



# SIRENS

Fall/Winter 2021

## News & Information for Albemarle County Fire Rescue



### Second In-House Paramedic School a Success

In March of 2021, six firefighters started their journey towards becoming paramedics. They were selected to be part of ACFR's second in-house Paramedic School, taught by Captain Ed Fisher and SFF Tom Sullivan in partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University. By the time the program was complete, the students had spent several hundred hours completing clinical rotations at VCU, field ride time, and the educational equivalent of 20 credits hours.

SFF Sullivan said the group worked well together, all had a strong work ethic, and a solid sense of humor. That attitude helped all six pass their National Registry tests in August 2021. Four are currently working as medics in the field, while the other two are working towards release.

The Training Division congratulates the new paramedics and thanks the instructors for their dedication.



Left to right: James Stuart, Jacob Morris, James Wyant, Reilly McCann, David Carnes, and Jake Yerly

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### New Hires

In July, the Board of Supervisors authorized two new positions for Albemarle County Fire Rescue as part of an administrative reorganization. One of these new positions was Management Analyst for the Member Services Division to assist with hiring and promotional processes, act as a liaison with Human Resources on personnel matters, ensure equity for volunteer and career members during onboarding and the processing of insurance claims, and provide support services to volunteer agencies.

Since October 18th, Christina Davis moved into this role and has successfully undertaken many of these responsibilities. Her combined institutional knowledge and continued education in Human Resources makes her an ideal fit for the position.

#### Calls for Service

January 1 - December 31, 2021

EMS .....	11,668
Fire.....	2905
HM .....	547
Rescue .....	1156
Other .....	36
<b>Grand Total.....</b>	<b>16,332</b>

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## Letter From the Chief

As we reflect upon the close of one year and the start of a new one, I am immensely proud of the ways that you have shown up to help the community each and every day in 2021, and I have already seen that dedication and compassion continue in 2022.

Last year was one of exciting change and significant challenge, as we continued to provide the highest quality services to protect and preserve the lives, property, and environment of our community. I am deeply proud of your ability to provide this high level of

service while we all continue to experience the personal and professional challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In the first week of 2021, the Blue Ridge Health District (BRHD) began administering doses of COVID-19 vaccines. ACFR worked closely with BRHD to schedule and hold clinics, to ensure employees who wanted appointments were able to get one, and to provide volunteers for these clinics. At the time, doses were limited and being reserved for health care workers and public safety personnel. Today, anyone in our community age 5+ can walk into a clinic and receive a vaccine. At the close of 2021, 83.2% of Albemarle County residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

In August, the Board of Supervisors authorized two new positions, a fleet mechanic and a member services analyst, for ACFR. These positions are part of an ACFR administrative reorganization to create additional capacity in the department, address unmet needs, and work more efficiently. ACFR is working closely with Human Resources to advertise for and fill these positions.

In September, Albemarle County was awarded a \$1.88M FEMA Staffing for

Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant to hire, train, and deploy 10 full-time firefighters. This is the second year in a row that ACFR has been awarded a FEMA SAFER grant and has allowed the department to enhance service while deferring the cost.

In October, ACFR began providing 24/7 Advanced Life Support Emergency Medical Services (ALS EMS) coverage at the Ivy and Pantops stations, a cross-staffed engine and ambulance at the East Rivanna station, and minimum staffing of two at Earlysville, Stony Point, and East Rivanna stations. These changes were the third and final phase of an ambitious staffing initiative adopted by the Board of Supervisors in the FY 21 budget. This staffing plan, implemented in three phases over an 18-month period, included 22 new FTEs for ACFR in FY 21.

These milestones are just a sampling of the growth and change our department saw in 2021. You all are the backbone of our success, and I want to thank you for all of your ongoing hard work.

—Chief Dan Eggleston

## ACFR Awarded \$1.88M FEMA SAFER Grant

In September, Albemarle County was awarded a \$1.88M FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant to hire, train, and deploy 10 full-time firefighters. The SAFER grant program was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, “front line” firefighters available in their communities.

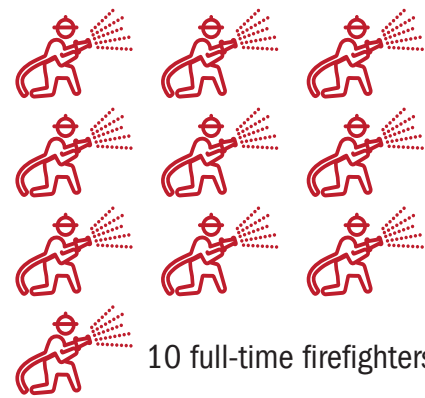
Of the 10 grant-funded positions, five of those new positions will be used to offset the costs already appropriated in the FY22 Budget for daytime firefighters to staff North Garden Volunteer Fire Company. The

other five positions will be used to greatly reduce the need for service reductions and station closures at Earlysville Volunteer Fire Company and Stony Point Volunteer Fire Company.

The 10 grant-funded positions began their six-month recruit school on January 11. As with previous processes, the recruit school will be followed by an in-house paramedic school for existing, experienced personnel. The positions will be fully deployed to the field by January 2023.

This \$1.88M grant along with the previous \$1.9M SAFER grant allow us to address significant gaps in service while deferring the cost.

\$1.88M equals



10 full-time firefighters

## All About the Zzzz's

Are you one of the millions of people who struggle with falling asleep, staying asleep, or getting enough quality sleep? You may find your mind racing with to-do's and your body tossing when all you want to do is fall asleep. You're in good company because most people can relate to difficulties in the sleep arena. The possible causes of sleep trouble can be a long list. Things that affect your mental and physical state can also affect your sleep, as well as sleep disorders, and habits.

So how do we get better sleep? Let's first ask ourselves a question. Are we to blame? Is our sleep hygiene the cause of all our slumber woes? Let's break down just a few of the poor sleep habits we have that might be having an impact on our sleep.

**Blue Light:** Part of the visible light spectrum found in screens, electronics devices, LEDs, and fluorescent lighting. Blue light is one of the most common disruptors of healthy sleep. Your eyes have special receptors called “photoreceptors” that constantly track the amount of light in your environment. These receptors send messages to one of your brain's time keeping centers: the suprachiasmatic nucleus. These messages alert your internal clock of daily sunlight, or lack thereof, to help prepare your body for sleep. Based on these messages, your brain sends instructions to either produce or suppress your body's sleep promoting hormone, melatonin. So, this blue light tricks our brain into thinking it's daylight, and in turn signals for you to be awake which negatively affects your circadian rhythm.

Here are some tools to reduce the blue light and improve your sleep.

- Blue light-blocking screen filters for devices.
- Software and apps that allow you to set a schedule for reducing the amount of blue light your device emits.
- Blue light blocking glasses.
- Put the screen down an hour before bed.
- Sleep without your phone in the room.

**Alcohol:** A central nervous system depressant. A drug that slows down your brain activity. Having a nightcap before bed can be a common ritual for some. Approximately 20% of the U.S. adult population drinks alcohol to help them fall asleep. It's tempting to think that alcohol is the key to falling asleep. Unfortunately, you may be



doing more harm to your sleep health than help. Alcohol affects quite a few processes in your body that prevent you from getting quality sleep. Here are the highlights:

- Decreases melatonin by inhibiting the release. Remember, melatonin is your body's primary sleep signaler.
- Reduces your growth hormone release, which is a component of repairing your body at night.
- Believe it or not, alcohol increases your stress hormones. Cortisol levels rise when drinking. Cortisol stimulates your body, by increasing its resting heart rate. This makes it more likely that you'll wake up during the night.
- Alcohol messes with the internal clocks of your brain, and liver. This fights with your natural sleep cycle.
- Increases urination, which means more trips to the bathroom.
- Alcohol relaxes your muscles, including your throat which makes you more prone to snoring.

**Late Night Snack:** A snack eaten shortly before going to bed or during the night. Your eating habits may be impacting your sleep more than you realize. Those late-night snacks might be

confusing your internal belly clock. When the sun goes down your brain says sleep, but when you give into the munchies your stomach says it's time to wake up. You set yourself up for a restless night when you ask two opposing signals to work together.

- Try to avoid big meals 3+ hours before bed time. Meals elevate our metabolism and resting heart rate.
- Cut the caffeine around midday. We all know the delicious effects of caffeine, so this one needs no explanation.
- No alcohol before bed.

Now that we've covered all the things not to do, let's review ways to improve our sleep.

**Routine:** A sequence of actions regularly followed.

You can start by scheduling your night. Once we set up a regular routine for our body it just knows what to do and takes the thinking out of bedtime. Routines signal our minds and bodies of an intended outcome, and in this case it's sleep.

- Stick to your bedtime, even on the weekends will promote the consistency of habits.
- Figure out your temperature. Did you know that your body temperature cools down to initiate sleep? If you want to give your body a head start, try decreasing the temperature in your room to around 65 degrees.
- Start to reserve some “you” time, which understandably can be easier said than done. Scheduling some time to unwind can be truly helpful to signal to your body it's time to relax and rest. Try to implement practices like meditation, taking a bubble bath, or reading before bed.

If the idea of a night of slumber seems out of reach for you, try out any or all of these tips. Don't get overwhelmed. Try one of these for a week and see how it plays out. Give your body plenty of patience and grace in this new venture. Remember progress is never a straight line. Figure out what works best for you, and remember sleep is different for everyone. Good luck! Sleep tight, and don't let the bed bugs bite.

# LIVE BURN



## Compliance Corner



### Documentation Reminders

- Documentation must always be detailed and correct.
- Documentation should explain the patient's status.
- Documentation should contain the reason why the patient is incapable of signing the PCR.
- Always sign your PCR with your legal name.
- If possible, get a patient's name for your report regardless if the patient is being transported.

## Fire Incidents

Date	Street	Incident Type.....Resolution/Cause
11/7/21	Old Brook Rd.	Fire other than a structure ..... Arson - open investigation
12/9/21	Eastwood Ln.	Structure Fire..... Electrical failure of heat tape
12/16/21	Towne Ln,	Structure Fire..... Dryer malfunction
12/21/21	Timberland Ln.	Vehicle Fire ..... Arson - open investigation
12/27/21	Airport Acres Rd.	Structure Fire..... Discard permissible fireworks
1/3/22	Rosemont Dr.	Structure Fire..... Generator
1/3/22	Willow Spring Rd.	Structure Fire..... Generator
1/4/22	Thomas Jefferson Pkwy	Structure Fire..... Failure of a propane appliance
1/7/22	Quandary Rd.	Structure Fire..... Chimney fire
1/10/22	Green Meadows Ln.	Structure Fire..... Combustibles too close to heater
1/13/22	Leeds Ln.	Structure Fire..... Accidental cooking fire
1/21/22	Jarmans Gap Rd.	Structure Fire..... Electrical failure of screw in fuses
1/27/22	Bentivar Dr.	Structure Fire..... Solar panel fire

## RELEASES

- FF Joshua King ..... EVOC II, FF
- FF David Marshall.....BLS, EVOC II, FF
- FF Michael Karr .....FF
- FF Maxwell Morgan.....BLS, EVOC II, FF
- FF Josh Euhus.....FF
- FF Colin Mayry.....BLS, FF
- FF Jordan Divine .....FF
- FF Caleb Shetler.....FF
- FF Marvin Tapia ..... EVOC II, FF, BLS
- FF Jacob Morris ..... ALS
- FF Andre Miles-Redmond .....FF
- FF Jake Yerly ..... ALS
- FF Brett Turner.....FF
- MFF Chris Pitt.....MFF
- FF Stuart Dalton .....FF
- FF William Filippelli .....BLS, EVOC II, FF
- SFF Reilly McCann.....ALS, DAO
- FF Ryan Mullen..... DPO
- FF Eric Opoku .....FF
- FF Kenny Malloch ..... DPO
- FF Chris Hein ..... DPO
- Lan-Anh Dang.....BLS, EVOC II
- EMT Nathan Lee .....EVOC II

## PROMOTIONS

- MFF Chris Pitt..... MFF
- SFF Reilly McCann..... SFF
- MFF Doug Brede..... Captain
- MFF Cody Gillespie..... Captain
- MFF Zach Matthews..... Captain
- MFF Matt McCain ..... Captain
- MFF Gilbert Monroe..... Captain
- MFF John Rebert ..... Captain



**Kasia Buyaki**  
Stony Point Volunteer

Kasia Buyaki has been a Junior Member with Stony Point Volunteer Fire Company since August 2020. She is a full-time college student at PVCC and works part-time as a Certified

Nursing Assistant at a local nursing home. Kasia is involved in Scouts BSA, and is a Life Scout working towards becoming an Eagle Scout. Here is some more information on Kasia and her words of wisdom for others.

**Q.** What is your role with your agency? Give a little snapshot of duties, responsibilities, typical day.

**A.** Since I've joined, I have completed EMT-Basic and am working on completing Fire 1. I think my biggest responsibility right now is to be a sponge and absorb knowledge. Eventually, I will be AIC and Command, and I will have to make decisions that impact my patients and my crew.

**Q.** What are three career lessons you've learned thus far?

**A.** You cannot know everything.

Always ask questions (especially the stupid ones).

Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something.

**Q.** When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

**A.** I always had aspirations to be a professional soccer player.

**Q.** What is a career goal or ambition you are working towards?

**A.** I am pursuing a degree in Nursing. I am open to any specialty, but my top three right now would be ER, ICU, or Pediatrics.

**Q.** What advice would you tell someone who is interested in your field of work?

**A.** Start at a volunteer station. Volunteering lets you explore and try out Fire Rescue. You'll be able to learn the ins and outs of the basic operations, attend classes, and gain experience.

**Q.** Tell us about something you love—and a few details about why you love it.

**A.** One of my favorite things to do is backpack and hike. I enjoy the challenge of a long solo hike in the middle of nowhere. It's you versus the wilderness. I have seen breathtaking views and tons of wildlife (wild ponies have been the best so far)!

**Q.** What is your life motto/work mantra?

**A.** When in doubt, pray it out.

## The Power of Peer Support

Peer Supporters offer emotional support, share knowledge, teach skills, provide practical assistance, and connect individuals with resources, opportunities, communities of support, and other people. A "peer" is an equal, someone with whom one shares demographic or social similarities. "Support" expresses the kind of deeply felt empathy, encouragement, and assistance that people with shared experiences can offer one another within a reciprocal relationship.

Mental illness in the fire service is not a new thing, but through education and awareness it is starting to receive the attention it deserves. Peer Supporters play a huge role in supporting the behavioral health needs of their brothers and sisters. Part of a Supporter's job is to also recognize when to recommend a connection with a licensed clinician.

The qualities of a Peer Supporter include but are not limited to:

- **Respect** Maintains the respect and trust of their peers. Remember, if they don't trust you, they won't talk to you.
- **Confidentiality** Loose lips sink ships. The quickest way to lose trust is to breach confidentiality.
- **Empathy** First responders aren't stupid. They can spot a fake a mile away. It's important to truly care about the people that talk to you and be empathetic to their worries.
- **Good listener** A fair amount of the time folks just want to be heard. So, it's important you close your mouth and open your ears. No advise needed.
- **Skilled communicator** When it is time to speak, it's important that you worry less about saying the perfect thing all the time, and focus more on communicating that you care about them as a person and you are there for support.

In December of 2021, members of Albemarle County Fire Rescue and Charlottesville Fire Department attended a two-day class taught by Virginia First Responder Support Services. These members will be the newest members of each department's Peer Supporter Groups. They will be available to all first responders in the area. The class taught best practices in providing support for first responders in need. Since we spend so much time together while at work, often, co-workers and Peer Supporters are the first to recognize a brother or sister in need. We are frequently the first line, and therefore must be proactive about identifying the warning signs early and reach out to someone before things become problematic.

It's important to remember that you don't need a certification to be a good listener. An important part of knowing when someone is in need is less complicated than you think. It is about getting to know your own brothers and sisters. Find out who they are, what they like to do. Get to know their families, wives, husbands, children, etc. Be nosy about what their "important" is. When they are normally easy going and come in a bit on edge the first day of shift, take the time to listen. Remember, that small things add up to the big things. If we can figure out how to best mediate and help with the small things maybe they won't turn into the big things. Next time you sit down, do a little less talking and a little more listening.



## Celebrating Years of Service

### 5 years

ACFR Dept..... Ann Marie Schare  
ACFR Dept..... Brandon D Brooks  
ACFR Dept..... Jacob Anthony Morris  
ACFR Dept..... Justin A Lacey  
ACFR Dept..... Martha Truxel  
ACFR Dept..... Patricia Mininberg  
ACFR Dept..... Reilly P Mccann  
ACFR Dept..... Robert W Greene  
ACFR Dept..... Scott C Mackay  
ACFR Dept..... Sean P Ryan  
ACFR Dept..... Virginia Neumark  
Crozet..... Matthew Hensley  
East Rivanna..... Jacob R Pace  
East Rivanna..... Meaghan E Willis  
North Garden..... Richard Victor  
Scottsville Fire..... Kendal Lee Swingler  
Seminole Trail..... Charles V Moens  
Seminole Trail..... Edward R Moan  
Seminole Trail..... Jesse C Cosgrove  
Seminole Trail..... John E Dour  
Seminole Trail..... Julianna Suzin Kang

### 10 years

ACFR Dept..... James C Bryant  
ACFR Dept..... James R Molloy  
Crozet..... Chris Rivera  
Crozet..... Christopher P Rowland

Crozet..... Lawrence Devault  
Earlsville ..... Justin R Richardson  
Scottsville Fire..... Russell Lee L Zimmerman  
Scottsville Fire..... William Mcclurken  
Seminole Trail..... Adam Kendall Ladd  
Seminole Trail..... Clayton Matthias Geipel  
Seminole Trail..... Mikolaj Vivaldi  
Seminole Trail..... Sarah Kelley  
Seminole Trail..... Wesley W Young  
WARS ..... David Booth  
WARS ..... Emily Wagoner  
WARS ..... Janice Steppe

### 15 years

ACFR Dept..... James W. M. Rowse, III  
ACFR Dept..... John T McCracken  
ACFR Dept..... Patrick W Ledford  
ACFR Dept..... Thomas W Mulcahy  
ACFR Dept..... Velton A Smith  
Crozet..... Lewis N Barnette  
Crozet..... Thomas C Loach  
Scottsville Fire..... Ronnie R Dudley

### 20 years

ACFR Dept..... Rebecca L Morris  
Earlsville ..... Bradley T Richardson  
Earlsville ..... Lois S Deane  
East Rivanna..... Calvin S Butler

East Rivanna..... Cynthia T Tetterton  
Scottsville Fire..... Brian Cropp  
Seminole Trail..... Daniel G McFadyen  
Seminole Trail..... Michael P Rose 20  
Stony Point..... Bryan R Hoerman  
Stony Point..... John Mellott  
WARS ..... Ross Anderson

### 25 years

ACFR Dept..... Christina M Davis  
Seminole Trail..... Todd M Cosgrove  
WARS ..... Robert Coleman Jr

### 30 years

Scottsville Fire..... James S Williams

### 35 years

Scottsville Fire..... Timothy M Karr

### 40 years

North Garden..... George A Stephens

### 45 years

Crozet..... William P Gentry  
East Rivanna..... Lanny L Moore  
Seminole Trail..... Douglas Smythers

## WE ARE HERE WITH YOU!

Remember, if you or someone you know is struggling you are not alone.

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
- **IAFF Center of Excellence** 1-301-358-0192
- **Emergency** 911
- **Albemarle County Fire Rescue Peer Support**  
[ACFRGroupPeerSupport@albemarle.org](mailto:ACFRGroupPeerSupport@albemarle.org)

# Retirements, Transitions & Celebrations

## Captain Fisher's Retirement



October 1st, 2021, was Captain Edward “Fish” Fisher’s last day, signaling retirement from his 23plus years with ACFR. He functioned in many roles over the years, the latest as the EMS Captain in the Training Division.

Anyone who knows Fish knows he is as outspoken as a person can be. His farewell email contained many memories and advice. He closed with the following call to action in his own unique fashion, showing his dedication and passion right up to the end.

“So, my fellow firefighters. Is ACFR perfect? Yes..... I mean no. But, what are you willing to do to make it better? Are you aggravated and tell others how it should be, or are you going to rise to the challenge? Are you going to get off your butts, workout like your life depends on it (cause it does)? Or do you want to keep your soft hands, drink soy milk, and thump your marshmallow chest?”

In Chief Eggleston’s own farewell email, he said “Fish is a strong and consistent leader, someone who is not shy about taking on difficult issues or standing up for what is right for the department and its members....many of us have benefited from Fish’s wisdom and generosity.”

Though he has retired, he will always be part of the ACFR family.

## Training Division Transitions



On January 31st, 2022, Battalion Chief Steve Elliott retired from ACFR after 18 years with the department. While the decision had been a tough one for Chief Elliott, he knew it was time to close this chapter of his life. As he said in his words of farewell at his retirement gathering on his last day, he’s checking out of the hotel California. As we all know though, you can check out, but you can never leave. Once you’re part of ACFR, that never changes. We wish Chief Elliott a well deserved happy retirement and thank him for his dedication to our department and the people of Albemarle County.

At the beginning of January, Chief Matt Ascoli transitioned into the Training Division to spend some time getting to know the ropes before Chief Elliott left. He has now assumed his role as Chief of the Training Division after approximately 30 years in Operations. He is looking forward to learning a new aspect of ACFR and is up for the challenge.

## Happy Birthday Ann



Left to right is Ann Neumark, Joshua King, Patricia Mininberg, Ben Jordan, Doug Brede, and Ryan Holbrook. Capt. Braunger is taking the photo.

SIRENS is the official newsletter of Albemarle County Fire Rescue and is published quarterly.

The newsletter is available online at [acfirerescue.org](http://acfirerescue.org) with hardcopies distributed to each station.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Articles, feature stories, cartoons, photographs, upcoming training, station news, and station events and functions are welcome at any time and can be submitted to [ACFRSirens@albemarle.org](mailto:ACFRSirens@albemarle.org).

