

# ANNUAL REPORT

UPPER PINE RIVER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

BAYFIELD CO

**2023**





## MISSION

The Mission of the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District is to provide exceptional service through response and mitigation of all risk/hazards in the Upper Pine River Valley and Region.

## VISION

Building resilience in our communities  
Engaging our neighbors in collaborative ideas

Innovative financial strategies  
Delivering outcome based medical, rescue, and fire services  
Empower employees to engage in District processes  
Approach problems as opportunities through "Just Culture"  
Supporting staff in their professional development

## VALUES

Accountable  
Committed  
Competent  
Dedicated  
Duty  
Family  
Integrity  
Professional  
Respectful  
Teamwork

"We will be leaders in rural EMS and fire protection serving the four corners region."

## DISTRICT PROFILE

The Upper Pine River Fire Protection District provides all-risk/hazard fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to 284 square miles of eastern La Plata County and a small portion of the western part of Archuleta County in southwest Colorado, located near the Four Corners of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. We proudly serve a permanent population of approximately 14,000 residents. The popular vacation area of Lake Vallecito increases our summer population with seasonal residents largely from Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico.

Our District includes the Town of Bayfield, Gem Village, and the communities of Forest Lakes, Vallecito Lake, and Lemon Reservoir along with 24 other smaller subdivisions. We also cover the County Road 240 corridor from County Road 246 to above Lemon Dam to the Forest Service Boundaries. The topography includes several urban interfaces and intermixed neighborhoods with austere public lands. We work closely through mutual aid with the US Forest Service and surrounding fire Districts to protect the community.

In 2023, we responded to 1028 calls for help. Of those calls, approximately 62%, or 636, were a request for emergency medical services or motor vehicle crashes. We employ 33 full-time employees with a daily staffing of 8 fire and EMS personnel per shift. The District operates on 3, 48 HR shifts with personnel working a 48/96 schedule. Part-time members and 6 support staff also trained as EMTs or paramedics support operations. During Spring and Summer, mitigation services are performed utilizing a 4-8 person wildland crew and part-time members in conjunction with private contractors. These services are primarily for grant-funded projects on private property and watershed areas. When feasible, assistance to ranchers and farmers with agriculture and ditch burns is provided in the Spring.

We maintain eight fire stations, three of which are staffed 24 hours in Bayfield, Forest Lakes, and Lake Vallecito. The administrative office building is located in the Town of Bayfield at 515 Sower Drive. Resident firefighters are housed in stations on CR 240, CR 502 and at the Vallecito Dam. Resident firefighters respond to calls and maintain stations.

The Upper Pine River Fire Protection District is an autonomous Title 32 Colorado Special District. As a non-profit, the major revenue sources are taxes from a mill levy, wildland fire deployments, and ambulance fees. Additional sources of revenue are from grant awards and Federally funded wildland firefighting activities. We are governed by a five-member Board of Directors elected at large by their constituents, each serving a staggered four-year term. The Fire Chief oversees the general operations in accordance with the policy direction prescribed by the Board of Directors.



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**NEW BOARD MEMBERS**



Upper Pine Crews with The Boys and Girls Club



9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

# FIRE CHIEF



Upper Pine River Fire proudly presents the 2023 annual report for public inspection. As we approach our 50th Anniversary in September 2024, it's a momentous time for Upper Pine River. These accomplishments build on the foundation laid by numerous dedicated volunteers over the years.

A key milestone this year was the acquisition of a 2-acre land parcel on County Road 501 and Bayfield Center Drive, northeast of the traffic circle, for the replacement of Fire Station 1 in Bayfield. This purchase, completed in August 2023, represents just one step in a comprehensive 100-step process. We have partnered with Oz Architecture from Denver, a professional fire station design firm, to develop blueprints and construction documents. In a significant community endorsement, voters approved extending the mill levy in November 2023 with a 74% affirmative vote. Converting a mill levy for a 20-year bond ending in 2024 to a capital improvement mill levy will now begin funding capital projects in 2025. Additionally, we are in the process of applying for a USDA community facilities loan for the station and actively pursuing grant funding as an alternative to incurring long-term debt.

In 2023, we saw remarkable outcomes in emergency response, especially in severe medical and trauma cases. Notably, several individuals in rural trauma situations defied the odds with assistance from our firefighters and paramedics. With their consent, some of these survival stories are featured in this report. This year, we also welcomed a new paramedic, funded by a generous donation from the Bishop Family. Upper Pine added a water tender and a remounted ambulance to our fleet, further modernizing our capabilities and we also sold 2 20-year-old water tenders.

For me, a personal milestone as a lifelong student, I was fortunate to be selected to attend the Executive Leadership Program at the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, California. It was some of the best education I have had in my 40-year career in emergency services. The tuition is entirely funded by FEMA, along with all of the travel expenses. We had presentations and time with Leon Panetta, the former Director of the CIA, John Yoo, Professor of Law at Berkley and a frequent contributor to Fox News, and General Pepper from the Space Force, to name a few. This ended with graduation from the program in September of 2023 and a new set of lifelong friends.

My term as President of the National Association of EMTs concluded at the start of 2023, transitioning me into a two-year role as the immediate past president. One of my key initiatives was the James O Page Lighthouse Leadership mentoring program, has benefited our own firefighter paramedic, Steve Bradford, who was accepted into the second class. My tenure also included advocating on Capitol Hill, where we secured funding for the Siren Act which supplies grants to rural EMS bringing over \$600,000 to the Pine River Valley over three years. This funding is providing free EMT training to locals and high school students, encouraging them to serve their community.

As always, it remains an honor to serve the Pine River community, and our firefighters and paramedics are dedicated to addressing every challenge, from life-threatening emergencies to rescuing dogs in drainpipes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Evans".

Bruce Evans, MPA, NRP, CFO, SPO  
Fire Chief  
Upper Pine River Fire



# BOARD PRESIDENT

As we close out 2023, it's clear that our primary focus needs to be working with other Fire Departments to overcome the current financial challenges we're all facing in the state of Colorado. Our goal has always been to provide our community with the highest quality care and services. Training is one of our top priorities in hopes of creating an environment where firefighters and EMTs can start and finish a career.

By collaborating with other departments and first responders, we can strengthen our voice in the conversation at the State level to ensure the challenges we face are recognized and understood. The importance of special Districts to their communities are critical, and we've got to advocate to ensure future sustainability.

For being a very small and rural District, we bring the same level of care and services that you'd expect to see in a large city. That is something we can all feel incredibly proud of. This is due to the outstanding firefighters and EMTs who have taken it upon themselves to further their education and training. We've got dedicated crew members who can solve problems under the most severe circumstances and always get the job done. We also have an admin team that is passionate about bettering and elevating the department as a whole.

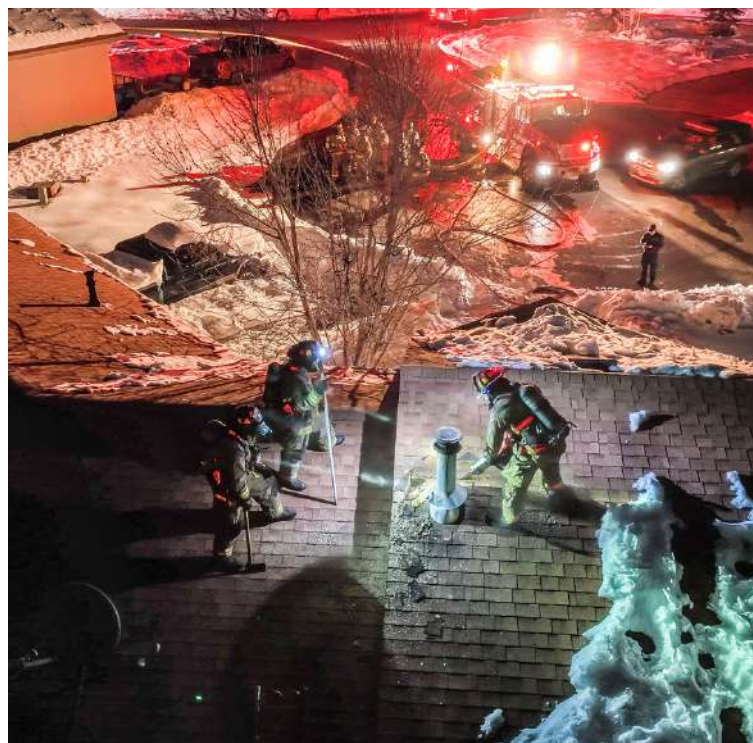
What Chief Evans and Deputy Chief French bring to the table with their combined years of experience is an incredible asset to Upper Pine. It's great to see this knowledge passed down to the next generation and benefit our District for years to come.

From the board's perspective, we couldn't ask for a better crew and community to serve.

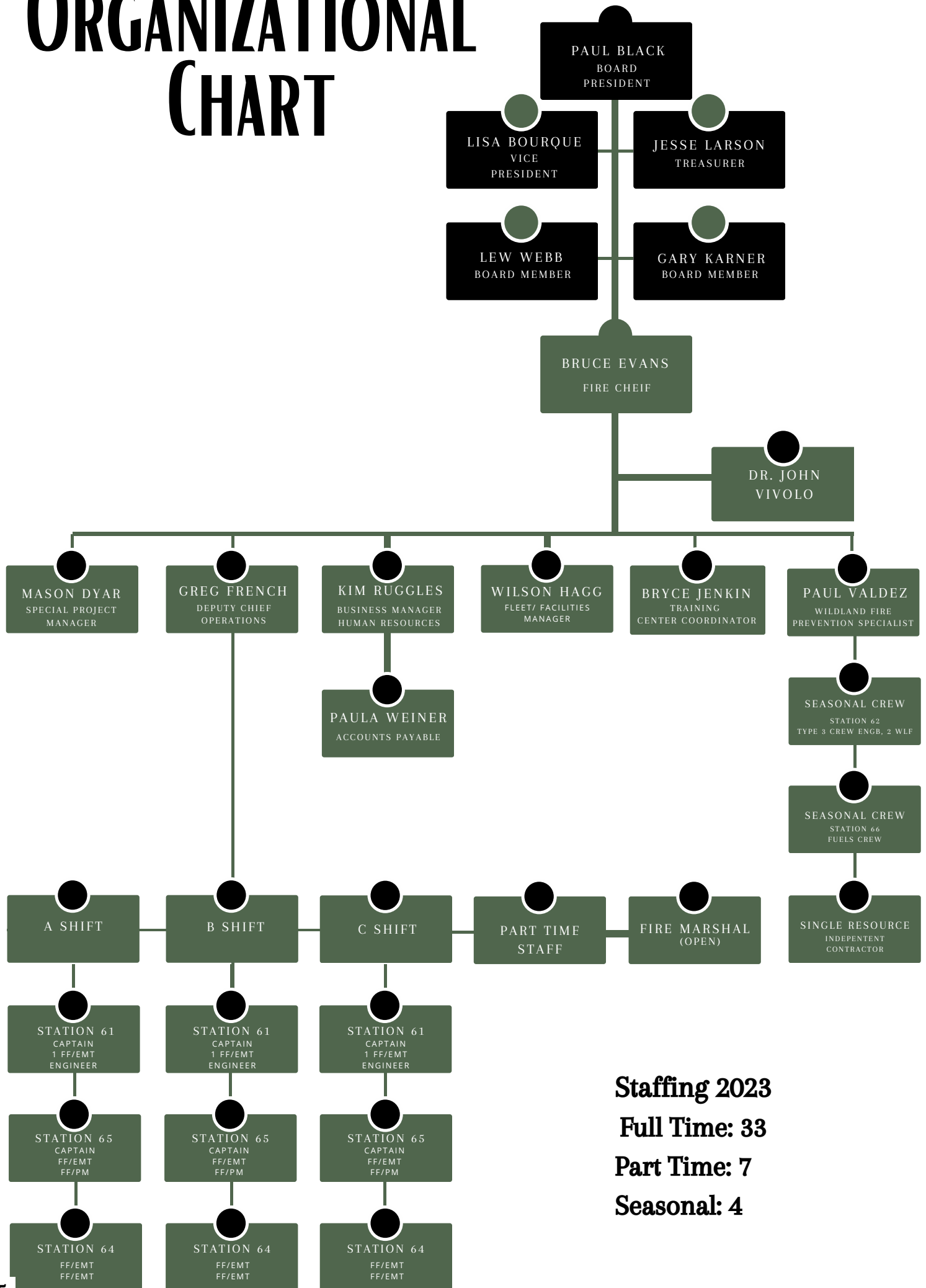
Thank you,

*Paul Black*

Paul Black  
Board President



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



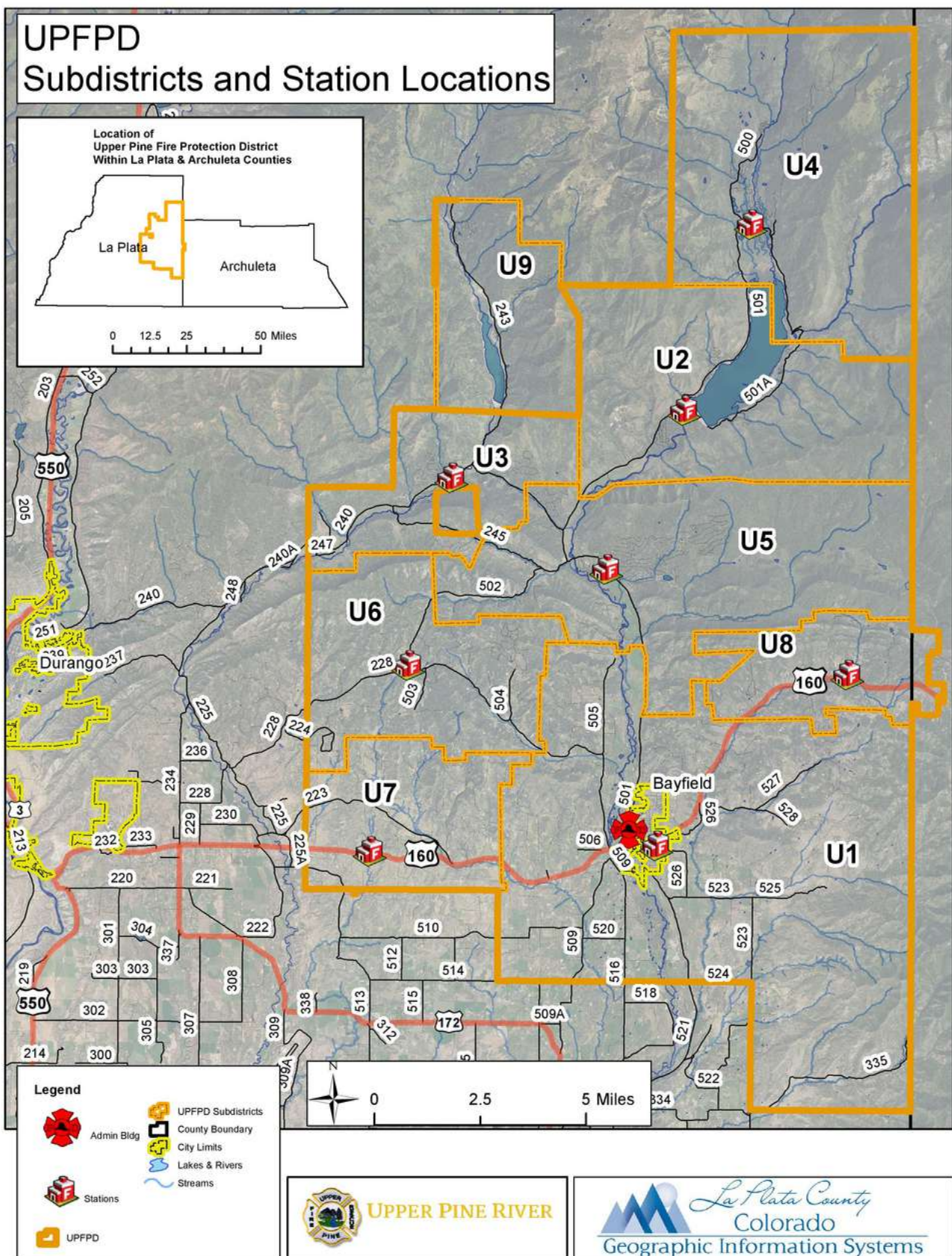
**Staffing 2023**

**Full Time: 33**

**Part Time: 7**

**Seasonal: 4**





**ADMIN:** 515 Sower Dr  
**STATION 1:** 75 S. Clover Dr  
**STATION 2:** 13100 CR 501  
**STATION 3:** 13407 Cr 240  
**STATION 4:** 80 W. Vallecito Creek

**STATION 5:** 6891 CR 501  
**STATION 6:** 8476 CR 502  
**STATION 7:** 35191 W Hwy 160  
**STATION 8:** 49342 E Hwy 160



For more than a decade, Upper Pine River Fire had prepared and submitted a budget with a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), which is a set of U.S. government financial statements comprising the financial report of a State, municipal, or other governmental entity that complies with the accounting requirements promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). 2023 is the first year in over a decade that Upper Pine River Fire's budget was not prepared to that high standard due to the inability to find an accounting firm with available staffing to achieve that level of review. This year, an audit was prepared in compliance with the Local Government Audit Law [Section 29-1-601, et seq., C.R.S.], requiring an annual independent financial audit submission to the State of Colorado via the Department of Local Affairs. Annual reports reflect the audited financial statements from the previous year. Copies of past audited comprehensive financial reports are available on our website:

<https://www.upperpinefpd.org/boards-finances/>



The following section reflects the unaudited financials for the year 2023. Several items negatively affected the budget in 2023. First, significant drawdowns of reserve money were used to purchase land for the re-location of Fire Station 1. While this consumed a large amount of reserve money, the District saved approximately \$1.2 million by selecting a lot with utilities and the road system. This site also saved on the cost of re-engineering or redesigning the building as it fits perfectly onto the two acres at 297 Bayfield Center Drive.

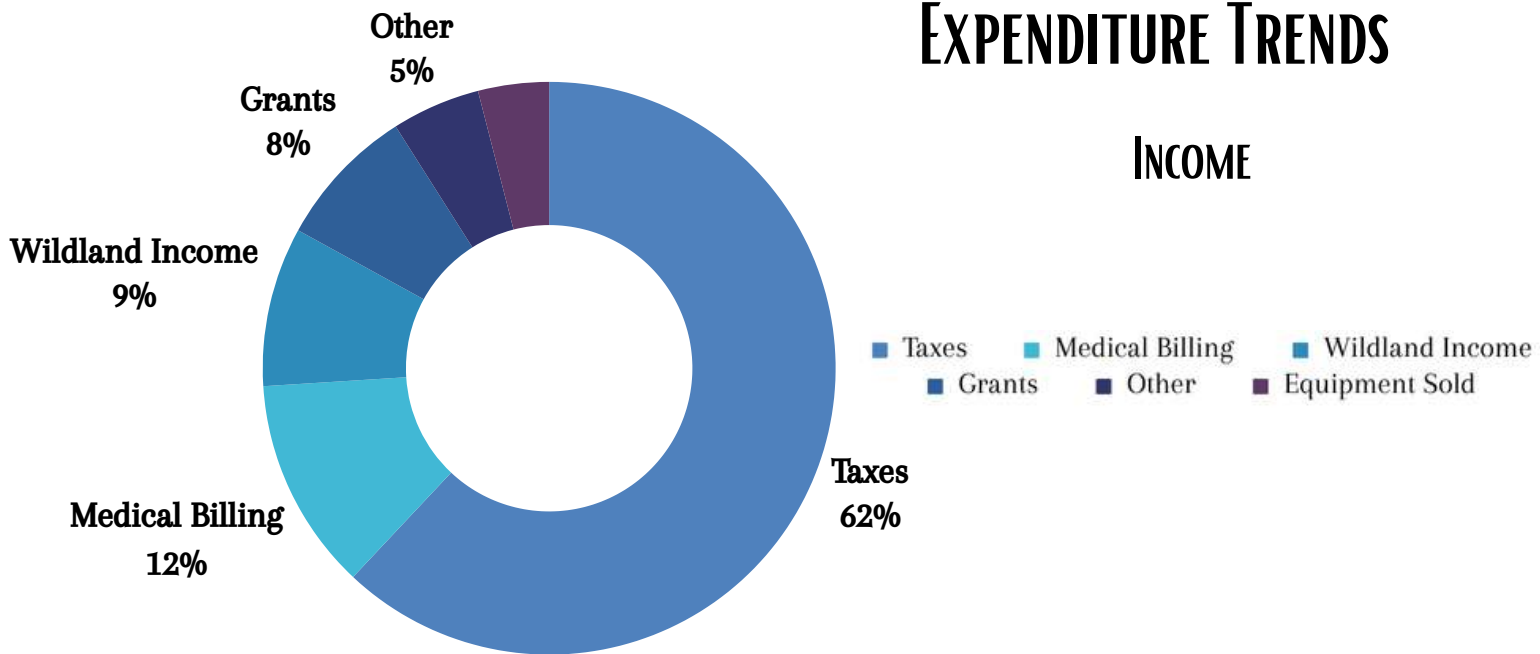
Medical services accounted for most of the emergency operations with 70% of the fire District's call volume. While wildfire responses outpace structure fire responses in the District, structure and wildland fires remain a costly endeavor to prepare for. Medical and firefighting supplies such as hoses, foam, and fire trucks have risen significantly due to supply chain issues and trouble getting skilled workers in the manufacturing industry. The District took advantage of this shortage and offered up three vehicles over 20 years old for sale, reducing the fleet and maintenance costs.

Grants still supply a significant amount of income at 8% of the total income. The District has over \$1 million in grant money in 2023-24 that is being processed for safety programs, training, equipment, and backfill for staff at paramedic schools. Wildland fire also continues to be a significant part of the District's income at 9-10%, thanks to a cooperative agreement with the USFS and the Columbine Ranger District that places Upper Pine River Fire units under the command of the USFS.

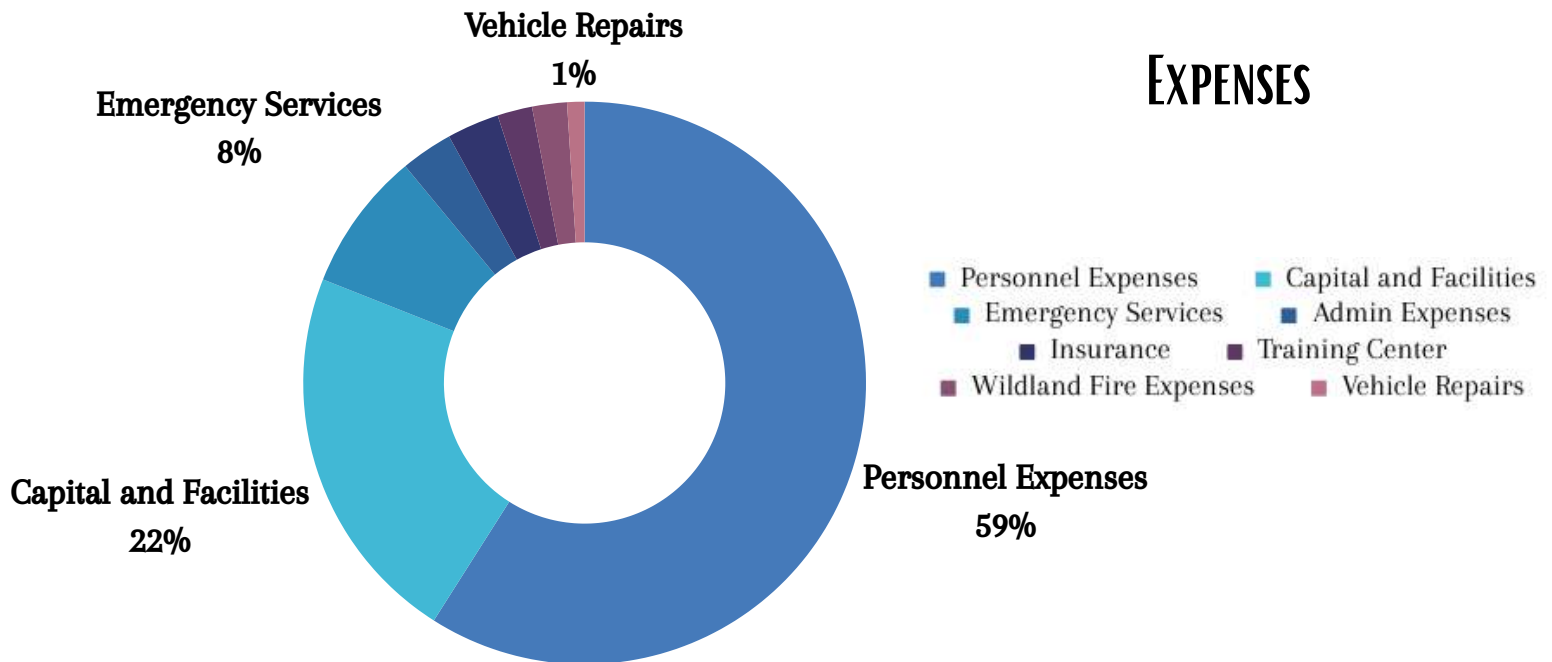


# EXPENDITURE TRENDS

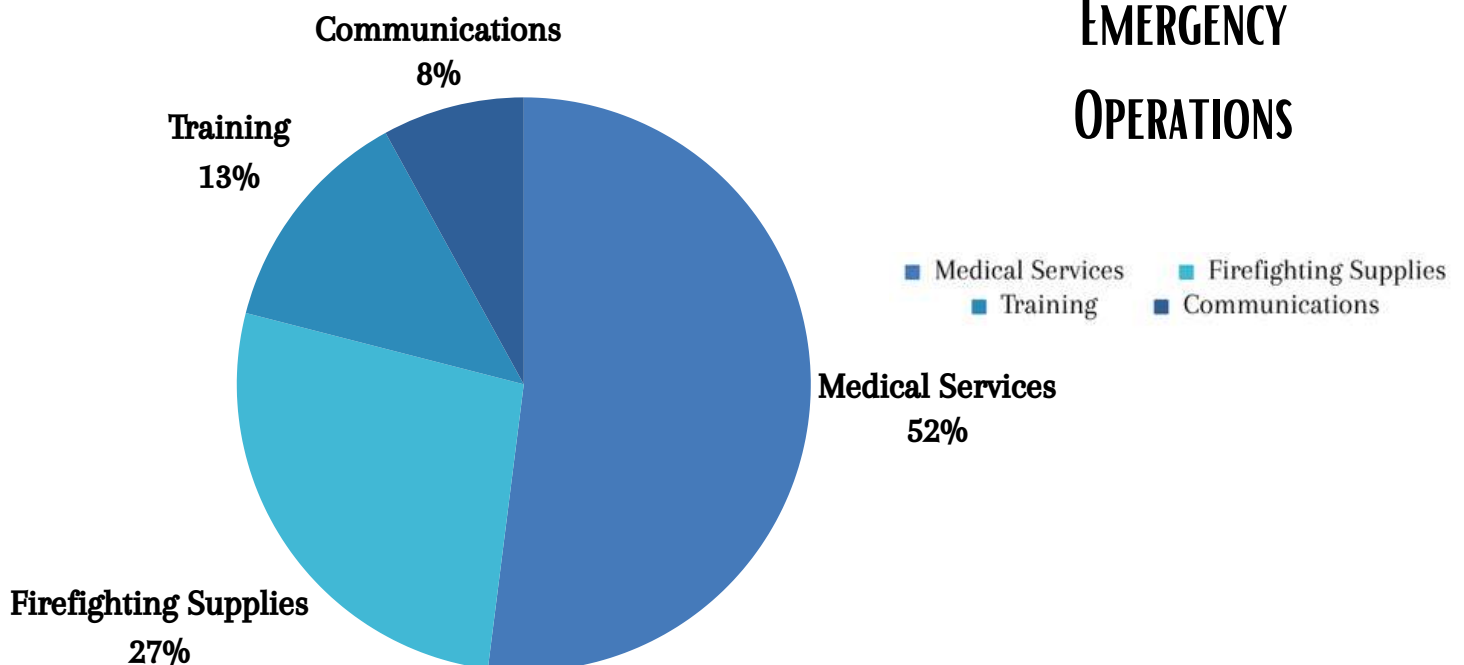
## INCOME



## EXPENSES



## EMERGENCY OPERATIONS





Upper Pine River Fire maintains five ambulances, three staffed full time and two used to support Durango Fire's Interfacility transfers during peak demand. This year, the District remounted an ambulance we affectionately called the "frankenbus." After repeated failures in the Ford 6.4 diesel engines, we placed a Cummins engine with a custom wiring harness into a Ford ambulance. This truck served as a functional backup unit in our fleet for three years before being sent to Osage Ambulance in Missouri for a remount. This process saved the District thousands of dollars, as a single ambulance box can be reused multiple times.

Upper Pine River Fire remained available to the National Ambulance Strike Team program to respond to any emergency within the United States. Upper Pine is also the coordinating agency for the Colorado Ambulance Strike Team contract. Along with these potential deployments, Upper Pine maintains a robust wildland EMS program with line medics at both the BLS and ALS levels, along with a dedicated ambulance to deploy on standby to wildland fires. An EMS systems grant from the Colorado Dept. Health and Environment funded a UTV for response onto USFS land and the cross-country trail at Lake Vallecito.



FFs Panawa and Heck on the Quartz wildland fire



Vehicle Rollover on HWY-160

### EMS Leadership

Upper Pine River Fire continues to be involved in National and State EMS Leadership. Chief Evans has rotated to the Immediate Past President of the National Association of EMTs. He represents EMS at the National Academy of Medicine on the Traumatic Brain Injury and Emergency Preparedness Forums. Firefighter/Paramedic Steve Bradford entered the James O Page Lighthouse Leadership mentoring program this year with an 18-month commitment to leadership development. Two Upper Pine employees, Logan Mosher and Steve Bradford, serve as Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinators, routinely coordinating with Children's Hospital of Colorado. Upper Pine Paramedic Joel Claus continues to serve as the SW Health Care Coalition coordinator, attempting to stitch together various health care providers in a five-county area.

### Innovation

Upper Pine River Paramedic Stuart Burglar stepped back to part-time status in 2023, not due to burnout or a desire to not do the job but to pursue a passion for better patient burn care. After several encounters with burn patients in the field, Stuart felt there had to be a better way to take care of burn patients. With an angel investor behind him, he has set out on a monumental task to create a therapy for burn patients. While we can not mention specifics, you can imagine the hurdle and attention to detail needed to bring a new treatment online and patents secured.



Extrication of Injured Hiker from Miller Creek



# EMT Classes of 2023

In 2023, the Upper Pine Training Center's EMT program achieved remarkable success, graduating 36 new Emergency Medical Technicians, who are now ready to serve our local communities with dedication and expertise. This noteworthy accomplishment was significantly bolstered by our ability to offer free tuition to all students, thanks to the generous funding from two key grants: the State of Colorado Work Force Development Grant and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Grant, commonly known as the Siren Act. The Siren Act grants target specifically rural EMS to provide training and equipment. This is the third year in a row that Upper Pine has applied for and received this grant. This financial support has enabled a diverse group of students to pursue their aspirations in emergency medical services and strengthened our area's healthcare workforce.



**EMT Class 2023-01**

Our program strictly adheres to the NREMT (National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians) curriculum, ensuring our training aligns with national standards of excellence. After completing the program's rigorous coursework and psychomotor segments, our students are well-prepared to take the National Registry examination. In 2023, our students showcased their proficiency and dedication, achieving a 98% pass rate on this examination, a testament to the quality of education and training provided at Upper Pine.



**EMT Class 2023-02**

A significant number of our graduates have swiftly transitioned into the workforce, with many securing positions at neighboring departments. Notably, Upper Pine itself has welcomed seven new members, both full-time and part-time, from this year's class, further augmenting our capacity to respond to emergencies with skilled and trained personnel.



**EMT Students in a High Fidelity Simulation**

Through our commitment to excellence in education and training, the Upper Pine Training Center's EMT program continues to play a pivotal role in enhancing emergency medical services in our community and beyond. As we reflect on the past year's successes, we are inspired to continue this legacy of excellence and service in the years to come. Upper Pine is transitioning to a partnership with Common Spirit, St. Anthony's, in 2024 from Pagosa Springs Medical Center.



Upper Pine River Fire is also a National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians Training Center offering various standardized courses. These include Pre-hospital trauma life support (PHTLS), Advanced Medical Life Support (AMLS), and Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC). Captain Cory Adamy is the state Affiliate Faculty for TECC monitoring and signing off other instructors throughout Colorado.

# AVALANCHE RECOVERY



**Rescue team ascending terrain**



**Avalanche Crown and Path**

The most unusual call for service occurred during the last week of February 2023. Two experienced skiers triggered an avalanche in the San Juan Mountains during an exceptionally snowy winter, leading to a tragic outcome. The skiers were reported overdue by their family, prompting a search operation by La Plata County Search and Rescue (SAR) teams and a medical helicopter. The SAR team, battling harsh weather conditions, located the skiers beneath six feet of snow, deceased, using avalanche transceivers. Efforts were temporarily suspended due to worsening weather. Coordination with SAR was maintained throughout the operation. The Upper Pine River Fire Protection District (UPRFPD) prepared to assist with victim extrication, gathering necessary avalanche rescue equipment from various agencies. After consulting the local avalanche forecast and ensuring safe conditions, the team commenced the recovery mission with careful planning and the aid of a drone for aerial reconnaissance. The recovery team reached the site in the afternoon, securely packaging the victims for transport. The descent was meticulously executed, employing lowering systems and anchored belays to navigate the challenging terrain, including a dense aspen forest. The operation concluded with the team safely reuniting the victims with their families, highlighting the importance of teamwork and precise coordination among the responders. In response to this incident, UPRFPD initiated avalanche awareness training for its personnel and plans to acquire appropriate rescue gear. The incident underscored the necessity of avalanche hazard assessments in the District.

This event was also the final call for **Captain Andy Miller**. Captain Andy Miller participated in the rescue shortly before he retired from Upper Pine Fire Protection District. We recognize his service and dedication to the District's people and fellow firefighters. Enjoy your retirement, Andy!

This event emphasizes the serious risks posed by avalanches and the critical need for preparedness and education among both rescuers and recreational mountain users.



**Captain Andy Miller**



**Recovery Vallectio**



**Crew Briefing at Avalanche Recovery**



# TOP 23 CALLS FOR 2023

- 1.EMS call excluding vehicle accident with injury: **635**
- 2.Dispatched and canceled en route: **62**
- 3.Motor vehicle accident with no injuries: **45**
- 4.Motor vehicle accident with injuries: **30**
- 5.Gas leak (natural gas or LPG): **22**
- 6.Smoke scare, odor of smoke: **13**
- 7.No incident found on arrival at dispatched address: **12**
- 8.Authorized burning: **12**
- 9.Bush or brush-and-grass mixture fire: **11**
- 10.Building fire: **10**
- 11.Forest, woods, grass, or wildland fire: **10**
- 12.Unauthorized burning: **10**
- 13.False alarm calls: **9**
- 14.Powerline down: **8**
- 15.Assist invalid: **7**
- 16.Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional: **7**
- 17.Rubbish, trash, dumpster, or landfill fire: **5**
- 18.Assist police or government agency: **5**
- 19.Public service: **5**
- 20.Carbon monoxide incident: **4**
21. Smoke or odor removal: **4**
- 22.Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue: **3**
- 23.Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire: **3**



**July 4th Multiple Patient Motor Vehicle Accident**



**A 3 Acre Wildland Fire on CR 526**



**Crews Respond to a Camper Van Fire**



**Captain Ciccarelli and Firefighter Diebolt Rescue a Dog from a Drainage Pipe**

# OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Upper Pine River Fire Protection District  
January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023



## Benchmark Comparison

This section of the report is based off your overall score for the YTD 12-month time period, compared to other benchmark compare groups. An aggregate rolling score is needed to provide stability to the overall score ranking for more meaningful comparisons to other benchmark groups. Each month, the last month in the 12 month period is dropped and the newest month is added. An organization must have a minimum of 100 surveys to be eligible for ranking.

	Your Company	Total DB	Similar Sized	CAAS	Colorado	All Fire Departments
Number of organizations in compare group		228	90	47	2	22
Minimum Score	95.23	1.00	1.00	1.00	86.47	10.00
Maximum Score	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mean Score	97.59	92.40	92.97	92.05	96.74	94.52
Your Percentile		99th	97th	100th	N/A	100th
Your Rank		2	2	1	N/A	1

**Minimum Score** - This is the lowest score in the benchmark group.  
**Maximum Score** - This is the highest score in the benchmark group.  
**Mean Score** - This is where your mean score ranks against others in the compare group.  
**Your Percentile** - This is the percentage of scores that fall below your mean score.  
**Your Rank** - This is where your mean score ranks against others in the compare group.

## Executive Summary

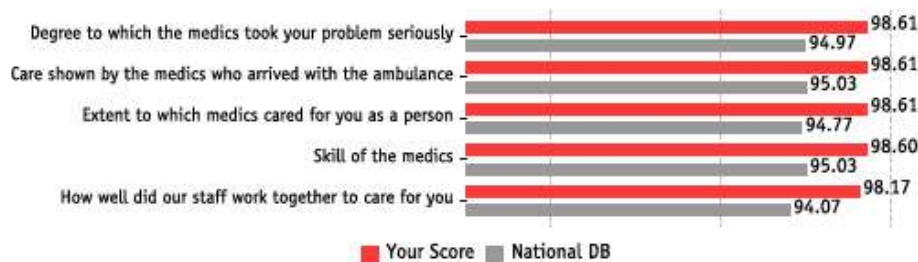
Your overall score for the time period selected is **96.95**. This is a difference of **-0.71** from your previous period's score of **97.66**.

Your overall Top Box score, which represents the percentage of the highest possible rating Very Good, is **89.16%**.

In addition, your rolling 12-month score of **97.60** is a difference of **4.40** from the national database score of **93.20**.

When compared to all organizations in the national database, your score of **97.60** is ranked **2nd** and **2nd** for comparably sized organizations.

## 5 Highest Scores



## 5 Lowest Scores





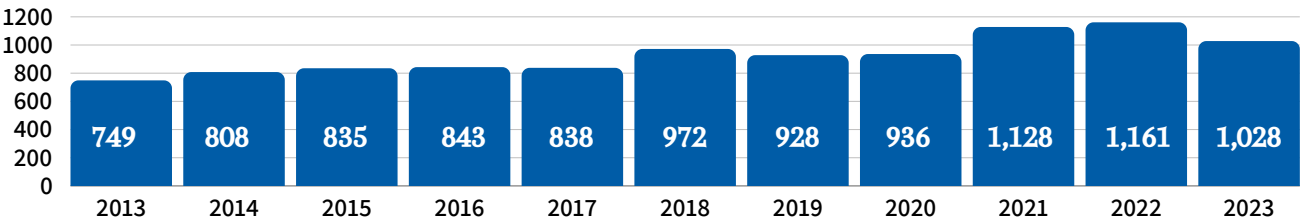


Structure Fire on the 240 Corridor

Upper Pine Fire Protection District firefighters responded to 1,028 calls for service during 2023. There was a slight decrease in call volume (-101) and a 3% increase in emergency medical service responses from the previous year to 74%. Our personnel continue to study, train, practice, and prepare to be able to provide the highest level of service for the residents and visitors of our fire District. Most of our personnel completed the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) Driver/Operator certification, which validates their abilities to drive and operate fire apparatus.

We also completed an Exterior Level Firefighter (ELF) class that increased our reserve firefighter ranks. Three of those firefighters also completed their DFPC Firefighter 1 training and have been working as full-time firefighters. Two firefighters completed advanced medical training with one becoming an EMT Advanced and another a Paramedic. Both firefighters are stationed at station 1 to bring Advanced Life Support skills to the busiest station in our area and support the paramedic from station 5.

CALL VOLUMES



Our daily minimum staffing is three at the downtown Bayfield station 1, three in Forest Lakes at station 5, and two at the north end of Vallecito in station 4. Resident firefighters have helped staff stations 3 on Florida Road and station 6 at the intersection of County Road 502 and 228. Resident firefighters live in the fire stations, maintain the equipment and the stations, and respond to emergency calls in their areas. The combination of resident and full-time firefighters allows us to maintain response times in conjunction with the recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association for rural, suburban, and remote areas.

- Suburban Zones with 500-1000 people/sq. mi. call for 10 staff to assemble a fire attack in 8 minutes, 80% of the time. (DistrictS 1, 4, 5)
- Rural Zones with <500 people/sq. mi. call for 6 staff to assemble a fire attack in 11 minutes, 80% of the time. (DistrictS 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9)

Our response time goals are designed to meet the District’s Standards of Cover, the National Fire Protection Associations 1710/1720 Standard and the American Heart Association’s response guidelines for Stroke, Cardiac Arrest and Acute Myocardial Infarctions (Heart Attacks).

Replacement of our aging fleet is still an urgent need. We have contracted with Pierce to build a new type 1 engine for downtown Bayfield. The engine will be built on the Enforcer chassis and will have an enclosed cab that can carry four firefighters. The new engine will have a 1500 gpm Waterous pump, carry 750 gallons of water, have modern passenger safety systems, and will be NFPA compliant with emergency lighting. Apparatus replacement to maintain emergency preparedness and enhance firefighter safety is a project that will continue for several more years and be funded from our operating budget and grants.



**EMT/Firefighter Rhodes on the CR 502 Barn Fire**



**Crews Respond in Wintery Conditions**

New Fire Station #1 continues to be a high priority ongoing project. During 2023, the District was able to purchase a parcel of land on Sower Drive, just south of our fire administration building. Our architectural firm has been working towards a fire station design that incorporates modern firefighter health and safety within an efficient building where firefighters can live, train, stay fit, and maintain their equipment. The new station will also incorporate a community room and a 24/7 urgent care for the people of the Pine River Valley. The urgent care will also house our Community Paramedic who will be able to assist in the clinic or respond to non-emergent calls within the District.



**Hose Deployed to a House Fire, Intown Bayfield**



**An Upper Pine FF uses a FLIR Device while at Durango Fire Training Tower**

District personnel responded to several significant calls during the year, including structure fires, wildland fires, multiple vehicle traffic accidents, and a water rescue at Vallecito Lake. With the help of our mutual aid partners, all of the structure fires were contained to the room of origin, and there was no significant structural damage.



We offered a part-time or reserve fire academy in 2023 to increase the number of part-time employees in the system. Our staff will train people in the NFPA Firefighter 1 and Hazardous Materials Operations and provide EMT training. We continue to offer professional certifications. In 2023, an effort to increase the number of fire engineers or certified driver operators was a success.

## New Apparatus

The District received several pieces of new equipment during 2023. We received a new Paramedic Chase vehicle (EMS 60), a 2022 Ford Expedition, and an ambulance remount on a Ford F550 chassis. Both of these acquisitions were funded by grants awarded to the fire District.

A new type 3 fire engine from BME also joined the fleet and was put into service at station #5 Forest Lakes. This wildland engine will provide the crews with greater access to areas and homes in the wildland urban interface in our District's central and north end.



Paramedic EMS 60 Funded 50% by EMTS Grant



Brush 65, Type 3 Wildland Engine Funded 50% by DOLA Grant

We also took delivery of a new SVI tactical water tender that replaced an older tender. The latest tender has a Freightliner M2 chassis with tool compartments, ladder and porta tank racks, hose reel, and hose beds, a 500 gpm Waterous pump, and carries 2000 gallons of water.



Medic 65 Funded with Capital Reserve and Replacement Fund

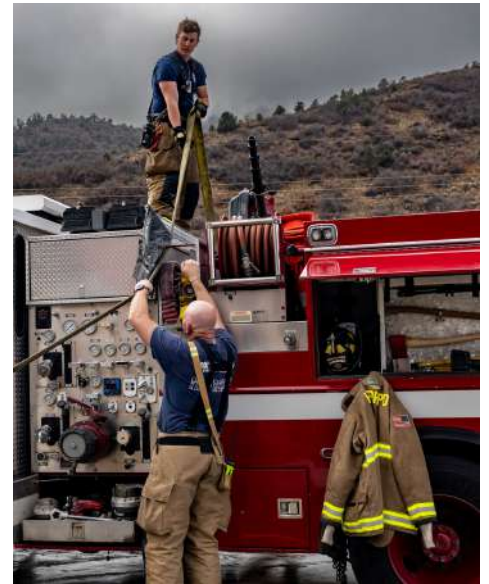


New Tactical Tender Funded by an Insurance Replacement

# DISTRICT TRAINING



**Flight for Life Safety Training**



**Hose Evolution with E-61**

Training is an essential component in upholding the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District's (UPRFPD) mission of providing exceptional service through response and mitigation of all risks/hazards in the Upper Pine River Valley and region. Providing balanced training throughout all disciplines is of utmost importance, considering the diverse call types UPRFPD responders face daily.

2023 was a dynamic year for the Training Division. Every month, UPRFPD members fluctuated between full-scale scenarios and online classes to keep their skills sharp. The Training Division created a monthly training plan for the fire department that incorporated fireground, EMS, Officer/professional development, driver operator, wildland, and special operations training.

## **Training highlights from 2023 include:**

- **Live fire scenarios at Durango Fire Protection District's new training facility.**
- **Completion of multiple NAEMT courses in EMS, such as: Advanced Medical Life Support, Tactical Emergency Casualty Care, and Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support.**
- **Most members completed the Driver Operator Certification.**
- **Wildland tabletop exercises**
- **Special operations training included: confined space rescue, elevator rescue, ice rescue, and more**

The Training Division has been improving our Quality Improvement (QI) process by conducting regular formal after-action reviews of significant fire and rescue incidents. Our medical director, Dr. Vivolo, visits UPRFPD quarterly to conduct case reviews and QI of significant EMS incidents. We were fortunate to send many of our members to external training, such as Auto X in Arvada, FirePower X in Denver, National Fire Academy courses, and, notably, three members to one of the world's largest fire conferences, FDIC. This was made possible through a generous donation from Bob Niggly, one of UPRFPD's original founding members, who unfortunately passed away in 2022. Overall, 2023 has been a very progressive year for training. UPRFPD members take our training very seriously and work diligently every day to improve our skills in all disciplines so that we can better serve the public.



Fire 6,051



Wildland 2,220



EMS 2,918



Leadership 1,306



Hazmat 263



Online 245

**TOTAL TRAINING HOURS**

**13,003**



# WILDLAND REPORT

Paul Valdez

Wildland Fire Prevention

The 2023 season saw our wildland crew experiencing a relatively mild wildfire season in our District, region, and across the western United States. This allowed our teams to dedicate more time to fuel reduction projects within our community. We are pleased to report a successful collaboration with Marilyn McCord, who is the Vallecito Fire Wise coordinator, and the Vallecito volunteers in utilizing a woodchipper for chipping wood slash. Property owners in Vallecito and throughout our District contributed to the disposal of 520 cubic yards of slash, as reported by Marilyn McCord. We commend Marilyn and the Vallecito volunteers for their hard work.



## **Looking Forward to Fire Mitigation:**

Upper Pine has secured a BLM mitigation grant valid through 2027. This grant has funded fuel reduction efforts over 10 acres northeast of the Forest Lakes Subdivision, involving the thinning of approximately 200 ponderosa pine trees and gambel oak on FLMD open land. Thinning these trees is expected to improve the health and vitality of the remaining trees by reducing competition for water and nutrients. Additionally, removing unhealthy, diseased, and dead trees should mitigate aggressive fire behavior as fires approach residential areas. In 2024, Upper Pine plans to extend the fuel reduction project to open land adjacent to homes on East Pine Top Drive, Pinecone Drive, and Pine Top Drive. The proximity of these areas to emergency escape routes enhances the safety of public evacuations in emergencies.



**Wildland Coordinator Paul Valdez with Marilyn McCord**



**CR 526 Wildland Fire**



**Wildfire Assignments included:**

- Support for the San Juan National Forest
- San Juan National Forest Prescribed Fire (RX)
- Dry Lake Fire in Pagosa Springs
- Grassy Mountain Fire in Washington State
- Quartz Ridge Fire in Pagosa Springs

**Public Education:**

A summer highlight was assisting Abrah Masterson, a teacher at Bayfield High School, with Wildland Fire Week as part of her Exploration & Survival Skills class. The program included an hour-long lecture on the elements influencing wildland fire behavior and two field trips to Sauls Creek and Station 61. Captain Jeremy Kelly and his crew demonstrated the use of a fire engine and provided practical lessons in donning and doffing structural gear. According to Masterson with Bayfield High School, many students ranked the Wildland Fire Week as their favorite module of the course. Engaging with Masterson and her students was a rewarding experience for our team.



Scan to view newly developed  
District 4 & District 5 Evacuation Plans

In 2023, the Wildland (WL) division supported over:

- 32 property owners with agricultural and slash pile burns.
- Accumulating more than 943 man-hours in fuel treatment, chipping, and burning activities.
- Which is the equivalent of \$29,714 in kind/good will hours.



Little Pine River Park 2 acre fire.



US-160 1-2 acre fire caused by dragging chains on the road



## January

- January 24th, 2023- Tactical Emergency Casualty Care class hosted by Upper Pine for Regional First Responders and Law Enforcement for Mass Casualty/Shooting training.
- January 31st, 2023- Upper Pine responds and controls a house fire on Full Moon Circle.

## February

- February 12th, 2023- Upper Pine says goodbye to long-time Captain Andy Miller, who retired back to Scotland.
- February 13th- Upper Pine EMS Training Center graduates 7 EMTs from the Fall 2023 EMT class.
- February 23rd- New Wildland Type 3 Engine build complete and purchased through Colorado Department of Local Affairs, DOLA Grant.
- February 26th- Upper Pine and La Plata County Search and Rescue work in tandem to bring avalanche victims on the SE side of Vallecito Reservoir back to their families.

## April

- April 18th- Upper Pine participates in an Airport Disaster Drill.
- April 25th- Evacuation drills executed in Upper Pine Fire District to test the efficacy of evacuation technology to alert residents of the need to evacuate during wildfires or disasters.

## May

- May 21st, Upper Pine unveils their new training tower at Station 4 in Vallecito. The tower is dedicated to Leo Lloyd, who passed away tragically. For years, Leo provided quality training on safe rope rescue strategies to Upper Pine and surrounding areas.

## June

- June 7th- Remount of Medic 65 received from Osage Ambulance and placed in service in Forest Lakes
- June 11th- Upper Pine participates in search and rescue operations at Lake Vallecito for a drowning victim.
- June 24th- Little Pine River Park in Bayfield catches fire, burning  $\frac{1}{3}$  of an acre. Upper Pine units responded and contained the fire.

## July

- July 1st- Upper Pine EMS Training Center graduates 13 EMTs.
- July 4th- Upper Pine River Fire Crew contained a fire on the 4th of July triggered by fireworks that threatened the Senior Center.
- July 16th- A vehicle dragging its chains on US 160 starts a fire along the Highway. Upper Pine, USFS and Los Pinos crews respond to contain the wildfire.
- July 30th- Back Country rescue at Miller Creek rescue of a hiker who fell with a dislocated hip.

# RETROSPECTIVE 2023

## August

- Aug 1st- A small Wildfire contained in Timberdale started by a short in a barbed wire fence.
- Aug 11th- Upper Pine Fire Softball team wins Bayfield Men's Rec League
- Aug 11th Chief Evans graduates from the Naval Post Graduate School in the Executive Leadership Program.
- Aug 12th- Attic Fire knockdown by Upper Pine with Mutual Aid from Los Pinos and DFPD.
- August 24th- Jack Russell Terrier "Sandy" rescued from a drain pipe after chasing a squirrel.
- August 29th- Upper Pine host Animas High School Osprey Block to give them a hands-on look at fire and EMS.

## September

- Sept 3rd- Former Upper Pine Deputy Chief Randy Larson retires as Fire Chief from Pagosa Fire.
- September 10th- Crews battled a 4-acre wildfire on the 2500 Block of CR 526 that threatened homes in the area.

## October

- October 14th- Upper Pine begins Community Meetings to inform the public of Upper Pine's vision of the future and the District's coverage standards. As well as getting community feedback on the future new Station 1.

## November

- Nov 7th- Voters approve by 74% the extension of a mill levy servicing Upper Pine River Fire's bond for another 20 years effective Spring of 2025.
- Nov. 4th- Former Board President for Upper Pine, Jeff Dyar, receives the honorary C.J. Shanaberger Award for Lifetime Achievement in EMS from the EMS Association of Colorado.

## December

- December 23rd- Upper Pine Medics catch a torn mesenteric artery after a motor vehicle accident at Yellow Jacket Pass, providing life-saving interventions and saving the patient's life.

# New Fire Station 1 Project



The most exciting project for Upper Pine was when we finally put a flag in the ground for the new Fire Station 1 to be located at 297 Bayfield Center Drive. This will be a unique fire station to service the town of Bayfield and the Pine River valley. Today, a fire station is designed to last 70 years from when you build it. This will be a unique facility in that it is not only a fire station. It will include an urgent care in partnership with Durango Urgent Care. The Urgent Care will serve as a base for Upper Pine's Community Paramedic program. The District has obtained workforce development money to train community paramedics. The station will also have a community space that can act as an emergency public health clinic and meeting space and function as a shelter for medically dependent people during an evacuation.



The project is at step 11 out of 100 steps with land purchased and an architect hired and a feasibility study to identify the best possible funding mechanism. The public voted to convert the mill levy that supports the current bond measure due to expire in 2024 to begin applying that money to capital projects that includes the replace fire station. The target is to break ground on this project between the Spring and Fall of 2025.

This station will house an engine, paramedic ambulance, water tender, and wildland fire engine, along with reserve equipment and the regional mass casualty unit. With the population growth anticipated in Bayfield, this station should come online about the same time several homes and businesses start to be occupied. There are several bidders who have an interest in the site of the old fire station.



# 2023 UNIVERSITY OF BORDEAUX. INTERN: LAURINE

For over a decade, Upper Pine has hosted students for an internship from the University of Bordeaux's Occupational and Safety program. The top 5% of students are sent to the United States. The intern is based at Fire Station 5 in a spare dorm and gets to ride along on calls as well as train with Upper Pine crews. Interns have completed projects on community wildfire protection plans, risk assessments on certain hazardous material occupancies and preplans for high-risk areas of the fire District.

They are required to present to the class their experiences when they return to France. While they are here, they get to experience all that SW Colorado has to offer: off-roading, rafting, and hiking. Laurine Paineau was the 2023 Intern working on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan for the Pine River Valley from Ludwig Drive to the North side of US 160 and between CR 502 and CR 501.

université  
de BORDEAUX

## From Laurine:

"I spent 2 months in Upper Pine, living in Station 5. Those two months were a wonderful experience with amazing people. I was here to do my internship and make evacuation plans for Districts 5 and 4. I had the opportunity to run calls, dance, fish, shoot - everything was new to me. Everyone in Upper Pine allowed me to discover the 'American culture.' I would like to say thank you to everyone for that; this experience was better than anything I could have imagined. Throughout these two months, I have met many new people and made friends that I will never forget."

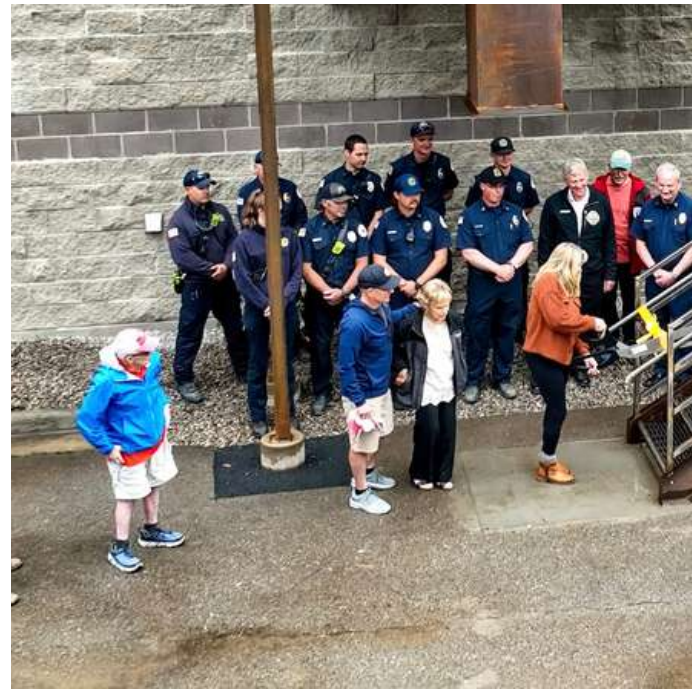




# TRAINING TOWER BUILT AND DEDICATED TO THE LATE LEO LLOYD

In 2023, Upper Pine completed a rope rescue and training tower at Upper Pine River Fire Station 4 at 80 W Vallecito Creek Road. In addition to being designed for a variety of evolutions, the tower serves as an emergency egress for the crew quarters on the second floor. Vallecito Creek, the Transfer Park above Lemon, along with many other areas in the fire District, present significant rope and rescue challenges that demand the crews are proficient in high and low-angle rescue. After several months of construction by Monarch Steel the tower was ready for dedication. Leo Llyod was a legend in the International rescue world, having taught rigging for rescue from Denali National Park in Alaska to Tibet.

Leo passed away from a heart attack in 2022 while hiking with his son. Most of Upper Pine's rescue technicians were trained by Leo in rescue and rigging. Upper Pine firefighters routinely interacted with Leo on LaPlata County Search and Rescue. On May 21st, 2023, Leo's wife Susie, his brother Joe, Leo's mother, and father joined members from Upper Pine Fire and Leo's long-time friend Durango EMS Chief Scott Shoales, along with other guests for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to dedicate the tower. The tower will serve to complete rope and confined space training to meet the NFPA 1006, Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications. The Llyod Tower will serve as a reminder of the need to remain vigilant in training for generations.



Susie Lloyd cutting the ribbon on the Llyod Tower.



# CHRISTMAS MIRACLE INCIDENT PROFILE

In the backdrop of Yellow Jacket Pass on US Highway 160, a routine day of delivering cookies and returning from a family trip on the Polar Express transformed into a remarkable tale of survival. Upper Pine River Fire (UPRFPD) was dispatched for a two-vehicle collision at mile marker 113, arriving to find a more complex scenario with vehicles entangled in a head-on collision with five patients.

Upon arrival Medic 61 was directed to a single driver who was triaged as a red or immediate patient. Katherine, a resilient woman from New Mexico, was trapped in the first vehicle. Katherine's pain was palpable, at 10 out of 10, emanating from her abdomen – a worrying sign to the crew from Medic 61. Our team worked in unison, delicately extricating her onto a backboard and preparing her for rapid transport. In just over two minutes, Katherine was on her way to Mercy Regional with an alert to the trauma team.



**US-160 Yellow Jacket Crash.**



**Katherine discharged to home.**

An in-depth trauma assessment in transit revealed lower abdominal pain and shortness of breath. The initial rigidity in her abdomen soon evolved into a sure sign of internal bleeding. It was here that training, skill, and the powerful drug tranexamic acid (TXA), an antifibrinolytic, played a pivotal role. TXA was used to stabilize Katherine, to give her a fighting chance as her blood pressure waned.

Arriving alive at the hospital was just the first victory. Mercy Regional's trauma team immediately rushed Katherine to the operating room. The real triumph came days later, in the hospital recovery room, where firefighter/paramedic Aaron Cogburn met Katherine again. The gratitude in her eyes spoke volumes. She recounted the harrowing details of her injuries, the surgeries that followed, and a surreal encounter with her late mother during those critical moments in our ambulance.

Today, Katherine's recovery continues at her Santa Fe, NM, home. Her return to church and daily life is a beacon of hope and a testament to the skilled intervention she received. Her story, marked by resilience, skilled emergency response, and a touch of the divine, is a heartening reminder of the miracles we witness in our duty as first responders. As we reflect on this incident, we're reminded of the profound impact our actions have on the lives we touch and the extraordinary outcomes that are possible when skill, speed, and compassion converge in the face of adversity.

# HONORING MEMBERS CONTRIBUTING 5 YEARS OF SERVICE



**Chris Panawa**

I grew up in central Arizona and have always been drawn to Southwest Colorado for what I would call apparent reasons. I moved to Durango in 2008 to attend Fort Lewis College, receiving a bachelor's degree in Adventure Education. I met my now-wife at Fort Lewis and joined La Plata County Search and Rescue the summer before my senior year. Joining Search and Rescue would later impact my career path in a way that I never expected. After years of saw work and supervising crews, I decided to try something new and got hired on with a fabrication/welding shop in Durango; while working there, Search and Rescue was informed of an EMT class Upper Pine River FPD was facilitating; it was the first class of a new program the dept. I was starting, and SAR would cover half of my tuition; I jumped on the opportunity, thinking it would be good training to have and make me more valuable as a responder. While in class, I got to talking with the crews at Upper Pine and decided the fire service was something I wanted to get involved with. It was a dream I almost gave up on after years of backbreaking work. With my background and experience, wildland fire would be an all too familiar feeling, so I applied for the wildland crew. I worked for the wildland division for a season and was hired full-time that fall as a Firefighter/EMT contingent on attaining structure fire qualifications. I completed a fire academy, and over the years, I have attended many classes, acquired many certifications, and continued to go on wildland assignments. I am now an Engineer and am responsible for all things fire trucks. I am one of the dept's driving instructors and a chainsaw instructor, and I still maintain involvement with the county Search and Rescue team. I am mountain biking, climbing mountains, camping with my wife and dogs, or building things in our garage when not at work. Eventually I would like to achieve the rank of captain and plan to continue gaining wildland experience and certifications while serving my community.



**Kaleb Heck**

My name is Kaleb Heck, and I've been with Upper Pine for 5 years, now going on 6. My career path began in my senior year of high school when I attended an EMT-B class through UPRFPD and obtained my wildland firefighting certifications. Upon graduation, I joined the wildland crew as a seasonal firefighter. A few months into my tenure, UPRFPD sponsored my attendance at the West Metro Fire Academy to complete my structural/Hazmat certifications. Upon returning from Denver, I was offered a full-time position with the agency. After three years with the department, I decided to further my medical knowledge by attending paramedic school. I enrolled at Pueblo Community College and graduated with a certificate in Paramedicine. Following my schooling, I spent two months with the Castle Rock Fire Department to fulfill my field internship hour requirements. I then returned home and have since been stationed at Station 1. I continue to appreciate what this career offers and the colleagues I work with. I am excited to see where the next five years take me and the people I will meet along the way.



**Spencer Sorenson**

My career as a first responder started in 2015, when I obtained my EMT- I.V. through Arapahoe Community College and Denver Health. I also got my Armed Security license and worked in Denver as an EMT/ Response Officer. I quickly realized I had a passion for medicine but didn't like the enforcement side of my job. So, in 2017, I moved to Hesperus to pursue a fire career. I spent two years volunteering for Fort Lewis Mesa Fire, and during my time there, I was lucky enough to get sponsored and go through Durango Fire's Fire Academy. While in the fire academy, I applied to Upper Pine, where I was hired full-time to A shift. I've obtained several certifications in EMS, Structure, and Wildland through Upper Pine's training opportunities. I also have since gone back to school and got my Advanced EMT. My position and training at Upper Pine has allowed me to wear many different "hats" at any given time, from line firefighter and EMS provider to AIC or acting Captain. My role also gives me constant opportunities to grow as both a teacher and a student of the EMS and Fire service. I remain full-time on A shift, working on my Fire Officer 1 and considering returning to school to obtain my Paramedic. I currently own a home in Bayfield where my wife and I live with our two dogs. We are looking forward to the coming years and what the future holds as my career and our lives continue to develop.



# AWARDS

Recognizing our own

## Fire Captain of the Year Mike Muir



I have been a proud member of Upper Pine for approximately nine years. I am awarded the unique opportunity to live and work alongside a fantastic group of individuals who share my devotion and sense of community. I come from a family with a history steeped in fire service, and I have had a passion for serving for as long as I can remember. In a twist of fate, I moved to the area when I was 17 years old and found myself working at Purgatory Ski Resort. I worked my way up through the ranks and discovered fulfillment in education. After conveying the position to my successors, I launched a business as a general contractor, where I built everything from birdhouses to barns. When the fire department presented itself as a career option, I leaped at the chance and never looked back. I am a very proud father to my daughter Lily and my son Malcolm. I am very grateful to my wife, Christy, for her patience and encouragement with my career. You will see me driving around with my dog Otis and his head out of the window, enjoying a little "two-wheeled therapy" aboard my dirt bike, or possibly sliding down the slopes in a somewhat guided fall. I enjoy serving my community and look forward to a long career in the fire service.

## Firefighter of the Year Firefighter/EMT Logan Mosher

I started my career working as an EMT in Denver while simultaneously getting my firefighting certifications through Red Rocks Community College via the West Metro Training Center. After receiving my certifications, I volunteered for Fairmont Fire and Rescue where I got a taste of the fire service and continued to build my knowledge and skills. I was eventually hired by the Children's Hospital of Colorado where I earned EMT of the year on the Children's One flight team. I knew that I wanted to work in fire full-time, so I applied to Upper Pine River. Since getting hired in May of 2022, I have served as a pediatric emergency care coordinator, drone pilot, and firefighter. I am most excited to continue advancing my EMS career to become a paramedic in the near future. It's better to be busy than bored and living in such an amazing place leads to great opportunities. I spend most of my days off participating in every outdoor hobby that I can, but my true passion is fishing. I am very thankful to have had my past opportunities and even more excited about what's to come in my future.



## Firefighter of the Year Firefighter/EMT Aaron Clymer

As a Colorado native, I grew up on the other side of the mountains in the little city of Colorado Springs. After pursuing a career in education, I decided to make the move to Fire and EMS. Working at Black Forest Fire and Falcon Fire gave me a great foundation in Fire and EMS that I will be forever grateful for. At the time, this was the best decision I had ever made, only being proceeded later by marrying my wife, Abby. After getting married, we decided to move away from the big city life and moved to Montrose, where I had the pleasure of working in the Montrose Hospital ER as an ER Tech. After receiving the opportunity to work at Upper Pine River Fire Protection District, my wife and I decided to take a leap of faith and moved to Bayfield, where we could not be happier. We are truly blessed to be here between the outdoors, fishing, and wonderful people. We look forward to continuing to build relationships with the community and my fellow brothers and sisters at UPRFPD.

# AWARDS

## Medical Director Award

### Captain Corey Adamy



By in large, most fire and ems professionals do not like recognition for tasks that they perform while "just doing their job". I would even go as far to say they are content to be known as just mere "professional problem solvers". My name is Corey Adamy and am just one of many great problem solvers that work for the community at Upper Pine River Fire Protection District. I began my career in the US Marine Corps working Aviation Ordnance and Combat Life Support. With no demand in the civilian sector for bomb builders, I graduated from CSU Fort Collins with a Bachelors Degree and began working at the Veterans Fire Corps Durango where we trained and certified military veterans to become wildland firefighters. My passion for emergency medical services drew me out of the forest in 2012, and into the structural fire service. I attribute the Medical Directors Award ,and this patient's successful outcome, to the many hours we train both individually and as a team here at Upper Pine. Training and preparing is a large part of what we do in this profession. I look forward to gaining more skills, experiences, and providing a quality experience to all those I encounter. It is a pleasure to work in the community of Bayfield, Forest Lakes, Vallecito, and surrounding area.

## EMT of the Year

### Engineer/EMT- Matt Riggins



I have been a member of Upper Pine Fire Rescue since April 1, 2019. I am originally from California, but please don't tell anyone. Caring for others has always been a passion of mine and I am so fortunate to have the opportunity to serve my community with Upper Pine Fire Rescue. I feel humbled and empowered to be a recipient of this award and so grateful to all my outstanding coworkers who have invested their time and effort in me. I look forward to continuing to provide the best care possible for the Bayfield and Vallecito areas.

## EMT of the Year

### Firefighter/Soon to be Paramedic- Camille Lauer



My passion for EMS began five years ago when I started ski patrolling for Purgatory Ski Resort, this incredible experience fueled my desire to serve the community I call home. UPRFPD has given me the opportunity to serve and develop as a provider and firefighter. I am currently completing my last semester of my paramedicine program which will allow me to deliver a higher level of care and become a stronger medical provider. I am grateful to be able to serve the community and have a hand in making a bad situation end with better outcomes. That is why we are here, to help people in difficult and scary times and hopefully leave them better than we found them. Outside of the department, I enjoy spending my days hiking with my dog Basil, rafting, mountain biking, and participating in all that the southwest has to offer.

## ALS Provider of the Year

### Firefighter/Paramedic Jon Haner



Having attained a Bachelor's Degree studying Greek and Latin from Cornell University in 1990, Jon Haner returned to the United States after several months of European travels and began his career in the ski industry at Squaw Valley, California in 1991. He worked as a Ranger during the summer months at Mesa Verde National Park until permanently moving to Pagosa Springs in 1996 and becoming a member of the Wolf Creek Ski Patrol. There he had many duties and responsibilities, both as a Paramedic as well as a Level III Avalanche Technician. He worked summers as a Paramedic with the Upper San Juan Hospital District and attained both Critical Care and Flight Paramedic certifications. He came to the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District in 2017 and has worked as a Paramedic Firefighter since that time. He has been deployed on multiple disaster assignments including woodland fires, hurricanes, and Covid-relief deployments. He has also been involved with the EMS Education Center, coordinating and teaching multiple EMT and NAEMT courses. He continues to reside in Pagosa Springs and can be found skiing, fishing, or kayaking on any given day while off-shift, depending on the season.



# LOU WEBB

New Board Member



# NEW BOARD MEMBERS

My name is Lew Webb, and I was born in 1958 in Southern California. I was raised there and lived there until I went to a small school in the state of Washington to play football after graduating from high school in 1976. After a couple of years working in Texas to get some work experience outside of California, I came back to Southern California and made my living working in our family automotive business. I worked through virtually every position in the car business until I eventually became the Executive Vice President of the Webb Automotive Group. In late 1998 we sold all 9 of our dealerships to Republic Industries, and I moved my family to the Durango area in the summer of 2000. We live here year-round, as do our 4 daughters and their families. I am honored and privileged to serve on the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District Board.

# GARY KARNER

New Board Member



Gary Karner became the Commissioner of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) in 1996, embarking on a distinguished 24-year tenure that culminated in his retirement in 2020 as the longest-serving commissioner in the conference's history. Under his leadership, WIAC achieved unparalleled success in NCAA Division III, capturing 76 National Championships and 501 individual titles, outperforming nearly all other conferences. Karner's era was also marked by academic excellence among athletes, with hundreds achieving Academic All-American status, 16 winning the NCAA Elite 90 Award, and significant contributions to community service, especially supporting Special Olympics.

Karner's commitment to excellence extended beyond athletic achievements. He played a pivotal role in NCAA committees, fostering collaboration among DIII conferences, and launched initiatives like the WIAC Corporate Partner Program, which generated significant revenue. His establishment of the WIAC Hall of Fame, the Centennial Celebration, the Student-Athlete Leadership Institute, and an innovative internship program highlighted his dedication to developing leaders and celebrating the conference's rich history.

Beyond the WIAC, Karner's influence was recognized nationally. He presided over the National Association of DIII Athletics Administrators, created the NADIIIAA/Jostens Community Service Award, and earned multiple accolades for his service and leadership, including induction into the WIAC Hall of Fame and receiving the Rasmussen Lifetime Achievement Award.

Karner's educational contributions as an adjunct faculty member and his involvement with the Wisconsin Sports Development Corporation and Special Olympics Wisconsin showcased his commitment to sports and education. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin with a bachelor's, master's, and doctorate, Karner's career reflects a lifelong dedication to athletics, education, and community service. After retiring to Durango with his wife, Judy, he briefly returned to athletics as a special assistant at Fort Lewis College, continuing his legacy of leadership and service.

## DEFENSIBLE SPACE ZONES

Defensible space is the area around a home or other structure that has been modified to reduce fire hazard. In this area, natural and man-made fuels are treated, cleared or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire. Creating defensible space also works in the reverse, and reduces the chance of a structure fire spreading to neighboring homes or the surrounding forest. Creating an effective defensible space involves a series of management zones in which different treatment techniques are used.

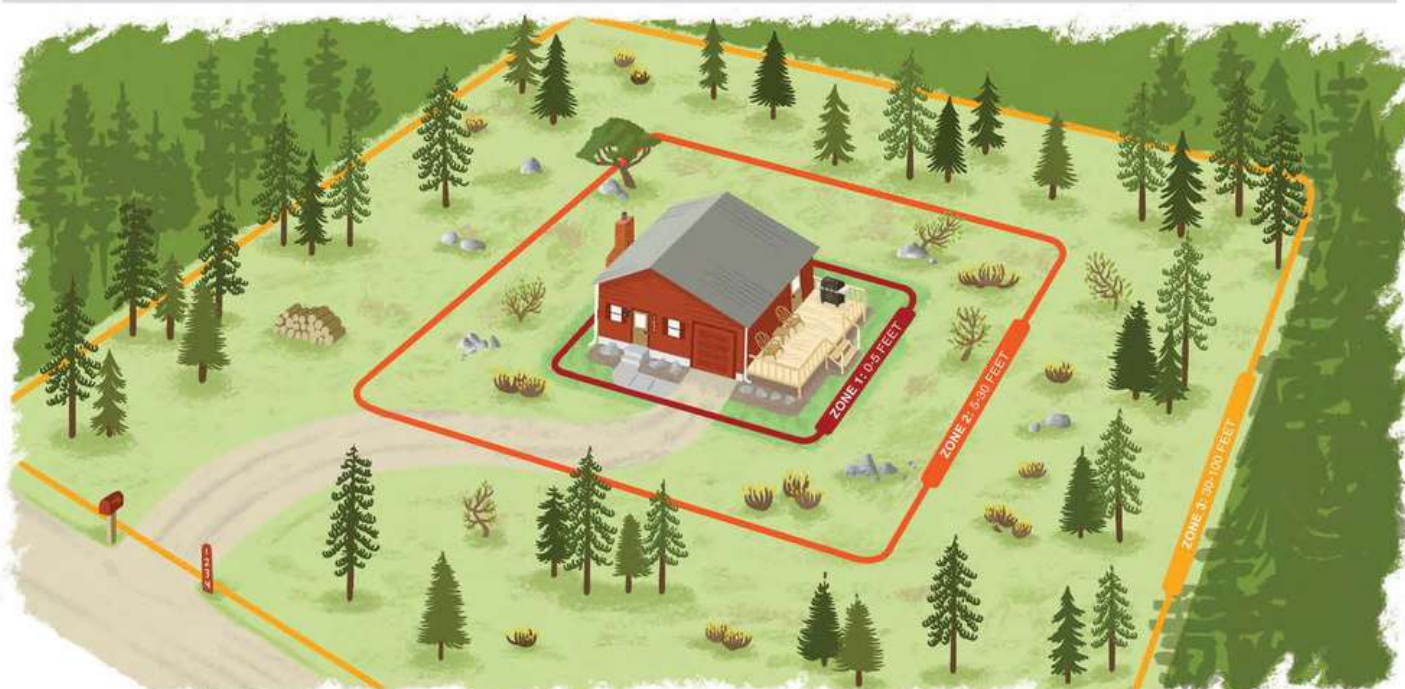


Illustration © Colorado State Forest Service

### ZONE 1

#### 0-5 FEET FROM THE HOME

The area nearest the home. This zone requires the most vigilant work in order to reduce or eliminate ember ignition and direct flame contact with your home.

### ZONE 2

#### 5-30 FEET FROM THE HOME

The area transitioning away from the home where fuels should be reduced. This zone is designed to minimize a fire's intensity and its ability to spread while significantly reducing the likelihood a structure ignites because of radiant heat.

### ZONE 3

#### 30-100 FEET FROM THE HOME

The area farthest from the home. It extends 100 feet from the home on relatively flat ground. Efforts in this zone are focused on ways to keep fire on the ground and to get fire that may be active in tree crowns (crown fire) to move to the ground (surface fire), where it will be less intense.



## CREATING DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Each home and property is located in a dynamic environment that is continually changing. Trees, grasses and shrubs grow, die or are damaged, and drop their leaves and needles each season. Just like your home, the defensible space around it requires regular, ongoing maintenance to be effective. Here are some basic checklists to help you protect your home and property, as well as neighbors in your community.

The following checklists can help you establish and maintain your defensible space (*lists are not all-inclusive*).

### Home Ignition Zone - Initial Projects

- ☐ Properly thin and prune trees and shrubs within the defensible space.
- ☐ Dispose of slash from tree/shrub thinning.
- ☐ Stack firewood uphill from or on the same elevation as any structures, and at least 30 feet away from structures.
- ☐ Screen attic, roof, eaves and foundation vents, and periodically check them to ensure that they are in good condition.
- ☐ Screen or wall-in stilt foundations and decks; screens should be 1/8-inch or smaller metal mesh (1/16-inch mesh is best).
- ☐ Post signs at the end of the driveway with your last name and house number that are noncombustible, reflective and easily visible to emergency responders.
- ☐ Make sure that the driveway is wide enough for fire trucks to enter and exit, and that trees and branches are adequately cleared for access by fire and emergency equipment. Contact your local fire department or check the Colorado State Forest Service website at [csfs.colostate.edu](https://csfs.colostate.edu) for information specific to access.

### Home Ignition Zone - Annual Requirements

- ☐ Clear roof, deck and gutters of pine needles and other debris.
- ☐ Regularly mow grass and weeds to a height of 4 inches or less.
- ☐ Rake pine needles and other flammable debris away from the foundation of your home and deck.
- ☐ Remove trash and debris accumulations from the defensible space.
- ☐ Replace or repair loose or missing roof shingles/tiles to reduce ember intrusions.
- ☐ Remove branches that overhang the roof and chimney.
- ☐ Dispose of slash from tree/shrub thinning.

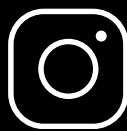




# COURAGE COMPASSION COMMUNITY



[UPPERPINEFPD.ORG](https://www.upperpinefpd.org)



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