



SIRENS

Fall 2024

News & Information for Albemarle County Fire Rescue



PHOTO BY LARRY BOUTERIE

Recruit Schools 23 & 24 Graduation

June 27, 2024, marked the graduation of two successful recruit schools for ACFR. Recruit School 23 was an advanced class with 4 students that was completed in April. Recruit School 24 finalized in June with 23 students.

Battalion Chief Ascoli began the night by introducing the Recruit School Graduates and after the Honor Guard posted colors, he led us with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced Chief Eggleston with a glimpse of his bio.

As always, Chief Eggleston offered up some laughs that led to sincere well wishes and spoken pride in watching both recruit schools grow from wide-eyed pups to confident firefighters.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Brady. Proving that even COVID can't keep him

from keeping a promise, Dr. Brady delivered a message, via Zoom, that was heartfelt and encouraging, not only for our new recruits, but everyone in the auditorium.

Captain Spearin let his pride show in speaking about what the recruits went through to get to graduation night. Deputy Chief Childress led us through the pinning and swearing part of the ceremony, followed by delivering the Oath of Office. Sean Ryan, Caleb Shetler, Alec McKee, and Seth Grubb presented awards for both recruit schools, followed by Recruit Remarks delivered by Ryan Haakenson (RS23) and Jacob Jordan (RS24).

After the video presentation, Deputy Chief Childress provided memorable closing remarks for each of the recruits to carry into their futures as firefighters for ACFR.

Calls for Service

January 1 - July 30, 2024

EMS	7,647
Fire.....	2,096
HM	369
Rescue	782
Other.....	96
Grand Total.....	10,990

In This Issue

- Letter From the Chief..... 2
- New Hires
- How Much is Too Much..... 3
- Employee Photos..... 4
- 911 Stair Climb..... 5
- Spotlight..... 6-7
- Response Times
- Photovoltaic Tech..... 8



Letter From the Chief

We are excited to announce a significant development within our department – the implementation of a new internal pharmacy program. This program is critical for maintaining service to the community and ensuring compliance with current proposed regulations.

Traditionally, our department has relied on local hospitals, such as UVA and Martha Jefferson, to supply pre-filled medica-

tion kits. However, due to upcoming DEA regulations and the FDA's Drug Supply Chain and Security Act, this model will no longer be viable starting in November of this year. After exploring various alternatives, we have decided that establishing our own DEA/VA Board of Pharmacy (BOP) compliant pharmacy is the most reliable solution. This will ensure we maintain control over our medication supply and comply fully with regulatory standards.

The transition to a compliant pharmacy is a significant financial and logistical undertaking. Due to the FDA's enforcement schedule, a project we had hoped to plan and implement over the course of 18-24 months, required a condensed timeline of just 9 months. Our goal is to have the pharmacy operational by October, so that we have a one-month overlap between the existing system of drug box exchange and the new pharmacy. Our intent is to have this time to work out any kinks and ensure a smooth transition. ACFR's budget has been adjusted to accommodate expenses associated with the expedited timeline,

including the creation of a compliant pharmacy space, procurement of medications, and technology systems to track medication dispensing. This project represents significant work undertaken not only by Fire Rescue, but also a number of departments across the County, including Procurement, OMB, the County Executive's Office, Performance and Strategic Planning, and Information Technology.

ACFR Firefighter Sean Watson will be managing the pharmacy when it is operational. Firefighter Watson is a paramedic with the technical expertise for the role. Additionally, he supported the County IMT during the COVID-19 pandemic while in the office on light duty and has proven to have the organizational skills needed for the role.

Thank you for your continued dedication to maintaining the high standards of care that ACFR is known for. Should you have any questions or need further details, please do not hesitate to reach out.

—Chief Dan Eggleston

New Hires

Lucian Mirra

EMS Educator Coordinator
Hired – May 6, 2024

Greta Fleming-McCauley

Public Safety Assistant
Hired – July 1, 2024

Christy Lloyd

Public Safety Assistant
Hired – July 28, 2024

Matthew Stumpf

Emergency Vehicle Technician
Hired – July 28, 2024



How Much is Too Much?

BY KEVIN FREIER

It's no secret that firefighters like to drink. Heck, some might even say that we love to drink. A few beers after work, group shots at a social event with your crew outing, a mixed drink on our night off, - we tend to put booze away about as well as we fight fire. But when does drinking no longer become fun? When does drinking turn into a legitimate problem? And how can we know that we need help?

The 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 63% of Americans drink alcohol. Comparatively, a 2020 FEMA study found that 85% of firefighters drink alcohol. But having a drink or two from time to time is usually not a problem. I am a firm believer that we all need something to help us decompress and for many, alcohol is just that. But it's when that casual after shift drink turns into an aggressive two too many that we start to have issues. When drinking starts to rear its ugly head and we begin to see the dark side of alcohol. So, it begs the question, just how much is too much?

The CDC defines binge drinking as “the consumption of 5 or more drinks for men and 4 or more drinks for women in a single sitting.” A recent survey conducted by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System found that out of the 63% of Americans that drink, 17% of them binge drink. Comparatively, a 2012 study conducted by the National Institute of Health found that out of the 85% of firefighters that drink, 58% of them binge drink. Meaning that firefighters are not only

22% more likely to drink in general, but they are also 41% more likely to binge drink in comparison to the average American.

The question still stands though, just how much is too much? Before we start throwing out numbers though, I think we must first examine why we drink so much as a profession. Because only when we know “why” we drink can we determine “how much” we should drink.

For starters I think drinking and firefighting tend to attract a very similar group of people. People who typically have a pension for stimulating and high-energy activities. Secondly, drinking is a very convenient coping mechanism. As you all know, our job is a very physically and mentally demanding profession that tends to take a tremendous toll on us. A toll that can often leave us tired, anxious, depressed, angry, etc. And considering a 6 pack of Miller Lite is a heck of a lot cheaper (and admittedly more fun) than therapy, we tend to gravitate towards the former when issues arise. And last but certainly not least, it's the culture. A part of the culture that is so deeply engrained that firefighting and drinking have largely become synonymous over the years.

Okay, so we drink because it's fun, it's cheap, and it's what firefighters do, got it. But once again, how much is too much? Well not to leave you hanging, but I don't actually know. I think that's the million-dollar question that only you can answer for yourself. Because let's be honest, 5 beers to a 6'4 250-pound



truckie hits a lot different than it does for a 5'6 150-pound rookie. So instead of focusing on an actual number, I suggest focusing more on the manner in which you drink.

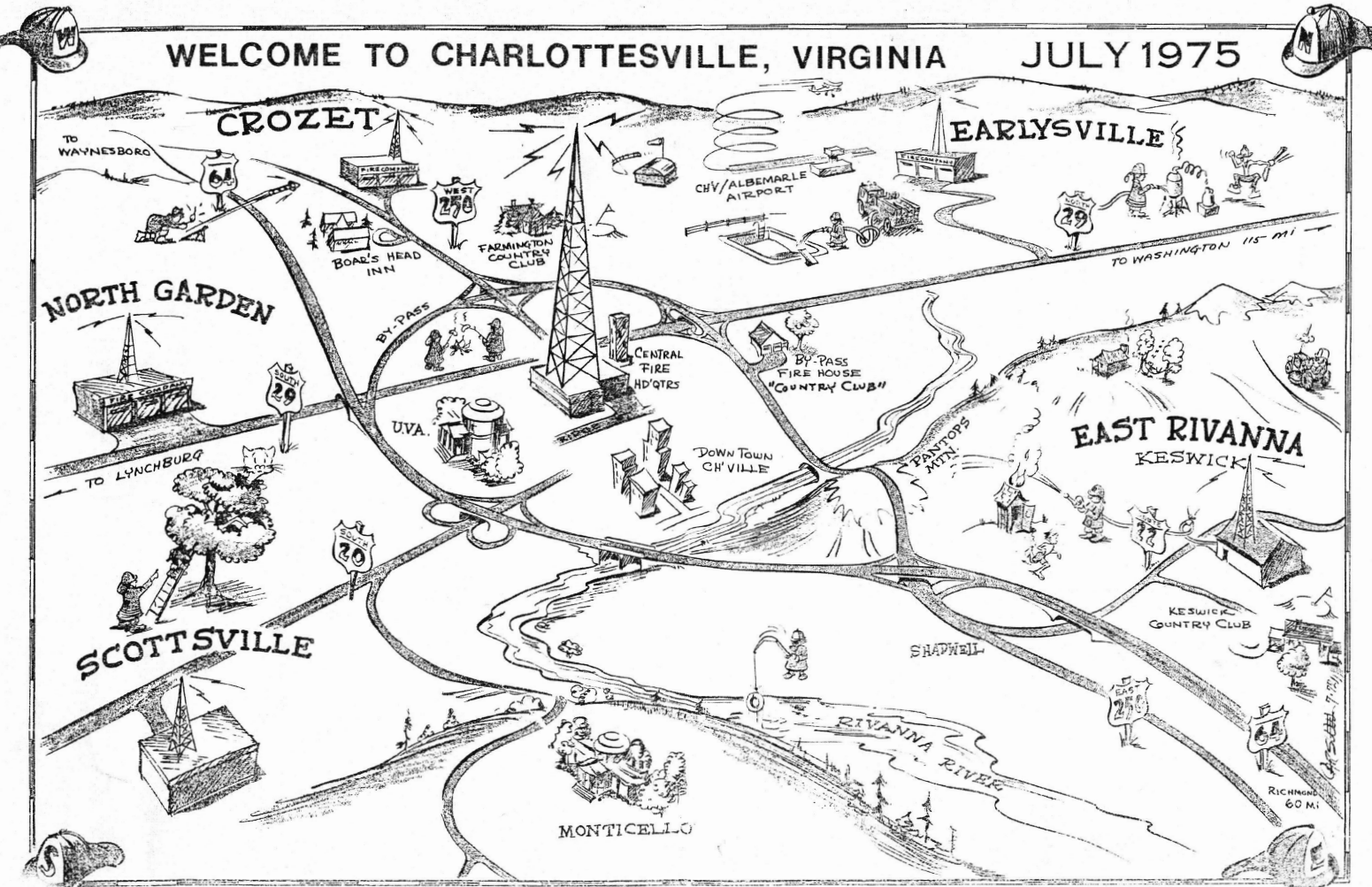
Are you drinking alone? Are you drinking to get drunk? Are you chugging hard liquor? Are you blacking out? Are you throwing up? Are you an angry drunk? A stupid drunk? A sad drunk? Because the answers to these questions tell us so much more than a simple number does. And only when we know why we drink will we be able to know if we have a problem and how we can fix it.

So, if you drink, I challenge you the next time you belly up at the bar or reach for a cold one to ponder these questions. Ask yourself how you drink, why you drink, and how your drinking affects you.

Alcoholism is a disease that is as real as diabetes, CHF, COPD, you name it. And like any other medical condition, there is nothing to be ashamed of. So, if you or anyone you know is concerned about your drinking, please reach out for help. Reach out to your crew, your Captain, your Battalion Chief, Peer Support, Chris P or myself. Because like anything else in the fire service, you are not alone.



Rowing for Responders 2024 was an amazing success. This year we had over 30 Concept2 Rowers donated to us by various local and surrounding agencies. We had an amazing raffle because of some extraordinary community partners. Rowing for Responders 2024 raised \$7,853.83 to be received by Virginia First Responder Support Services. VFRSS is a nonprofit that helps first responders with mental health and wellness services in the state.



Fire Prevention Week | October 6-12



- Sunday, October 6th**
1100-1500..... Kickoff (5th Street Station)
- Monday, October 7th**
1130-1300..... Chipotle - Pantops
1830-2000..... Open House (Station 4 / Station 12)
- Tuesday, October 8th**
1130-1300..... Crozet IGA
1830-2000..... Open House (Station 3 / Station 11)
- Wednesday, October 9th**
1130-1300..... Scottsville area
1830-2000..... Open House (Station 15)
- Thursday, October 10th**
0700-0900..... Coffee and Donuts (Station 6)
1130-1300..... Crossroad Store (Station 3)
1500-1630..... Earlysville Farmer's Market (Station 4)
1830-2000..... Open House (Station 16 / Station 17)
- Friday, October 11th**
0700-0900..... Coffee and Donuts (Station 2)
1130-1300..... Walmart
1830-2000..... Open House (Station 8 / CARS)
- Saturday, October 12th**
1100-1500 Grand Finale (Hollymead Town Center)

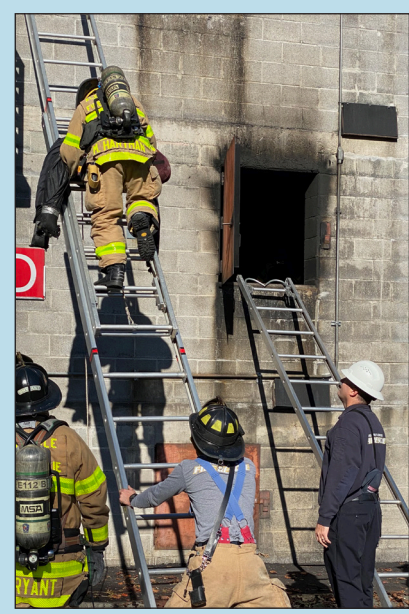
Kickoff of Employee Photo Showcase

We're excited to announce the launch of our new employee photo showcase! This is a great opportunity for everyone to showcase their creativity and share unique moments from our ACFR family. Whether it's a candid shot from the station, a stunning action shot from the field, or a creative take on our daily routines, we want to see it all. The best photos will be featured in upcoming editions of our newsletter, giving everyone a chance to appreciate the diverse talents and perspectives within our team.

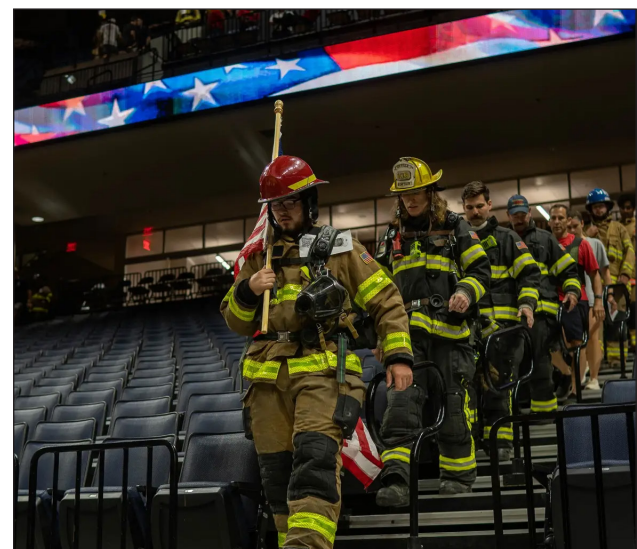
As we celebrate our work and community through photography, please remember to respect the comfort and privacy of your fellow crew members. Be mindful when taking photos at the stations or during work, ensuring that everyone featured is comfortable and consented to being photographed. When capturing moments from the field, it's important to ensure that photos do not include identifiable patient information or images, in adherence to HIPAA regulations. Only take photos in the field when it is safe and appropriate to do so and avoid capturing sensitive or potentially distressing situations.

To submit photos, you can email directly to ACFRSirens@albemarle.org or upload to the folder "Sirens Photo Showcase Submissions" in the ACFR Department Sharepoint site. Submitted photos should be at least 300 DPI with a minimum resolution of 1920x1080 pixels. Accepted formats include JPEG and PNG, with a maximum file size of 10 MB per photo. If possible, retain the original, uncompressed version of the image. Please note that submitted photos may be used for social media and other promotional materials, in addition to the newsletter.

Let's make this a fun and respectful way to highlight the incredible work we do every day!



911 Stair Climb Event



Members of the Fire and Rescue team, along with their counterparts from Charlottesville Fire Department, hosted a stair climb event on September the 14th at John Paul Jones Arena at the University of Virginia. The event was a memorial to first responders who responded to the World Trade Center buildings. Participants climbed an equivalent of 110 stories or 2200 steps. Over 60 firefighters, their families, their friends, and community members took part in this event.



Volunteer

Lee Ann Solo
FF/EMT
Earlsville Volunteer Fire Company

Q. How did you get into becoming an FF/EMT?
A. I needed a career change after getting divorced! I got my EMT and was working at UVA WorkMed when I met someone who volunteered at Earlsville and the rest is history.

Q. What's your favorite part of the job?
A. Definitely the camaraderie of working on a crew. I also love being able to help people when they're having what is likely one of the worst days of their lives.



If I could've made a living being an EMT, I would have stuck with it and got my medic, but it wasn't a viable path for me at the time. I got my RN/MSN in Clinical Nurse Leadership at UVA over the last two years and will start in the medical intensive care unit in September. I really want to take the RN to Medic bridge class that PVCC offers once I'm settled in at my job so I can continue to give back to the community.

Q. How did you get into sword fighting?
A. When I lived in Albuquerque, I practiced wushu kung fu; and a friend suggested I also try the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) - where you dress up in full metal armor and fight with sticks! There's usually a weekly fighter practice; right now, they're doing rapier sword fighting. Every August, I go to an event called Pennsic War - which has been running for 51 years now - with over a thousand people on the battlefield.

Q. Does it hurt?
A. It definitely hurts, especially if you get hit where you don't have armor. Bigger dudes wear less armor, but we have a core minimum of protection you have to wear. I've had some heinous bruises!

We calibrate how hard we hit and what shots are "good" - I'm trying to "kill" my friends, not hurt them! So, we consider forceful helmet strikes a kill strike, a jab with a thrusting tip (squishy piece on sword tip) to the front of the helmet is considered piercing and lethal, same with torso strikes. Thigh shots are non-lethal, but you have to fight from the ground (knees or sitting). There are so many different weapons that you can fight with too. Great swords, pike pole, glaive, 6' spear, 9' spear, double swords (called florentine), a mace, and something I'd never heard of called a madu. There's also an order of chivalry - squires wear red belts, while knights wear a white belt and an unadorned chain necklace.

If a strike seems too light or flat, we call 'light' and that's a cue for your homie to hit you harder. There've been problems with people not taking shots but it's usually not an issue...because if someone who's a knight and has been doing it 20+ years hears about it they, um, "self police" and that person definitely won't call light on their shots - play fair or win some bruises!

Career

Eric Sadlon
FF/Paramedic Station 11B

Q. How did you get into becoming a FF/Paramedic?
A. I have wanted to be a fireman since I was a little kid and always had a desire to help those in need and serve my community. Initially, I served my country in the US Army, where I enjoyed the advanced trauma life support aspects of my job as a combat medic in the light infantry. After the Army, I landed my dream job, beating 4,000 applicants for a coveted spot with the Seattle Fire Department, where I spent 16 years - ten as a line firefighter and six as an officer. I moved to ACFR after making the choice to move to VA to be closer to my wife's family.



Q. What's your favorite part of the job?
A. As a young firefighter, I loved going to fires, going on calls and helping people in need; but as I grew into my role as an officer, I came to enjoy building a crew that was a tight family unit, that not only ran calls together but also helped each other through life's struggles. I really enjoy being able to help mold the type of firefighters I want to work alongside.

Spotlight Continued on page 7

Spotlight Continued from page 6

Q. How long have you been beekeeping?
A. About six years ago, I visited a colleague's bee yard and was hooked immediately. There is just something so peaceful about working in the hives. I came to love the smell of propolis and nectar in the apiary as well as the sound the hives make; and who doesn't love fresh honey?

Q. Do you ever think of making it a side career?
A. They say that if you want to make a million bucks as a beekeeper, you need to spend two million! I started with two hives and, over time, have scaled up to around 100 or more colonies. I envision selling bee products such as honey and candles as well as mead. My goal is to have a scalable business model for entrepreneurs wishing to get into beekeeping and mead-making. The idea is to market an alcoholic beverage that regenerates the land and requires pollinator-friendly crops - unlike other types of alcohol, which require monocrops, such as corn, which are detrimental to the local ecosystem. I want to help folks grow a profitable business with stationary bee hives or multiple apiaries.

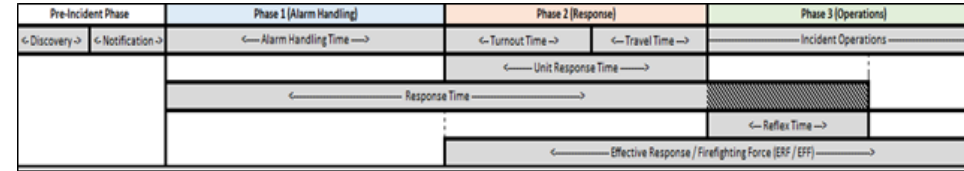
Releases

- Madhav Samudrala BLS
- Ria Raval BLS
- Micah Skadron BLS
- Yoko Chan BLS
- Grace Burke BLS
- Nicholas Nguyen BLS
- Reeves Yanez BLS
- Leanne Maharaj BLS
- Tuyet Chuong BLS
- Kushal Dondeti BLS
- Colin Howard BLS
- Simon Alexander BLS
- Hemanya Bhatt BLS
- Connor Grubbs BLS
- Lucian Mirra ALS
- Nate Chiarappa Firefighter/ALS
- Zach Emery DAO
- Chris Pitt DAO
- Zach Matthews Captain II
- Dan Spearin Captain II

Measuring Fire Department and EMS Response Time

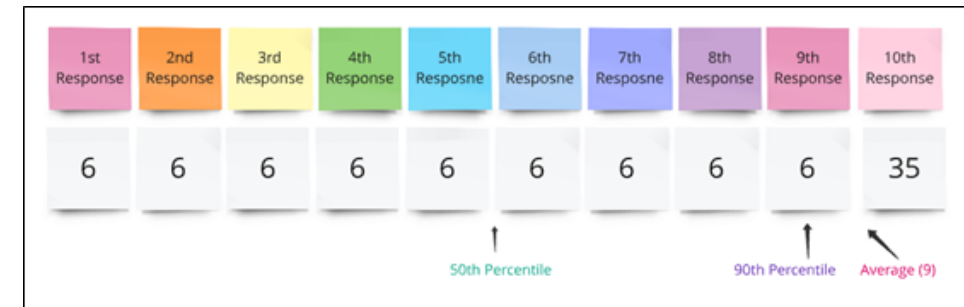
BY BRANDON AKARD – Senior Fire Rescue Analyst

Response time is a critical metric in evaluating the performance of fire departments and EMS. While many factors affect the outcome of an emergency, response time has a strong correlation with overall outcomes. "Response time" refers to the first arriving apparatus. The graphic below breaks down response time and other important measurements. Response time includes alarm handling, turnout time, and travel time.



Understanding the 90th Percentile

You may have heard that we measure response time using the "90th percentile response time." This means that if we have 10 response times, we report the 9th highest time. But why do we use this method? One reason is the need for consistency. The public deserves a reliable expectation for response time and our Standards of Cover (SOC) establishes response time goals that are formally adopted by our County's Board of Supervisors. Measuring performance with an average (sum divided by count) or median (the 50th percentile) isn't precise enough for our needs. For example, it's easier to communicate the 90th percentile when expressing the following: "We will arrive faster than 8 minutes, 90% of the time (or 9 in 10)." Compared to the median: "Half of the time we respond more slowly than 7 minutes, and half the time we are quicker."



Why Not Use Averages?

The average isn't a "robust" measurement because it is vulnerable to outliers. For instance, if you respond in six minutes nine times but take 35 minutes on the tenth response, your average response time is 9 minutes. Outliers skew the average significantly. In contrast, the 90th percentile response time remains unaffected by outliers. In this example, both the 90th percentile and the median remain six minutes, while the average is nearly 50% higher than the median due to one poor response.

Large Data Sets

In practice, we evaluate 500-1500 responses per apparatus per year. If you have 500 responses and meet the goal 450 times, the 90th percentile reflects that performance, and will be within goal. However, if more than 50 out of 500 responses exceed the goal, the 90th percentile response time will reflect this. Therefore, this method provides the consistency and reliability we need.

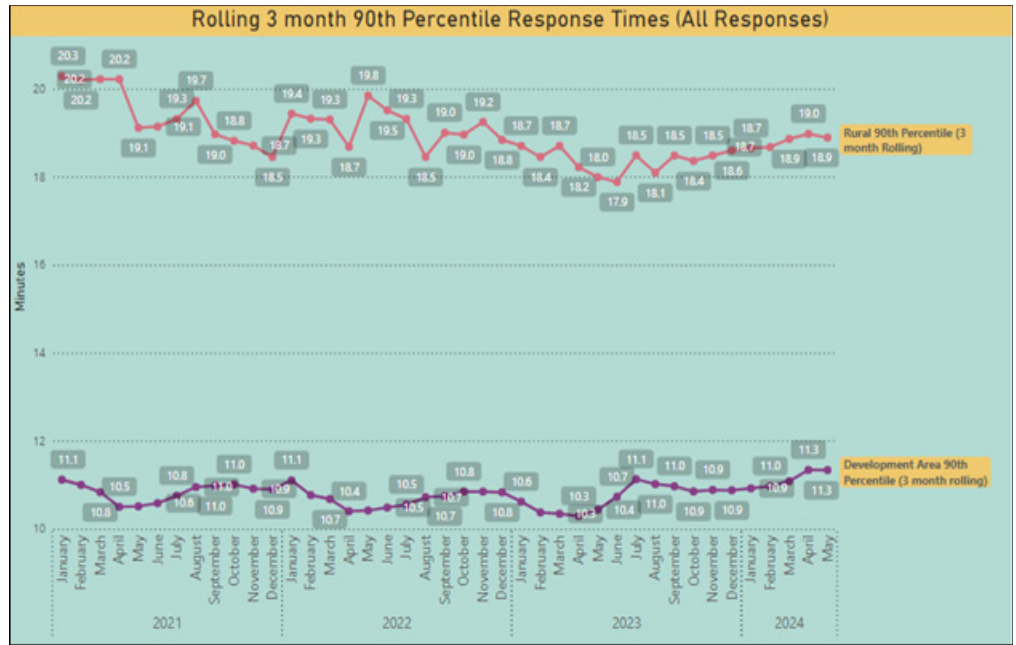
Response Time Continued on page 8

Response Time *Continued from page 7*

The graph below shows our “rolling” 90th percentile response time, over a 3-month period. In other words, the lines represent the response times during the previous 90 days following each data point and provide the 90th percentile response time for each measured period. This can demonstrate trends in performance over time.

Summary

The 90th percentile response time is a system-level metric that informs department and County leadership about our resource distribution and density, compared with NFPA benchmarks. It is not meant to be used to assess the performance of individual crews. This insight guides decisions regarding resource placement and will inform our upcoming SOC revisions.



Photovoltaic Technology: A New Challenge

With the emphasis on climate change awareness, society is focusing on new ways to generate electricity, with solar conversion to electrical energy taking the lead. In addition to rooftop panels, ground mounted systems attached to the electrical grid are sprouting up. These systems bring a wide array of challenges for firefighting and emergency response. It is imperative you educate yourself and crews to remain safe. View the attached links for a preview of these challenges:



youtube.com/watch?v=LC4Hm1VFf9Q

training.fsri.org/course/90/firefighter-safety-and-photovoltaic-systems

SIRENS is the official newsletter of Albemarle County Fire Rescue and is published three times yearly.

The newsletter is available online at 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.

