

# 2023 Annual Report

## **TULARE COUNTY** **FIRE**



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

~Byron Pulsifer, Motivational Speaker



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



Greetings!

2023 was an extremely unique year for the Department and the County in general. With flood events in January, February and March, all departments within the County were busy. Between March 9 and 14, the Department received approximately 400 calls for service. This is an unprecedented number of calls in such a short period of time. Flooding affected homes, rivers, creeks, and farmland throughout the County. In March alone, approximately 455 structures had damage due to flooding and 100+ roads were closed due to flooding and/or damage.

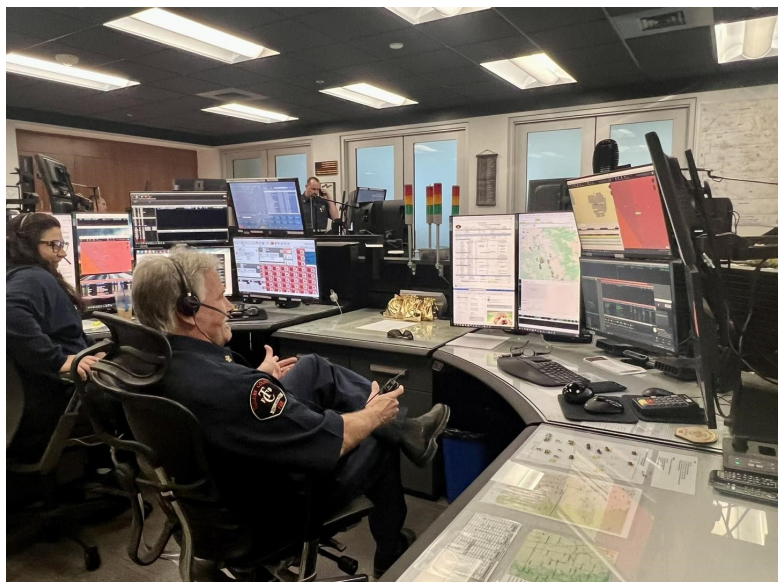
The floods of 2023 were an event only seen every 50 to 100 years. The main difference between the big fires we have had in the County in recent years, compared to the flooding last year, is that fires affect a small geographic area. The floods affected the entire County. Historic numbers of Tulare County residents were under evacuation warnings and orders for their homes at the same time.

Throughout the incident there were over 120 water rescues, and over 700 people were working on the flooding at the height of the floods in March. We would like to extend our thanks to the many cooperating agencies that helped us provide the citizens of Tulare County with the needed access to emergency services.

Even with all of the challenges to the start of 2023 we were able to make strides in our lease apparatus program and put 7 new apparatus in to use throughout the County. These new apparatuses allow our firefighters to respond appropriately to emergencies throughout the county.

We appreciate all the understanding and support from our citizens throughout the County during our challenging start to 2023. You are why we do what we do every single day.

Sincerely,  
Charlie Norman  
Fire Chief







# In Memory of Captain Ellorin

April 11, 1980 through November 26, 2023

Captain Ellorin began his full time service with the Tulare County Fire Department in May 2007. Captain Ellorin was an invaluable member of our fire family. He worked on many projects and with so many of the employees in the department. He will be missed. Rest easy Captain, we'll take it from here.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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



Larry Micari,  
District 1—  
Chair



Pete Vander Poel  
III,  
District 2—  
Vice Chair



Amy Shuklian,  
District 3



Eddie Valero,  
District 4



Dennis Townsend,  
District 5



County  
Administrative  
Officer  
Jason Britt



March 2023—Flood Briefing



Graduation/Promotional Ceremony

# 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, known today as CAL FIRE, to provide fire protection for the County. Through the agreement, CAL FIRE provided personnel to staff the County's fire apparatus and fire stations as well as administrative staff to manage the Department.

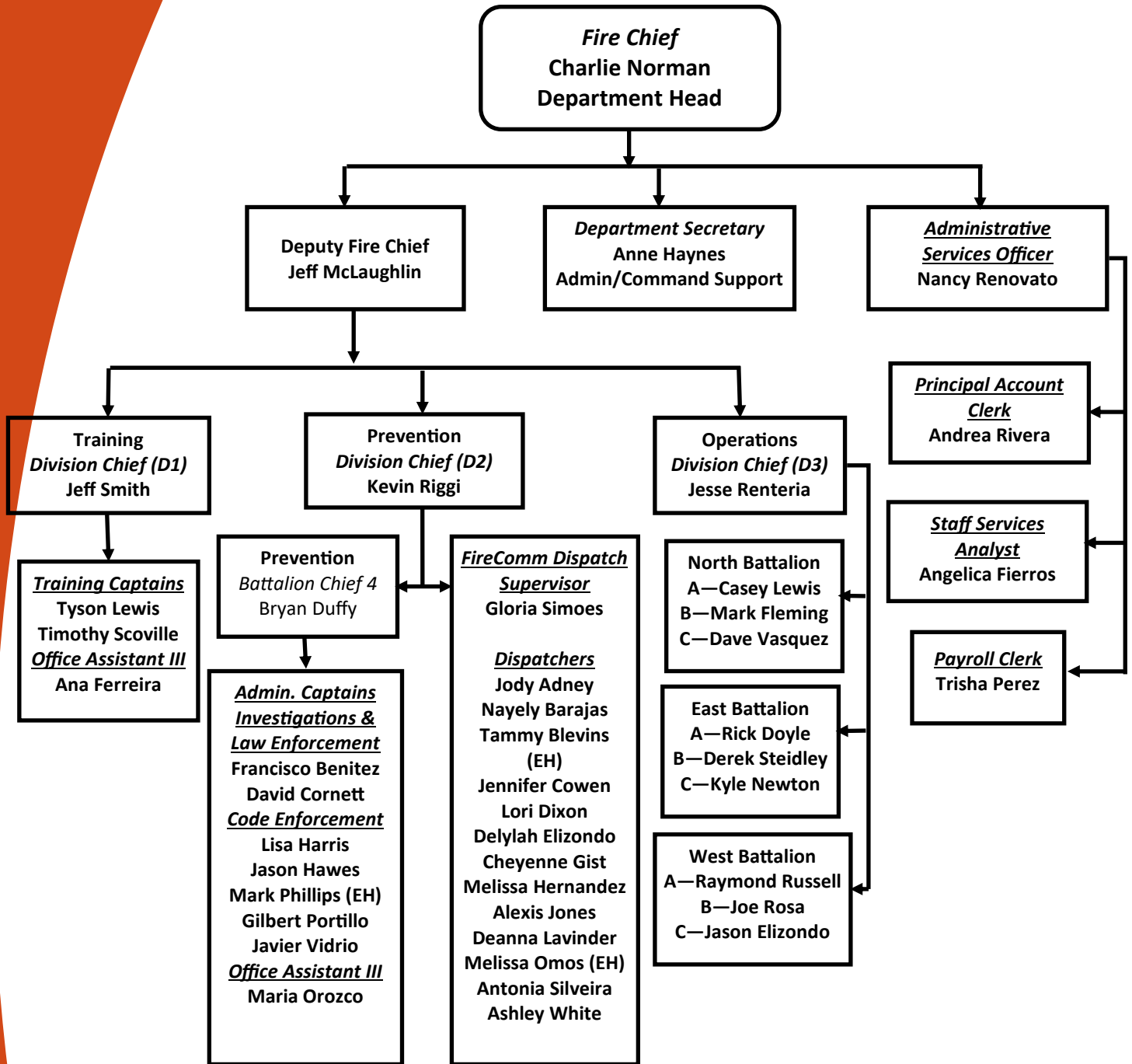
The current Fire Chief was appointed by the Board of Supervisors in January 2016 and is the Department's third Chief. The Department's original Command Staff included three Division Chiefs as well as the Fire Chief. The Department embraced field operations and reduced the Division Chief positions to 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



Positions as of 12/31/2023

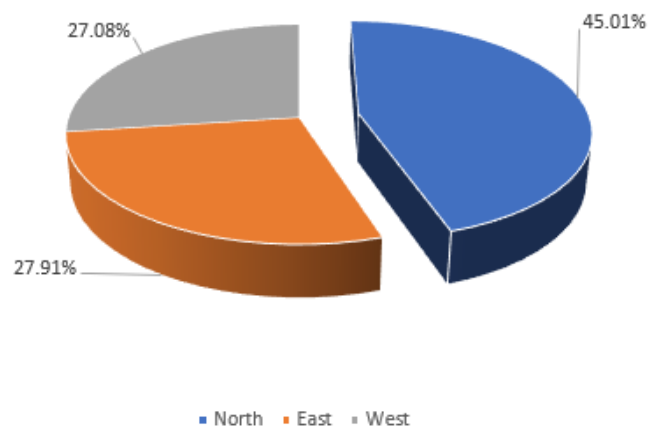


# North Battalion



North Battalion has a total of 9 stations.

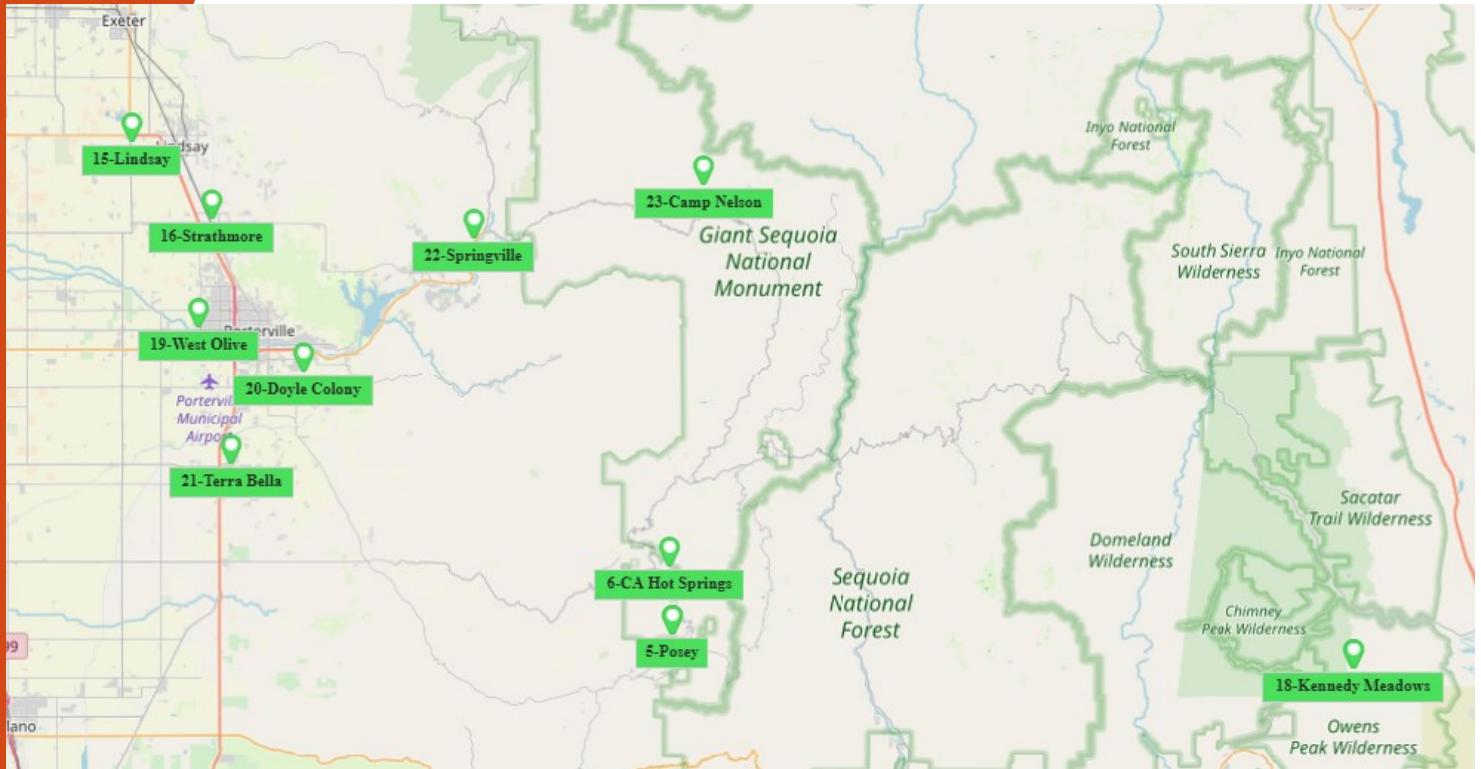
2-0 Staffed Stations:  
Station 1—Visalia  
Station 4—Cutler/Orosi  
Station 8—Ivanhoe



North Battalion accounted for 45.01% of our calls for service.

North Battalion also includes any miscellaneous location calls. i.e. Headquarters, FireComm, OOC, etc.

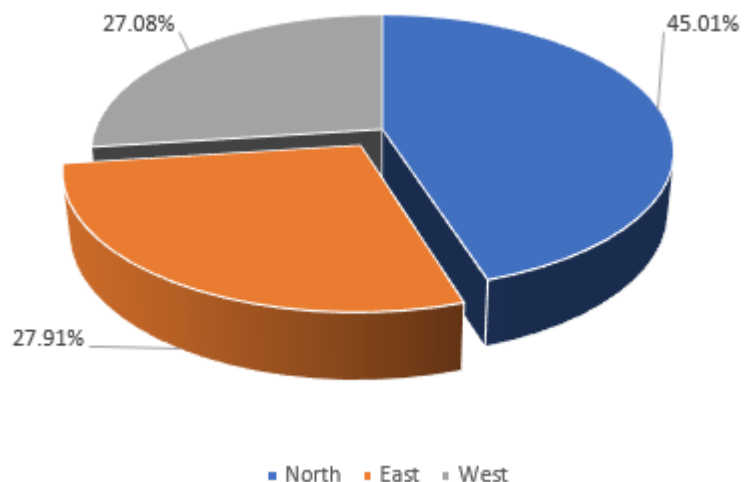
# East Battalion



East Battalion has a total of 10 stations.

Kennedy Meadows (18) is a community volunteer station.

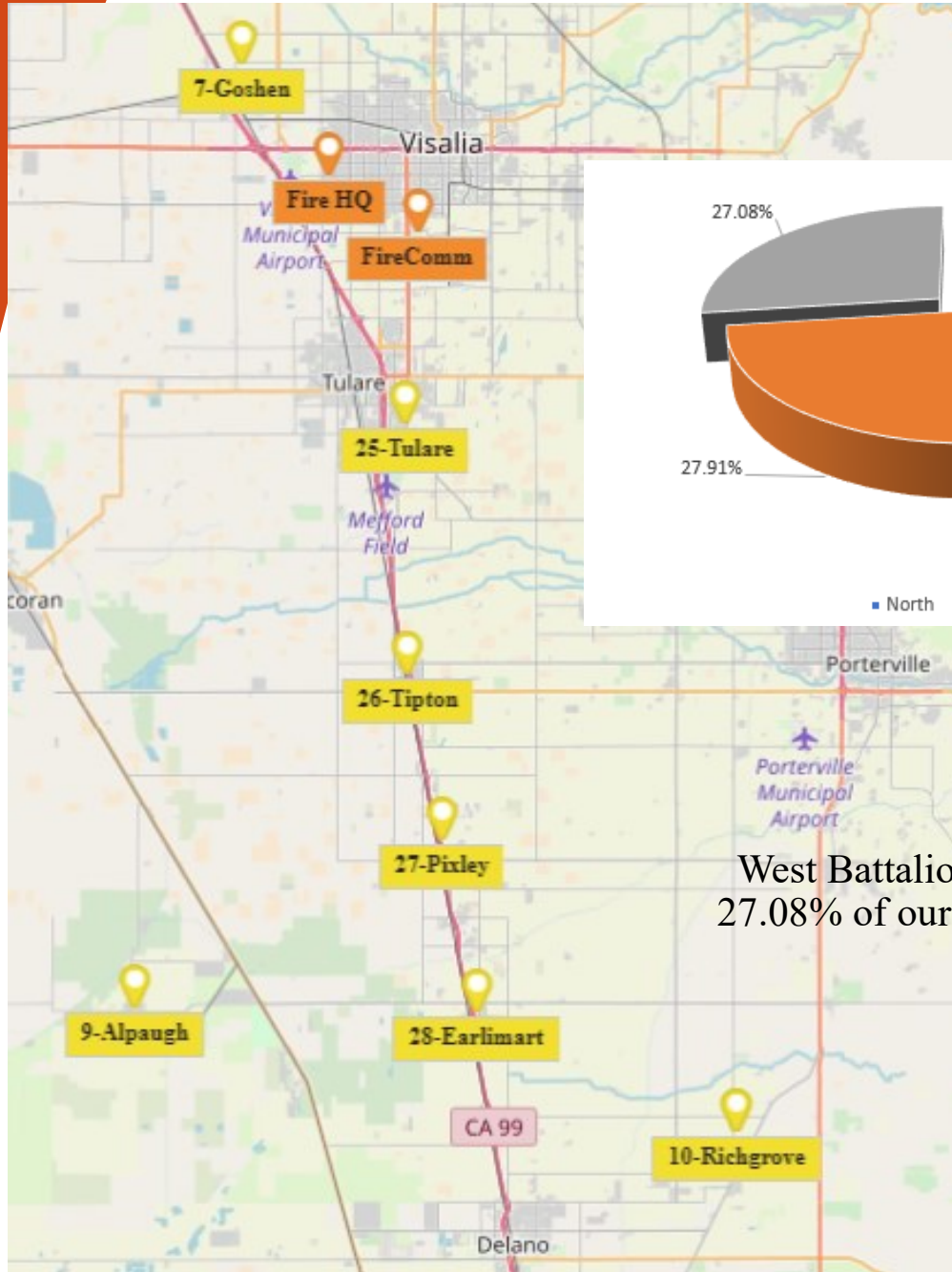
2-0 Staffed Stations:  
Station 21—Terra Bella



East Battalion accounted for 27.91% of our calls for service.



# West Battalion

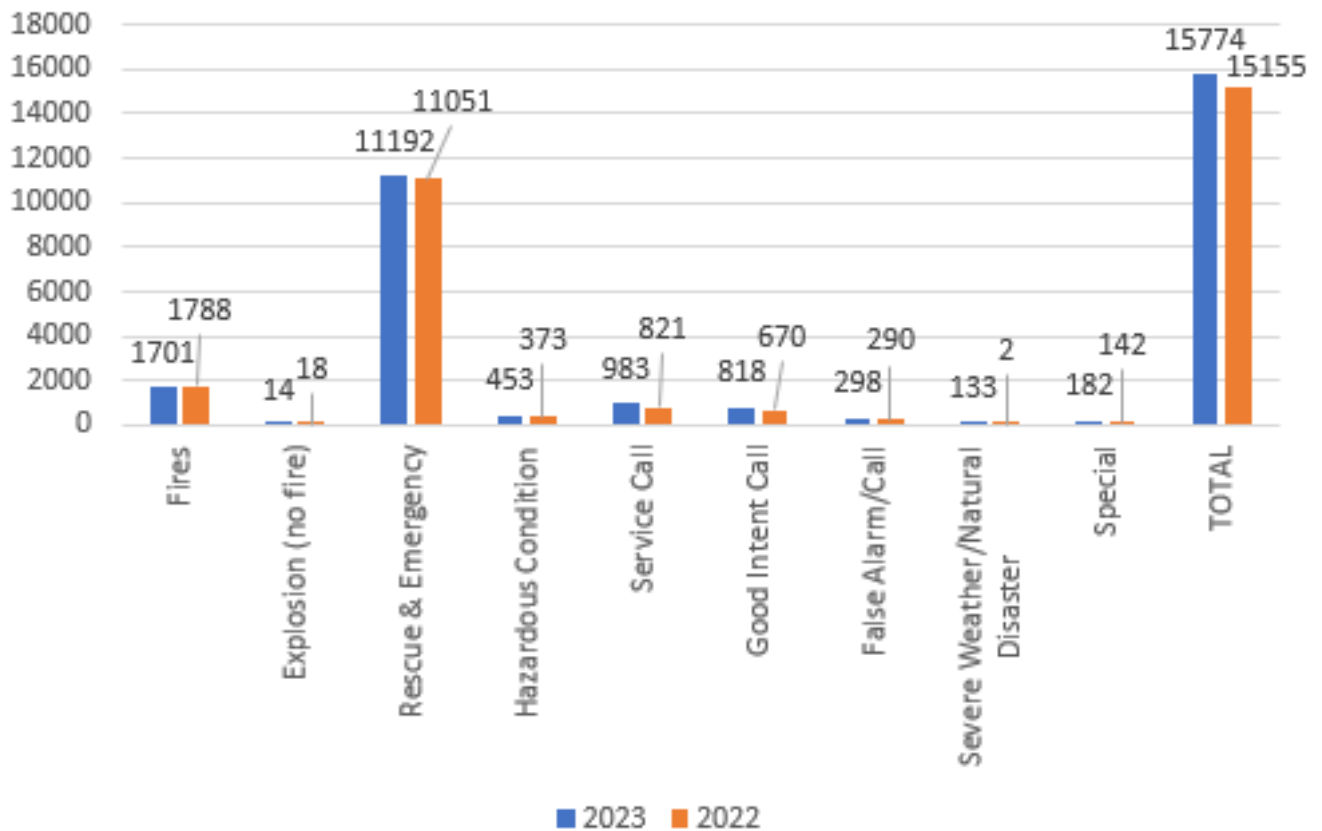


West Battalion accounted for 27.08% of our calls for service.

West Battalion has a total of 7 stations.

2-0 Staffed Stations:  
Station 7—Goshen  
Station 25—Tulare

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



In 2023, we placed new units in service in the communities of Ivanhoe (Engine 8) and Earlimart (Engine 28). We ordered and received a large purchase of Hurst eDraulics air bags and Rescue 42's to outfit all of our new equipment and replace our old and outdated extrication equipment. We were able to add three (3) much needed Fire Apparatus Engineer positions to our staffing. We also worked diligently with Facilities and General Services to start the remodel of Station 21, Terra Bella. We were also able to purchase Zonehaven (Genasys) Emergency Alerting System for County wide use.



# PREVENTION UPDATE

## FireComm calls for service:

	<b>TCFD</b>	<b>Exeter</b>	<b>Farmersville</b>	<b>Woodlake</b>	<b>TIA</b>	<b>Lindsay</b>
<b>Medical</b>	10701	1385	1158	690	310	351
<b>Fire</b>	2260	190	153	69	46	32
<b>Service</b>	1356	202	139	115	28	33
<b>Hazard</b>	338	17	7	19	3	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14655</b>	<b>1794</b>	<b>1457</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>417</b>

TIA = Tule River Reservation

TCFD = Tulare County Fire Department

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

## Inspections

Schools (E)	148
Hotels/ Motels (R-1)	38
Apartments (R-2)	128
Business & Mercantile	308
Fire Finals (New Con- struction)	465
Other Occupan- cies	65
Safe and Sane Fire- work Stands	24

### Prevention Statistics:

Total Admin Citations:	26
Fireworks	6
Illegal Burning	20
Illegal Fireworks Citations	8
Arrests	15
Hazard Abatement Cases	146

### Public Outreach:

Total Events:	33
Est. Attendees:	4,000+

Events included three fire camps, fireworks safety, and several parades throughout the county.

# TRAINING UPDATE

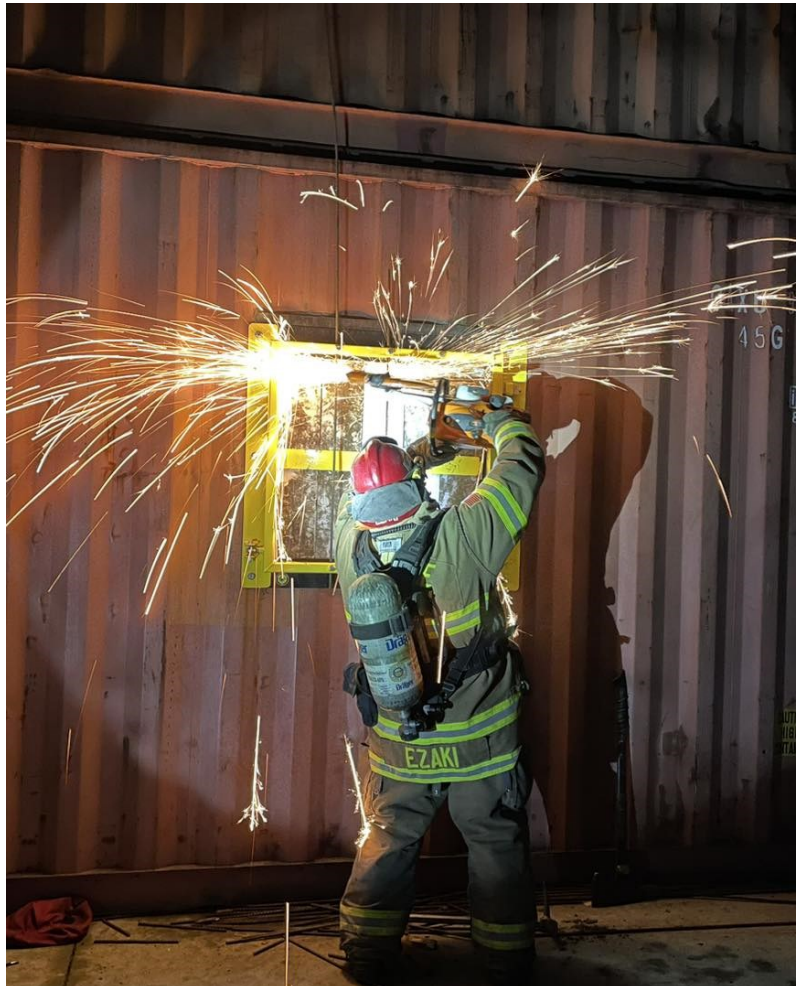
- Facilitated 31,235 hours of training to all personnel.
  - Training included:
- One 11-week Full Time entry-level academy (672 hours)
- One Extra Help Academy (192 hours over 3 months)
  - Two 80 hour truck academies
  - Tesla EV Course
  - Confined Space Training (SFT)
- NFPA 1851 (PPE Maintenance Class)

## EH Firefighter Interviews

	Total Applications*	201
Inter-view Process	Did Not Respond to interview request	66
	Interviewed	78
	No Show to Interview	35
	Candidates Selected	97
Hiring Process	Failed Background	22
	Withdrew	22
	Passed	53
	Total Hired	53

In 2023, 54.64% of the Extra Help candidates that were interviewed, passed the background process and moved on to hiring.

Extra Help candidates included Firefighters, Fuels Crew, and Emergency Dispatchers.





# 2023 Incident Statistics

11,192 EMS  
4,582 Fire

Mutual Aid:  
Given—531  
Received—1,088

# of Overlapping Calls:  
13,357

84.68 % of calls overlap

Average Time on Scene:  
31:59



# California Fire Service

## Local Incidents & Mutual Assistance

- Strathmore Incident
- 13 Out of County Assignments
- Smith River Complex (Elk Grove, CA)
- 2023 SRF Lightning Complex (Six Rivers National Forest, CA)
- Bonney Fire (RRU)
- Hawk (TUU)

### Flooding

- January Flooding
- February Flooding
- March Flooding - March 8th through April 20th

### Out of State Responses

- Colt Fire (Missoula, Montana)



Rocky Fire



Dry Creek Complex



# 2023 Flooding

- Over \$100 million in damages
- 31 bridges damaged
- 60 levees breached
- 300+ locations along roads





# Promotions

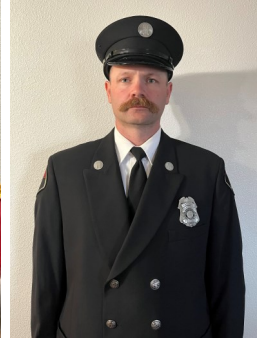
*Captain*  
Jared Arciniega



*Captain*  
Christian Avalos



*Captain*  
Jon Whitendale



*Emergency  
Dispatcher II*  
Lori Dixon



*Lieutenant*  
Joseph Amaral



*Lieutenant*  
Cipriano Del Real



*Lieutenant*  
Joshua Hernandez



*Lieutenant*  
Ryan Lucio



*Lieutenant*  
Luis Magana



*Lieutenant*  
Rafael Torres



*Lieutenant*  
Shawn Trocke



\*unavailable for  
picture



# Retirements

*Principal Account Clerk*  
Divina Santos



After 17 years with Tulare County Fire Department, Divina Santos has decided to retire. During her time with TCFD Divina worked in fiscal operations handling finances, accounts payable and accounts receivable for the department. Prior to joining TCFD in 2006, Divina worked with Tulare County Resource Management Agency and Tulare County Sheriffs office.

*Fire Captain*  
Thomas Marino



Captain Tom Marino recently retired this year. Chief Norman and staff presented Tom with a plaque highlighting his commitment to the County of Tulare for his 16 years of service.



Throughout his remarkable career spanning 36 years, Lieutenant Rodari has been an inspiration to us all. In 2007, we were fortunate to have Lieutenant Rodari join us as a full-time Fire Lieutenant at the Tulare County Fire Department. His dedication and passion for serving our community have been evident as he worked at various stations including Pixley, Earlimart, Tipton, and Alpaugh.

# New Hires



Tammy Blevins—  
EH Emergency Dispatcher  
(Unavailable for Photo)



Jason Hawes—  
Fire Inspector



Melissa Omos—  
EH Emergency Dispatcher



Andrea Rivera—  
Principal Account Clerk



Javier Vidrio—  
Fire Inspector



## **F&E Academy 22**



Ryan Lucio, Miguel Zavala, Luis Magana, Luis Guzman, Joseph Amaral, Isaiah Salvador

## **F&E Academy 23**



Tanner Rother, Austin Miller, Cipriano Del Real



# Terra Bella Remodel

Originally  
built in 1959

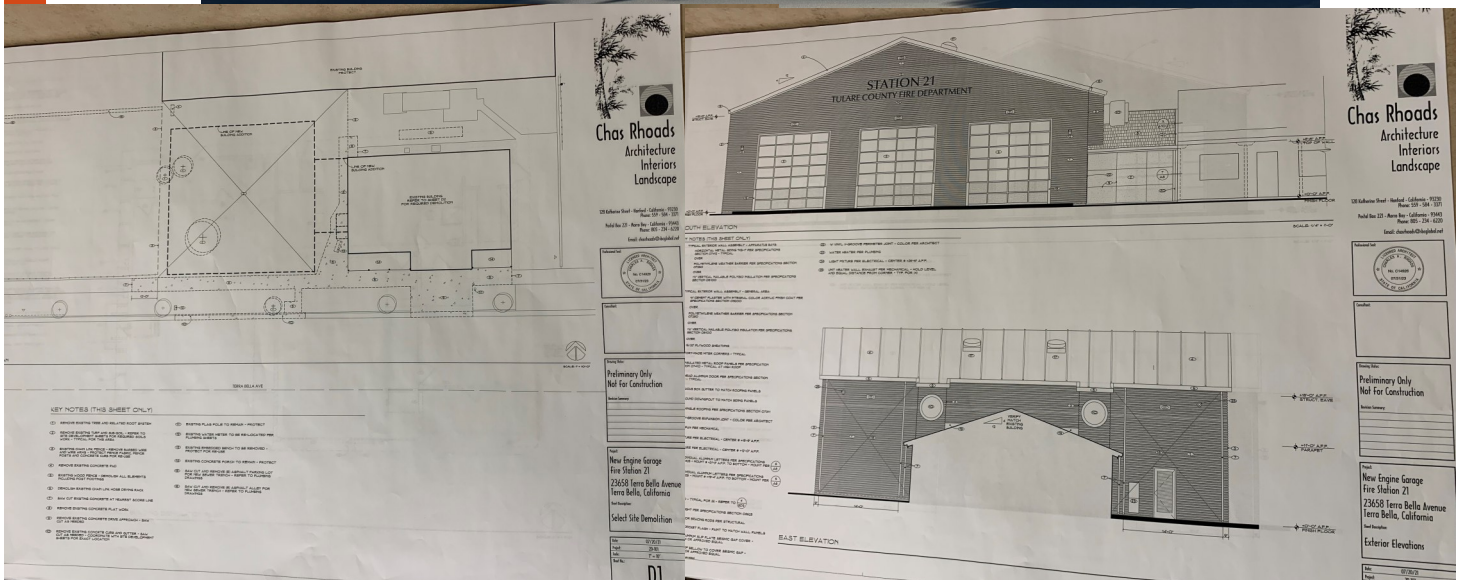


BEFORE

Terra Bella Fire Station—#21



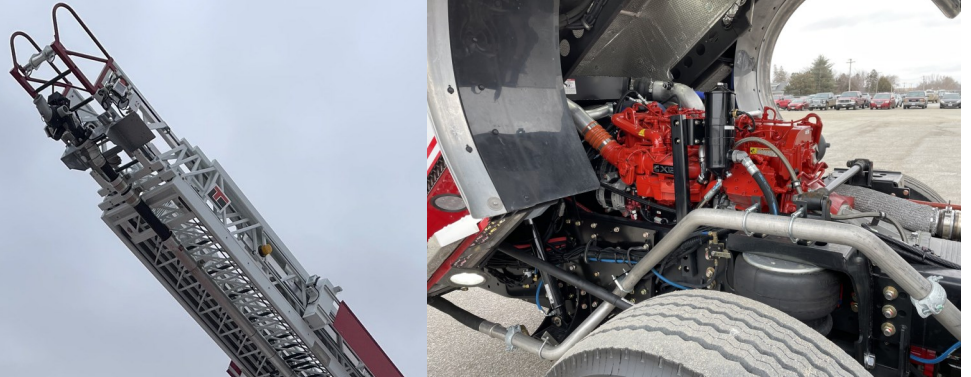
AFTER





# New Equipment

Two (2) new Type 3 Fire Engines from Emergency Vehicle Group and Spartan Fire. Type 3 Fire Engines are commonly referred to as Wildland Engines and are specifically designed to assist in fighting fires in the mountain areas, but are also designed to handle all type of emergencies. These 2 new Wildland Engines already have numbers and have been assigned to Springville Station #22 and Alpaugh Station #9.





# Wildfire Mitigation

- The crew returned with 9 returning members in 2023
  - Two crew members have become full time FAE's with TCFD
  - Oak Valley Crew 8 completed the North Fork Project.
    - Cleared 100 acres

Crew Boss:

Jose Porras (FT)

Crew:

Steven Ackerson

Fernando Aguila Ramirez

Isaiah Bulosan

Xavier Campos (R)

Marco Castillo

Angel Chambers (R)

Damion Daly (R)

Thomas Herrera

Clayton Hulsey

Esteban Maciel-Gonzalez (R)

Angel Marquez

Juan Meza, Jr. (R)

Breesa Miranda

Luis Nunez (R)

Jose Ramos Lemus

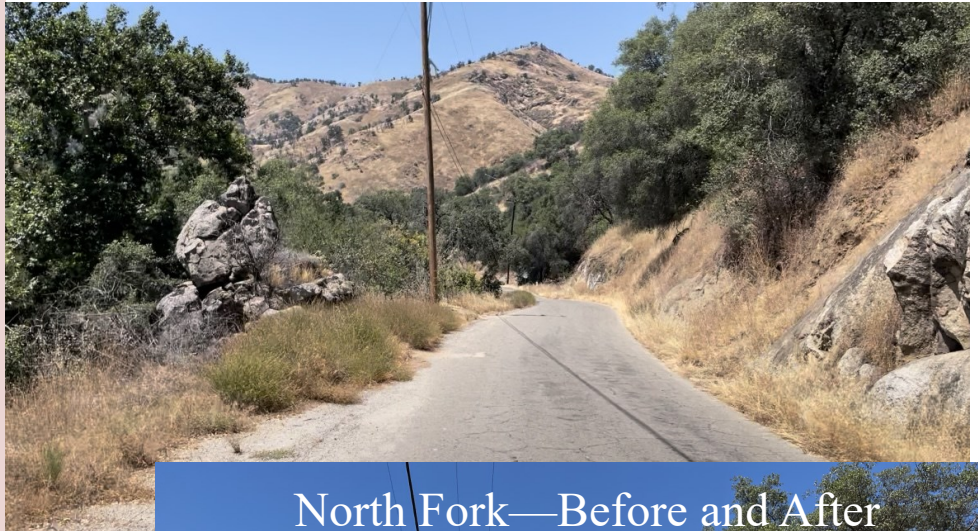
Angel Tinoco

Travin Webb (FT)

Trenton Webb (R)

R=Returning Crew Member

FT = Hired for Full Time



North Fork—Before and After





# Recognition



Matt Jackson—  
Three Rivers Heroes



David Cornett—  
Visalia Knights of  
Columbus



Grant Jackson—  
Exeter Knights of  
Columbus



Mark Hillman—  
Exchange Club of Porterville



Nayely Barajas—  
TCFD Dispatcher of the Year



Eric Ott (TCiCT)—  
TCFD Support Employee  
of the Year  
(Unavailable for Photo)



William Wells—  
TCFD Operations  
Employee of the Year



Shawn Muirhead—  
Bill Rodat Award



Edgar Huerta—  
Bill Rodat Award  
(Unavailable for Photo)



# Service Awards 20 Years



Division Chief Kevin Riggi



Dispatch Supervisor Gloria Simoes

## 15 Years



Deputy Fire Chief Jeff McLaughlin



Division Chief Jesse Renteria



Captain Francisco Benitez

### Not Pictured—15 Year Service Awards

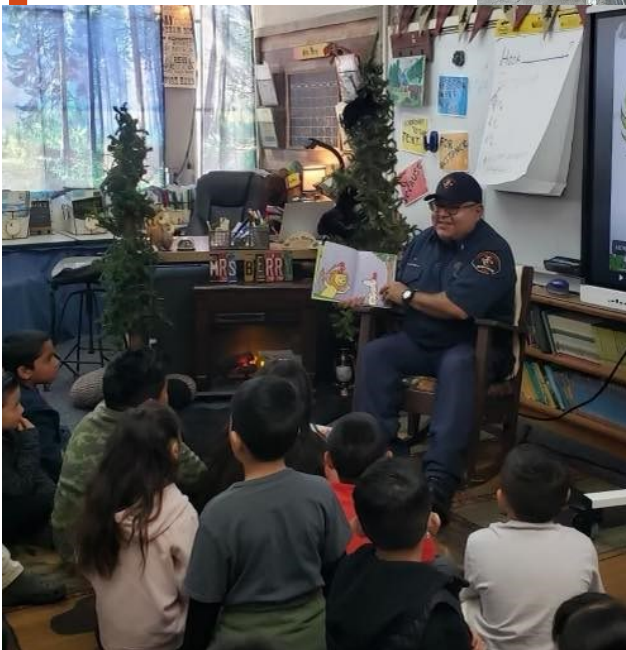
Francisco Benitez  
Derek Bontrager  
Ricardo Castillo  
Ronnie Castillo  
David Cornett  
Carlos Diaz  
Christopher Ellorin  
Timothy Franks  
Jose Helo  
Travis La Tour

Thomas Marino  
Scott McCorkill  
Joel Milligan  
Shaun O'Dell  
Daniel Ortiz  
Adam Pfenning  
Robert Rodari  
Joe Rosa Jr.  
Raymond Russell  
Jaime Sandoval

Duane Shiers  
Jeffrey Smith  
Mathew Whitendale  
Erik Withrow



# Community Involvement





# Community Involvement cont.

