

- Complete the transition to a "Risk Matrix" inspection program while integrating a new inspection reporting platform for all personnel.
- Streamline several office programs that operate behind the scenes in department support.
- The office goal in 2022 is to provide development technical reviews while maintaining a 95% or better on-time return to our applicants.



TECHNICAL SERVICES

FIRE INVESTIGATIONS

Fire Marshal personnel remained professional and dedicated under challenging working conditions as we conducted extensive fire investigations in our response area. In addition, we extended a service agreement with Puget Sound Fire Authority and delivered skillful investigations to their department through April of 2021.

Personnel assist regional partners in training and facilitating testing for the Washington State Patrol with state investigator certifications. In 2021, eight new state investigators were certified with the support of the VRFA. In 2021, 124 fires were reported for the jurisdiction; this reflects a 49% increase from 2020. New state and national reporting guidelines have redefined the fire causation terminology, reflected in our 2021 data terminology. The most significant movement was in the intentionally set fire category, with a three-fold increase. The VRFA experienced several impactful community structure fires in 2021, with notable property losses up 144% from the previous year.

Beginning the first quarter of 2022, the development and commencement of a new internal investigation training course is on schedule. This training will fulfill a department goal and augment individual expertise and competence at fire incidents affecting our community.



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Migrated case data to Sharepoint to make data more accessible and useable.



2022 GOALS

- Complete Investigator Certifications for the two newest investigators.
- Become a regional leader in assisting with certification and training.



FIRE INVESTIGATION

- 55 UNINTENTIONAL
- 20 INTENTIONAL
- 22 UNDETERMINED
- 27 UNDER INVESTIGATION

124 FIRES INVESTIGATED

ESTIMATED DOLLAR LOSS BY FIRE TYPE



STRUCTURE FIRE
\$9,194,452



VEHICLE FIRE
\$344,311



BRUSH FIRE
\$350



NON-STRUCTURE FIRE
\$39,100

ESTIMATED TOTAL DOLLAR LOSS
\$9,578,213



TECHNICAL SERVICES

CODE RESOLUTION

The Fire Marshal's Office receives and reviews various questions and inquiries regarding fire codes and compliance. A new quality assurance program was instituted in 2021 as a department goal to address suspected gaps in tracking and process completion. The Fire Marshal's office successfully resolved 65 code investigations throughout the jurisdiction in 2021, reflecting a 100% increase. This is not thought to reflect a doubling of resolution issues reported, but instead reflects the actual work being done in the Fire Marshal's office using more efficient processes and analytics. Moving forward into 2022, the Fire Marshal's office will track this data for anomalies while ensuring a quality experience for customers.



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Launched a new quality assurance program to address suspected tracking and process completion gaps.



2022 GOALS

- Track data for anomalies.

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION INSPECTIONS

Fire Marshal personnel are actively engaged in our communities through various programs. One of the most visible and interactive is our community risk reductions inspections, commonly referred to as "safety inspections." Community risk inspections focus on commercial, industrial, and multi-family buildings in the service area. Fire Marshal personnel have collected data on many of our occupancy and building types for several years, inputting that data into a "risk matrix." This matrix provides a list of "high hazard" occupancies that form the inspection program's foundation. This scoring matrix directs the inspection program to higher hazards so that the frequency of inspections for these buildings matches their score. This targeting is data-driven and the essence of community risk reduction.

2021 was challenging as the pandemic continued to hamper inspection activities; this is reflected in the reduction of inspections performed in the

338 CERTIFIED
INSPECTIONS

759

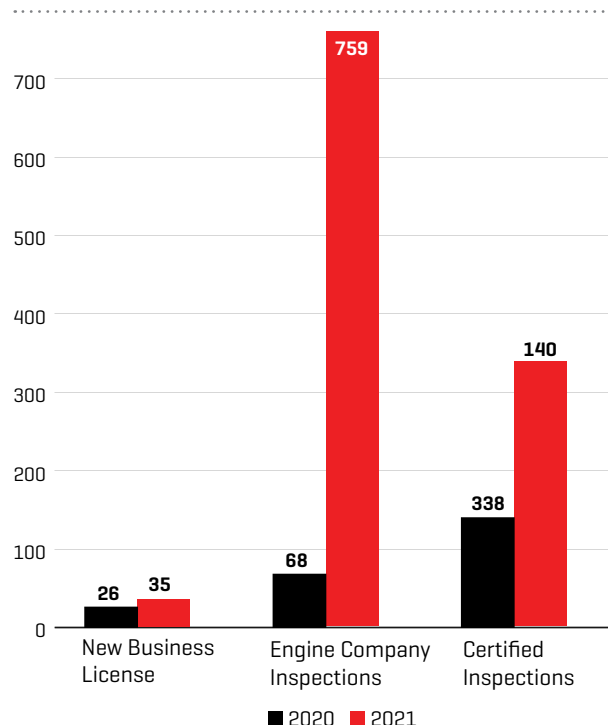
ENGINE COMPANY
INSPECTIONS

35

NEW BUSINESS
LICENSE

company level and certified inspection categories. Full inspection participation progressed as the 2021 year closed and has resumed in full for the 2022 year. Risk reduction inspections remain a proactive, front-loaded, proven strategy to engage our communities and assist emergency personnel with reducing the frequency and severity of all emergency hazards and incidents. The goal of the FMO for 2022 is to continue to refine the "risk" matrix and the inspection program as a community engagement concept and continue to collect targeted data to identify critical inspection occupancies.

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION INSPECTIONS



TECHNICAL SERVICES

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The VRFA and the Fire Marshal's office provide various development services collaborating with our member cities. Fire Marshal personnel provide analysis and guidance to new businesses in the jurisdiction when they submit a business license through each city. This

service provides an initial introduction and advice on safely operating any business within the adopted codes and standards. Construction plan review and associated inspections are integral to safe economic development in our cities. Plan review includes code review of new and renovated construction, life safety systems, and various business and hazardous material operations occurring within the service area. In conjunction with business license and construction reviews, the Fire Marshal's office provides comprehensive land use analysis to each city and potential developments. Initial development contact is made through pre-application meetings between developers, the city, and fire marshal personnel. Continued collaboration and guidance

are administered as projects move through various construction and development phases that can take years of teamwork. The goal of the FMO is to provide the most professional service available in development assistance while vigorously maintaining accepted industry safety standards and code.

In 2021, the VRFA experienced significant increases in pre-construction applications and construction inspections. These categories are notable in that these activities rank the highest in the number of office hours spent on specific services to our customers. We expect these trends to continue into 2022. The office goal in 2022 is to provide these technical reviews while maintaining a 95% or better on-time return to our applicants.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

565

CONSTRUCTION INSPECTIONS

150

NEW BUSINESS

85

PRE-CONSTRUCTION APPLICATIONS

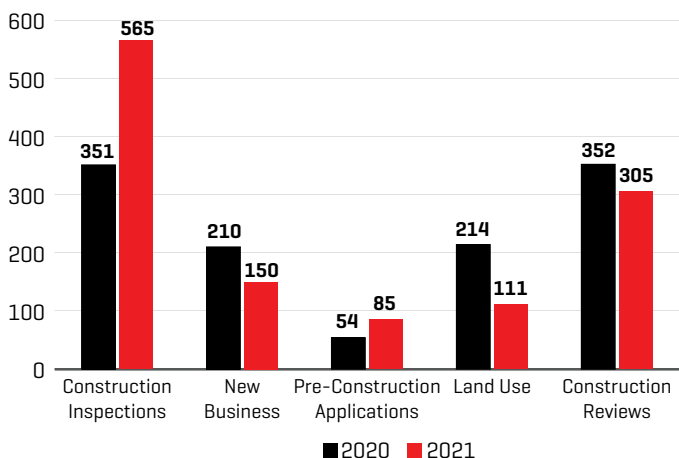
111

LAND USE

305

CONSTRUCTION REVIEWS

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



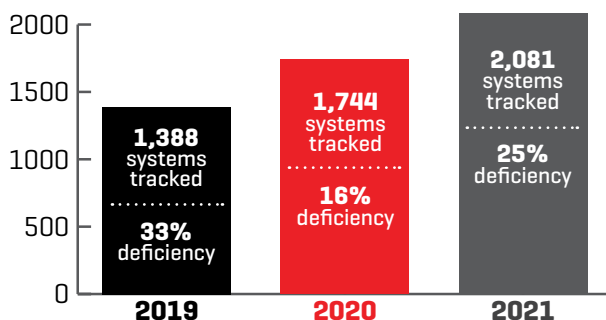
TECHNICAL SERVICES

FIRE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND TESTING

Statistically, one of the leading causes of significant fire events is the lack of maintenance for building safety systems. The VRFA uses a third-party web-based service, Compliance Engine, to comprehensively confirm and track inspections, testing, and code compliance for these systems in our jurisdiction, enhancing our inspection services. This service has dramatically improved the quality, efficiency, and confidence the VRFA has for the reliability of these required safety systems and their maintenance. Compliance Engine has yielded excellent benefits to our fire safety service.

From 2019 through 2021, total system tracking increased from 1,388 to 2,081, an increase of 50%. Significant improvement in the percentage of deficient systems was realized, with a drop from 33% in 2019 to 25% in 2021. This improvement has tangible benefits to business and citizen safety by preventing various factors that contribute to catastrophic events. Actively managing and engaging in this service model meets several VRFA and FMO strategic goals and allows for real-time analysis and intervention where public safety could be compromised.

FIRE SYSTEMS TRACKED



2021 FIRES BY CITY

 TOTAL FIRES 124	AUBURN	110
	PACIFIC	6
	ALGONA	8



TECHNICAL SERVICES

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

The Public Information and Education division provides fire and life safety information and education to schools, businesses, and the community through in-person training, classroom visits, printed publications, social media, and the media. The division consists of two public information and education officers and four firefighter specialists.

This year presented many challenges for the Public Information & Education division due to the continuing worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Most public education and public gatherings were canceled or altered. Once again, it was necessary to find alternative ways to provide fire and life safety education to our schools, community, and businesses while keeping ourselves and our communities healthy and safe.



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created fire safety videos for the elementary school fire and life safety education program for use in a virtual environment.
- Added more video-based safety education messages to social media posts.
- Worked with the Data Analyst to identify fire and injury trends to target those educational needs in our community.
- Added more educational content on the VRFA website, especially in children's fire safety/school programs, smoke alarms, and fire extinguishers.



2022 GOALS

- Continue adapting educational messaging for the changing COVID-19 environment, including more video-based messages.
- Continue working with the Data Analyst to identify fire and injury trends, and thus educational needs in our community.
- Continue work on strategic plan goals and objectives.



TECHNICAL SERVICES

2021 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

48 
SMOKE ALARMS

81 
BATTERIES

17  CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

WERE GIVEN OR INSTALLED FOR SENIORS AND LOW-INCOME HOMEOWNERS.

COSTCO

World Vision 

The Costco Corporation and World Vision provided the smoke & carbon monoxide alarms through a grant.

Energizer

The Energizer Company supplied the batteries through a grant award.

20 BICYCLE HELMETS 



We provided over 20 bicycle helmets to children and adults in need. The Auburn Area Fire Medic Campaign awarded the VRFA a grant to purchase the helmets.



Elementary School Fire and Life Safety virtual classes.

Virtual School Program visited

194 TIMES



3 BUSINESSES received fire extinguisher training.



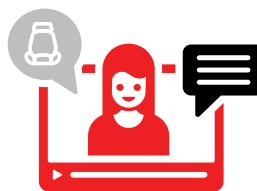
3 YOUTH FIRE SETTER INTERVENTIONS

Participated in



5 COMMUNITY EVENTS

We referred those looking for car seat inspections to



virtual providers in 2021.

1 SCHOOL 
1 ADULT CARE HOME received evacuation training.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In 2020, the VRFA implemented a five-year strategic plan based on priorities expressed by the community. A committee of civic leaders, business owners, local government employees, private citizens, and representatives from the VRFA divisions of labor and administration created the strategic plan. The strategic plan addresses the long-term direction of the VRFA.

External stakeholders worked with facilitators to share and document their experiences, opinions, advice, and desires regarding the VRFA and the agency's future. Internal stakeholders conducted VRFA-specific SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and updated the agency's mission, vision, and values. This comprehensive process revealed gaps in departmental capabilities and services while revealing five major strategic initiatives. We have made significant progress in the last two years. Below is a summary of the initiatives and the progress made in 2021.

#1 ACCREDITATION

The process of becoming an accredited agency and the overall implementation of the strategic plan over the next five years.

- The accreditation process is complete. The VRFA was officially awarded accredited status in December by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.
- We will complete a compliance report annually to show continuous quality improvement and the enhancement of service delivery.

#2 CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN

Developing and implementing a plan for facilities and equipment for future growth and improvement.

- A Capital Facilities Plan is complete. This document is a six-year plan that addresses future growth and improvement of facilities and equipment.
- A new 107' aerial ladder truck was ordered and will arrive in early 2022 to address the changing landscape of our communities.
- We are pursuing land in Auburn and Pacific for a new fire station[s].

#3 STAFFING

Examining current staffing levels, models, and procedures and identifying areas for improvement.

- The VRFA is examining staffing levels, models, and procedures to account for new stations and equipment.
- We hired 11 new personnel in 2021.

#4 MENTORSHIP

Ensuring the enduring success of the VRFA and its staff through sustainable internal mentorship.

- All divisions have completed a needs assessment to determine priorities, make organizational improvements, and, if needed, allocate resources.
- Supervisors and managers evaluated minimum/desired standards, credentials, and resources for their divisions.

#5 COMMUNICATION

Examining internal and external communication processes for service gaps and areas for improvement.

- We implemented several strategies to improve external communication based on a social media survey, emphasizing business-related matters, firefighter content, and video content.
- We collected demographic information in all three communities. The data will be used to improve services to the whole community.
- The VRFA is examining internal communication methods to understand the needs/wants of employees.

The VRFA's strategic plan and initiatives will guide the agency in identifying future needs for meeting the community's expectations for fire department-based safety services. The strategic plan will serve as a road map for how the VRFA will meet the demand for services within available resources.





VALLEY REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

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