

2020 Annual Report

TULARE COUNTY FIRE



“Fireman never know what they will encounter on each call but proceed with the same level of commitment and service.”

~Byron Pulsifer, Motivational Speaker



Table of Contents

Message from the Chief.....	3
Acknowledgements	4
Mission/Vision/Values	5
History	6
Organizational Chart.....	7
Battalion 1.....	8
Battalion 2.....	9
Battalion 3.....	10
Operations Update	11
Professional Standards Update	12
Training Update	13
Incident Breakdown.....	14
Local Incidents	15
California Fire Service Mutual Assistance	16
Promotions/Retirements/New Hires	17-18
Academies	19
Station 1 Grand Opening	20-21
Fuels Crew.....	22
Community Events	23
Recognition.....	24
Thank You's.....	25

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

It is my sincere honor and privilege to serve the residents of Tulare County as your Fire Chief. I work with over 200 of the best trained and dedicated fire service professionals in the industry. Together, we provide high quality fire suppression, prevention, and emergency medical services to 442,000 residents in a 4839 square mile response area. Over the last 13 years the Tulare County Fire Department has grown into a full service, all risk Fire Department that continues to provide outstanding customer service in a rapidly changing environment.

Over the last year our Department has faced numerous challenges that have taxed our local resources as well as the entire California Mutual Aid system. The vast majority of our resources and time have been allocated to mitigate some very large incidents including the global pandemic, SQF Complex Fire, and numerous out of County responses during the summer lightning siege.

In Spring 2020, the Department (and entire nation) began to see the adverse impacts of Global COVID pandemic. The Department has worked diligently to provide training, equipment, and quality policy development to ensure the safety of our citizens and firefighters. We look forward to the continued reduction of COVID spread through mask use, social distancing, and the active participation of vaccine distribution.

On August 16, 2020 the SQF Complex Fire began and escalated into the largest fire in Tulare County's recorded history. This fire destroyed over 230 structures and charred over 175,000 acres during the 3 month fire siege. This incident (coupled with the 100 other lightning caused fire) spread our State, Federal and Local resources extremely thin. Resources were deployed from as far as New York and Mexico to assist in our incident. In addition, a tremendous response from our local agency cooperators offered assistance during this long duration incident.

Despite all of the challenges of 2020; the department continued to make outstanding forward progress on many fronts. July marked the opening of Fire Station #1 located at Road 140 and Avenue 256. This project has been in the works for many years and has greatly assisted in the reduction of response times since its summer opening. The Station was designed for many generations of functional service and has the space for additional community space that will aid in our service delivery to our County residents.

In addition, staff continues diligently working on the Dispatch upgrade/re-location and Station 21 (Terra Bella) garage remodel. The Dispatch Center is estimated to be operational in Fall of 2021 and will provide "state of the art" communication and technology upgrades to assist with the rapid delivery of pre-hospital and fire suppression responses. The Terra Bella Fire Station improvements are slated for completion in 2022 and will greatly assist in the housing of future apparatus to serve our South County.

In 2020, the Tulare County Fire Department has made many strides in order to meet the needs of our diverse communities. The primary reason for our continued success is centered around our commitment to community and teamwork. The teamwork provided by our firefighters, elected officials, county staff, and members of our great County is exemplary. I am so very proud of the men and women of the Tulare County Fire Department that have worked so tirelessly to serve our communities over this long year. Please feel free to contact myself or any of our Tulare County Firefighters if we can assist you in any way.

Sincerely,
Charlie Norman
Fire Chief



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrative Officer for their ongoing support.



From Left: Larry Micari, District 1; Dennis Townsend, District 5; Amy Shuklian, District 3—Chairman; Pete Vander Poel III, District 2; Eddie Valero, District 4—Vice Chair.



County Administrative Officer
Jason Britt

The Fire Department
would like to thank
Supervisor Kuyler
Crocker for his support
throughout his tenure.

We would also like to
welcome Supervisor
Larry Micari to the
Board.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Tulare County Fire Department is committed to providing leadership, coordination and customer based service through fire prevention, suppression, and emergency medical services.

CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY
RESPECT
LOYALTY
TEAMWORK
COMPASSION

VISION

We are committed to excellence through professionalism and trustworthiness achieved through our daily operations. We will continue to expand our public service delivery model through innovative and fiscally-responsible practices. We will strive to offer our workforce the best opportunities available for training and education to further enhance the public service we provide.

HISTORY

The Tulare County Fire Department (TCFD) was established on July 1, 2007. Prior to 2007, the County of Tulare contracted with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, know today as CAL FIRE, to provide fire protection for the County. Through the agreement, CAL FIRE provided personnel to staff the Counties fire apparatus and fire stations as well as administrative staff to manage the Department.

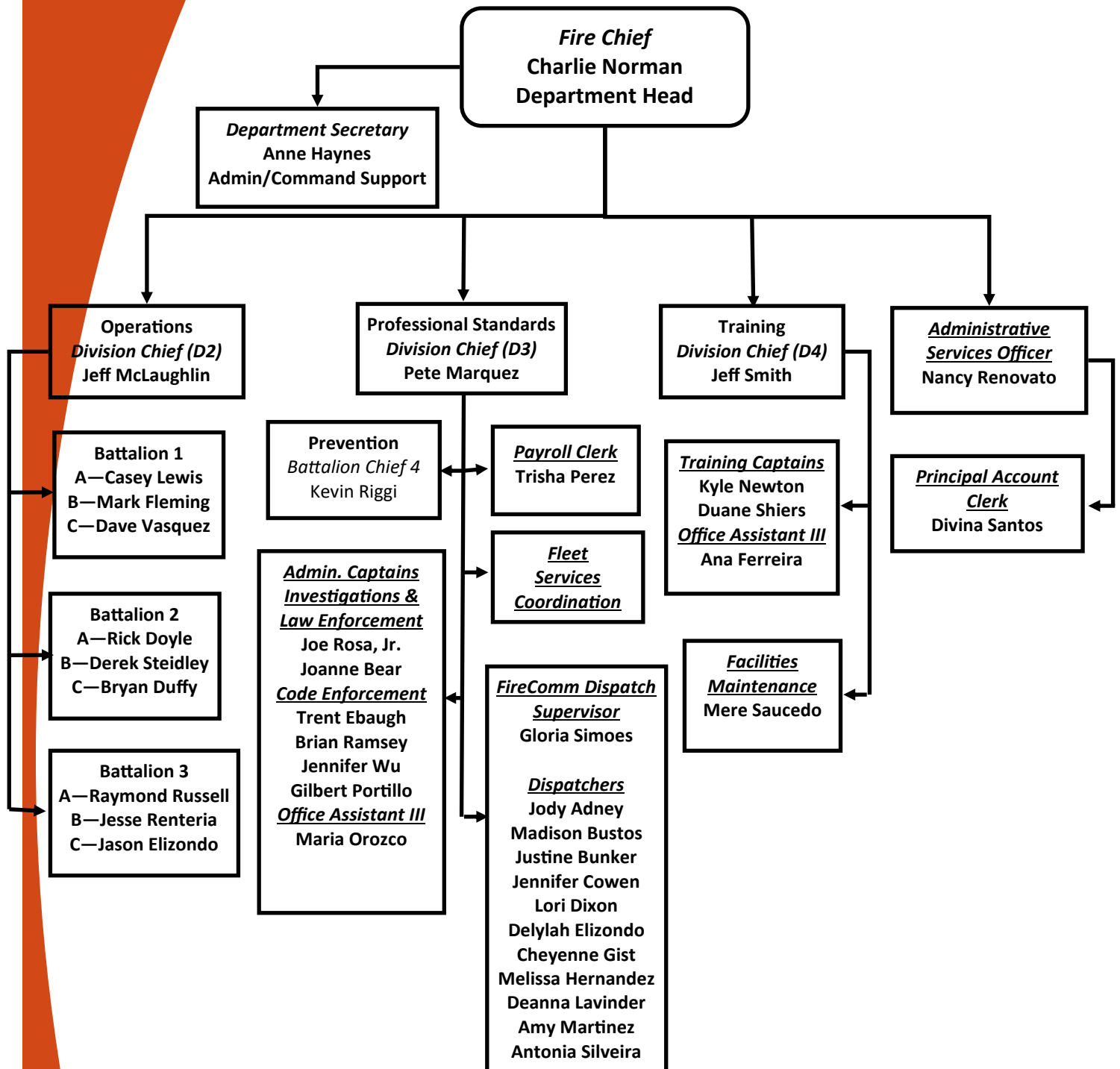
The current Fire Chief was appointed by the Board of Supervisors in January 2016 and is the Department's third Chief. The Department's original Command Staff included three Division Chiefs as well as the Fire Chief. The Department embraced field operations and reduced the Division Chief positions to two during the economic recession. A third Division Chief was added to the Department's Command Staff in November 2018. The Department currently has an Operations, Training and Professional Standards division.

The Department's fire stations were originally staffed with one person. Paid Call Fire Fighters, who later became classified as Extra Help Fire Fighters, supplement staffing. Today, the Department staffs four of its stations with two personnel on each shift and continues to rely on Extra Help Fire Fighters to supplement staffing.

The Department moved its headquarters from its original location in Farmersville, CA, to 835 S. Akers St. in Visalia, CA in September 2017. The Tulare County Emergency Operations Center is located in the Fire Department Headquarters which is next to the Tulare County Sheriff's Department. The co-location of the County's emergency services allows for collaboration between the three Departments to improve services for the residents of the County.



Organizational Chart

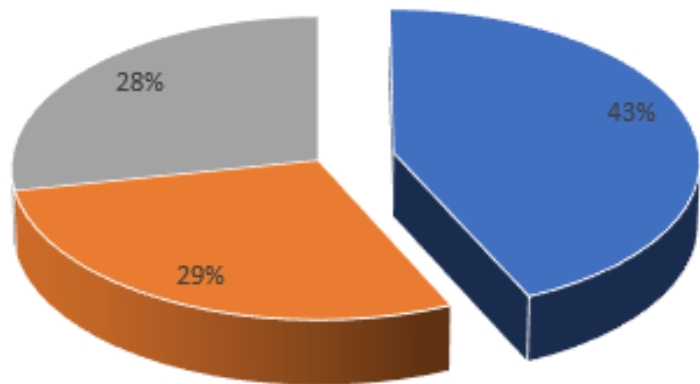


Battalion 1



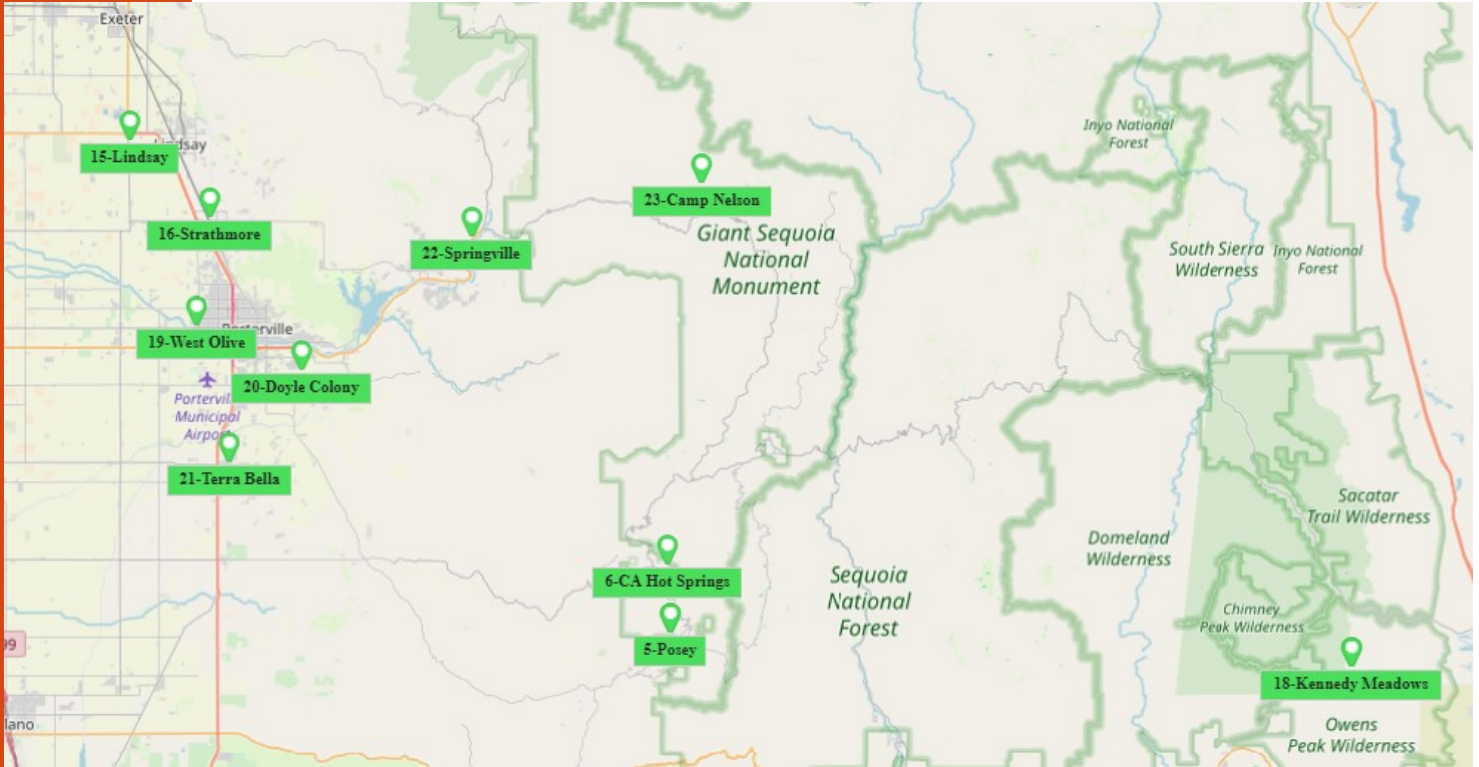
Battalion 1 has a total of 9 stations.

2 of those are resident stations.



Battalion 1 accounted for 43% of our calls for service.

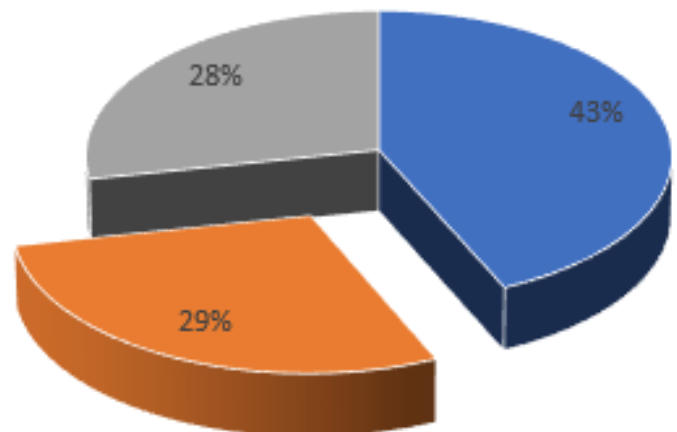
Battalion 2



■ Battalion 1 ■ Battalion 2 ■ Battalion 3

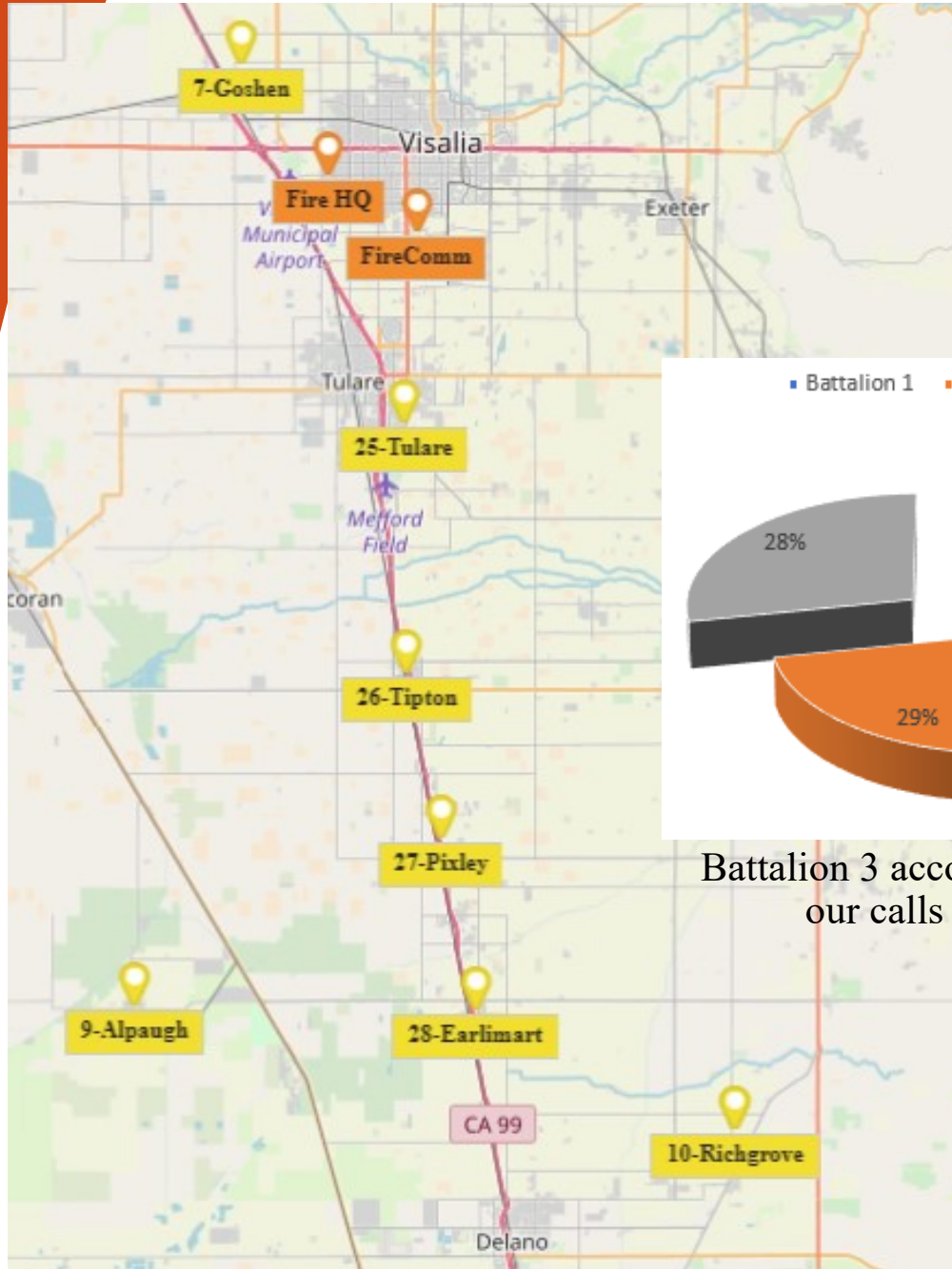
Battalion 2 has a total of 10 stations.

3 of those are resident stations
and 1 is a community
volunteer station.



Battalion 2 accounted for 29% of our calls for service.

Battalion 3



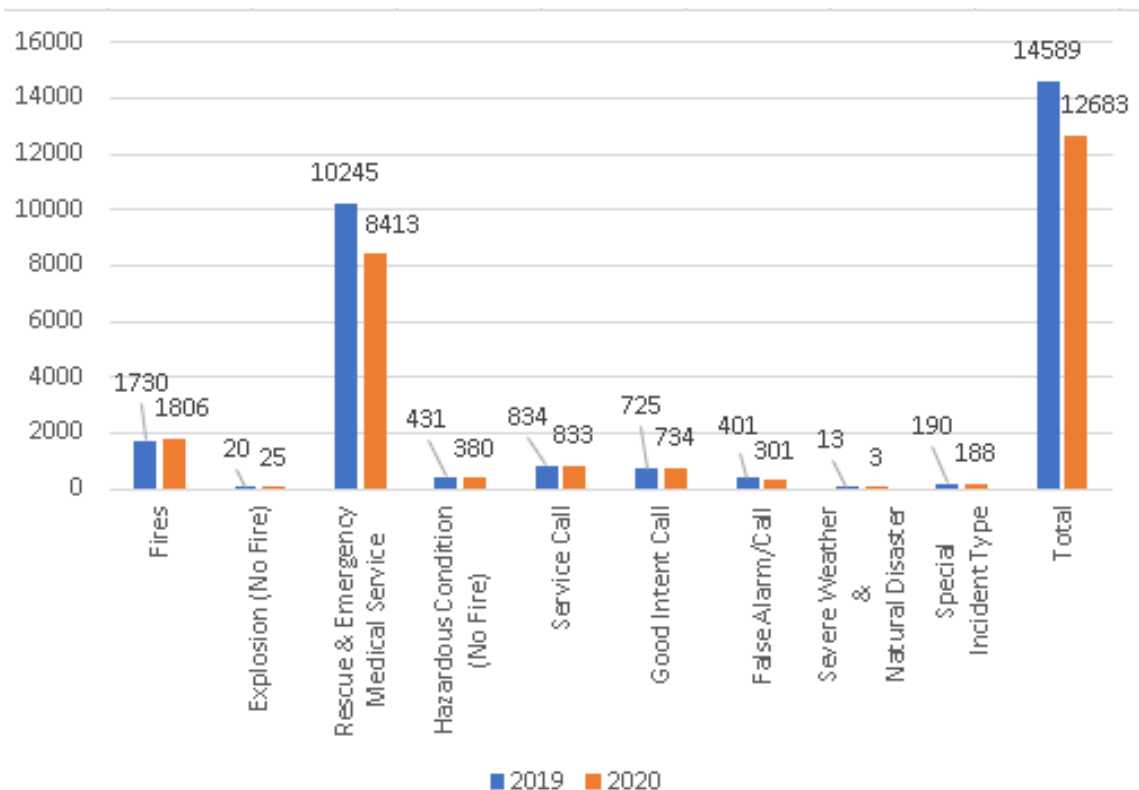
Battalion 3 accounted for 28% of our calls for service.

Battalion 3 has a total of 7 stations.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

Grants

- ♦ **OTS Grant**—\$150,000 granted for 3 sets of eDRAULICS,
 - ♦ high press low lift air bags, and rescue 42's
 - ♦ **VFA Grant**—\$40,000 for fire shelters
- ♦ **CARES Act funding**—The department was able to purchase 10
 - ♦ PPE Extractors, EMS Jackets, and thousands of dollars of
 - ♦ PPE through this funding.
- ♦ **FEMA COVID Grant**—\$82,000 for COVID PPE and supplies.



In 2020, we faced an extremely unique year complete with unforeseen challenges. With COVID-19, we limited the calls we responded to to include only priority 3 medical calls, as opposed to responding to all calls. We wanted to ensure the safety of our personnel and that of the communities we serve, by reducing contact between them. We have also adjusted our PPE accordingly to keep personnel as safe as possible.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UPDATE

Public Outreach:

Total Events: 32
Attendees (public outreach): 18,229

Events included station tours, local events, and HQ events. Due to COVID-19 we had less events than we usually do during a typical year.

Illegal Fireworks Enforcement— Approximately 500 lbs. recovered



FireComm Calls for Service 01/01/2020-12/31/2020

Type	Number
Fire Alarms	55
False Alarms	455
Public Service Assists	451
Fires	2259
Medical Aids	9983
Vehicle Accidents	1631
COVID Related	529
Public Hazard	420
Hazardous Materials	17
Burn Complaints	288
Other	661
Other Agency Assist	2960
Flooding	38
Swift Water Rescue	24
Technical Rescue	18
Total	19789

FireComm also provides dispatch service for the Tule River Reservation, Woodlake Fire Service and Farmersville City Fire Department.

Backgrounds

Position Applied	Total Completed	% of Total Completed Investigations	Disqualified	Withdrawn	Hired
EH Emergency Dispatcher I	1	1.8	0	0	1
EH Fire Fighter	33	57.9	18	0	15
EH Seasonal Fire Fighter/Fuels Crew	16	28.1	6	1	9
Fire Apparatus Engineer	4	7	0	0	4
Fire Inspector	3	5.3	1	0	2
Totals	57	100.1	25	1	31

TRAINING UPDATE

2020 Training Hours

	# of Personnel	Hours
Company Officers	68	12,912
FAE's	18	4,062
EH Firefighter	47	2,595
EH Engineer	9	51
Totals	142	17,285

Trainings included: HazMat, Facility, Driver, etc.

Academy 19:

- Interviewed 28 FAE
- Hired 10 candidates

2020 EH Firefighter Interviews

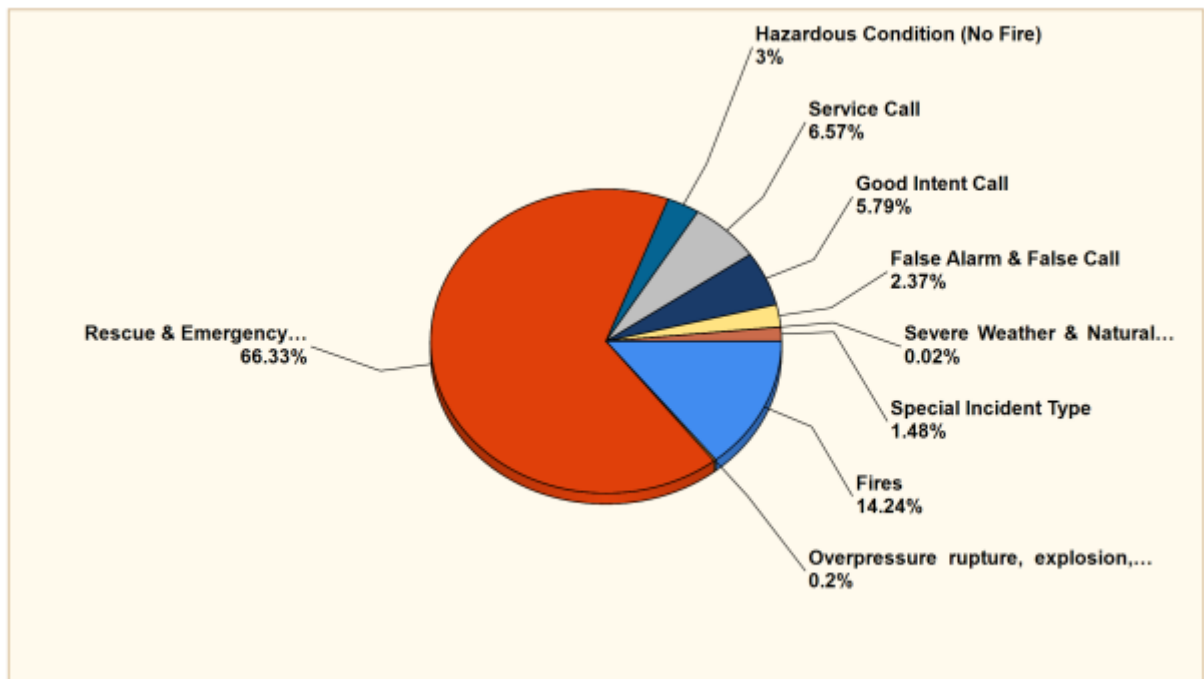
Interview Process	Total Applications*	212
	Interviewed	40
Hiring Process	Candidates Selected	40
	Failed Background	24
	Total Hired	16

40% of the candidates chosen were hired.

7.55% of the candidates that applied were hired.

*84 applicants were rejected as they lived out of Tulare County

Incident Breakdown



Annual calls for service were reduced in 2020, due to COVID-19.

In 2020, priority 3 calls were eliminated, and remain eliminated, from our response efforts, until such time that the infection rates are lower . We remain focused on life threatening calls and fires.

Local Incidents

- **Castle Fire/SQF Complex**—174,178 acres burned; 15 injuries, 240 structures damaged or destroyed
- **Train Derailment**—this was one of the largest hazmat incidents in recent years
- **Charlie's Nightclub**—Porterville; Two alarm fire, approximately 4,000 square feet



SQF Complex Thank You



SQF Complex

Train Derailment



Charlie's Night Club



California Fire Service

Mutual Assistance

Incident	Counties	Acres Burned	Fatalities	Injuries	Structures Destroyed/Damaged	Notes
Apple Fire	Riverside	1,087	0	4	12	
BTU North Complex Fires	Plumas, Butte	318,935	16	100+	2,455	
Creek Fire	Fresno, Madera	379,895	0	15	927	
Crews Fire	Santa Clara	5,513	0	1	2	
August Complex	Glenn, Mendocino, Lake, Tehama, Trinity, Shasta	1,032,648	1	2	940	
CZU Lightning Complex	San Mateo, Santa Cruz	86,509	1	1	1,630	
LNU Lightning Complex	Colusa, Lake, Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Yolo	363,220	6	5	1,723	
SCU Lightning Complex	Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Merced, Stanislaus	396,624	0	6	284	
Fish Creek Fire	Tulare	30	0	0	0	
Glass Fire	Napa, Sonoma	67,484	0	0	282	
Gold Fire	Lassen	22,634	0	2	18	
Hog Fire	Lassen	9,564	0	0	2	
Lake Fire	Los Angeles	31,089	0	2	60	
Loyalton Fire	Lassen, Plumas, Sierra	47,029	0	0	11	*First ever Fire Tornado Warning
Meadow Fire	Sequoia National Park	4,971	0	0		
Mineral Fire	Fresno	29,667	0	0	7	
Power Fire	Mariposa, Merced	2	0	0	0	
River Fire	Monterey	48,088	0	4	43	
Stagecoach Fire	Kern	7,760	1	0	54	
Zogg Fire	Shasta, Tehama	56,338	4	0	231	

Promotions

Promotions

Captain

Tim Franks
Mat Whitendale



Lieutenant



John Alvarado
Jose Andrade
Jared Arciniega
Zane Duvall



Blake Garrison
Matt Jackson
Justin Komin
Christopher Lucero



Antonio Mendoza
Michael Rawson
William Stout

New Hires and Retirements

New Hires

Fire Inspector—Jennifer Wu



Fire Inspector—Trent Ebaugh



Retirements

Fire Captain—Hank Seguin



Lieutenant—John Akers



F&E Academy 19



Cole Mahoney, Senteno Aguerria, John Hesson, Darren Noe, Josh Hernandez, Manuel Infante, Daniel Sanchez, Juan Calderon, Ramiro Tapia, Dylan Foster

EH Academy 20



From Left: Guillermo Munguia, Francisco Aguila, Kyle Pinedo, Julio Palacios-Aguilar, Antonio Avila, Javier Gamez, Benjamin Allen, Carmen Castillo, Celso Sanchez, David Tackett, Bransen Berry, Ruey Rowland, Calistro Alvarado, Raul Camacho.

Station 1 Grand Opening



On July 15, 2020, the Tulare County Fire Department celebrated the grand opening of Fire Station One – Tulare County’s first new fire station in over 20 years. Located at 25456 Road 140 in Tulare (District 2), the project has been 13 years in the making and was much needed due to urban growth in the area. The 7,070 square foot building features three apparatus bays, two double dorm rooms, a training/community room, and office areas. The completed project cost \$4.3 million and was built by Forcum-Mackey Construction. Fire Station One will reduce response times for residents in this portion of Tulare County and utilizes the latest technology to ensure the health and safety of the firefighters.



Station 1 Grand Opening



Station 1 Crew from Left: Captain Chris Ellorin, Lieutenant Michael Hansen, Lieutenant Zane Duvall, FAE Cole Mahoney, FAE Jason Blankinship

Mobile Command Unit



Tree Mortality

- The crew returned with 19 members in 2020
- Completed projects include South Fork in Three Rivers, Silver City, Posey, and Parker Pass.
- Approximately 7,000 trees removed in 2020

Posey—Before and After



Crew Boss:
Rafael Torres

Crew:

Joseph Amaral
Nedda Bakhtminoo
Angel Chambers
Oscar Cibrian
Jonathan Collazo
Ramon Espinoza
Cole Frazier
Joseph Gamez
Ryan Hum
Esteban Infante
Luis Melendez
Luis Nunez
Kyle Pinedo
Jose Porras
Daniel Ramos-Ruiz
Anthony Rivera
Andre Rosacia
Marisol Santillan
Alan Williamson

Community Events



Library Story Time



Leadership Group



Station 4 Yard Work



World Ag Expo



Dr. Seuss Day



Recognition



Cole Frazier—
Three Rivers Heroes Celebration



Tim Franks—
Visalia Knights of Columbus

Due to COVID-19, recognition events were cancelled for the majority of events. These employees would have been recognized at the events listed.



Jacques Rayburn—
Porterville Exchange Club



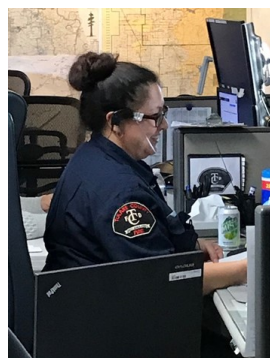
Chris Ezaki and
Joanne Bear—
Bill Rodat Award



Larry Mayfield—
Exeter Knights of
Columbus



Jared
Arciniega—
TCFD Firefighter
of the Year



Melissa Hernandez—
TCFD Dispatcher of the Year

Thank You's

My name is Hunter and I am an 8th grade student at Ridgeview Middle School. I am writing to you because I want to say thank you for all you do to help me and the world. I appreciate you for sacrificing your life to save people in the valley so we can be safe inside our homes while you are risking your life. Without you the world would be in flames and the human race would go extinct so thank you for all that you have done for me and others. The world is a better place because of all your efforts and hard work to keep us all safe. I cannot express enough how much I appreciate that you are risking your life to save others. I hope you are safe and keep helping people. Again thank you so much

"Sometimes the best way to solve your problems is to help someone else".

Hunter M

Dear all firefighters, my name is Roman and I am in the 8th grader at Ridgeview Middle School. I am writing this grateful letter because I want to thank you for the hard work you do. Putting out the fires can't be easy and having people depend on you to keep us safe from harm. I appreciate you guys risking your life to make sure that we are safe, thank you for the bravery, and I appreciate that you guys never give up no matter what. Without you, the flames would have hit us all but you guys are there to make sure that doesn't happen and I am very thankful for that and many people are thankful too.

The world is a better place thanks to all your efforts and hard work. I cannot express enough how much we need all you firefighters that you deal with these fires even though that some of these fires are done by stupid human error. I hope you guys stay safe out there and look out for each other and go home safely. Again, thank you so much firefighters for all you do. God bless.

Roman V

A grateful student

Tiny Tots and Oak Grove Elementary— Porterville

Tiny Tots w/
City of Porterville

Natalie Ellen Junior Sommer Perez
Amanda Janyne Karmine Julian Peng
Marissa Nunez Jacob Rodriguez
Cassandra Moore Erin Palad Shelley Andrade
Aleena Suarez Troy Alex
Anthony Ezrin Jaden Jnyl
Tubrey Jayda Neveah Mr. Escribano
Mr. Escribano's 6th grade class
Our thoughts and prayers
are with you!!
From all of the staff and
Students @ Oak
Grove
Elementary
and
The Tiny Tots of City of
Porterville

Ms. Laverne
Mrs. Rayburn
Emily AV
Emma Silos Mia
Charles Alex
Natalia Ezra
La. Hoon
Chris Renfard



Someone gifted you a mum!

Message: Thank you for your hard work and bravery!

#thanksgiving



Someone gifted you a mum!

Message: Thank you for all you have done to protect our community. Happy Thanksgiving to you & your family!

#thanksgiving