Message From The Chief

As the new Fire Chief, it is with honor and pride to present our annual report to the community for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 (FY16). The information contained in this report provides a concise overview of our operational, business and financial practices throughout FY16.

Through our staff and our seven (7) strategically placed fire stations we respond to the needs of our residents through three distinct business lines: Fire Suppression and Special Programs, Fire Prevention, and Emergency Medical Services.

With all the challenges a fire department faces, the members who wear the Las Cruces Fire Department badge continue to provide exceptional fire and emergency medical services to the community we protect. Las Cruces firefighters responded to 17,000 calls for service, conducted over 3,400 fire inspections and attended more than 30,000 hours of training—over 227 hours per firefighter.

The future looks very promising as we look forward to graduating 24 newly sworn firefighters and the completion of the East Mesa Public Safety Complex which will house Fire Station 8. These additions bring significant changes to our department as our number of sworn personnel grows to 146 and our city is divided into two Battalions—the Eastside Battalion and Westside Battalion, thus enabling the Las Cruces Fire Department to better serve our community.

The Las Cruces Fire Department is soundly committed to providing the highest level of service to the residents it protects. We have a long-standing tradition of excellence which will continue through prudent fiscal management, innovative initiatives, and above all, our dedicated professional firefighters and employees.

On behalf of our firefighters and staff, thank you for your continued support.

If you have questions about your fire department, please contact me at 575-528-3473 or email to: eenriquez@las-cruces.org

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- Honesty
- Continually Striving to Improve
- Customer Service
- High Performance
- Openness and Teamwork
- Respect for Diversity
- Forward Thinking
New Alternate Response Vehicle (ARV)

The Las Cruces Fire Department received the new Alternate Response Vehicle (ARV) in March, 2016. The ARV will be used by the firefighters who normally respond in one of our large ladder trucks when they are going to a call not involving a fire. We expect the ARV program to improve our response efficiency, reduce operating costs, and extend the life cycle of our ladder trucks.

LCFD Academy 30

LCFD Academy 30 began on March 28, 2016 and runs for 22 weeks with completion scheduled for August 19, 2016. Under the leadership and guidance of Lieutenant Jason Floyd and Lieutenant Jacob Trujillo, cadets have successfully completed their Firefighter 1 and 2 curriculums which are an introduction to the professional requirements as recommended by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). They also completed Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations, vehicle extrication, and finally their New Mexico Fire Training Academy (NMFTA) state certification written test and practical test necessary to be certified in the State of New Mexico. In the month of June, they were introduced to LCFD operations with the goal of having them ready to begin service after they graduate.

Strategic Plan

In an effort to support the overall City of Las Cruces Strategic Plan goal of improving fire protection, prevention, and emergency services for our community, we have developed eight internal objectives. These objectives focus on areas of fire prevention, public education, emergency medical services, master planning, collaboration with regional and internal partners, and evaluating our service delivery. Each objective is further broken down into a task, project, or action. As we achieve our benchmarks throughout the year, new items are added. We stay committed to safely providing the best customer service possible.
The mission of the Las Cruces Fire Department’s Emergency Medical Services Program is to deliver the best and highest quality medical care possible to the community.

Paramedic engine and truck companies better enable us to send the appropriate level of medical care to citizens at the initial dispatch which further enhances service delivery.
These individuals demonstrate a high level of commitment to our community and organization and take pride in performing their duties as paramedics.

Kyle Kozloski
4 Years of Service

Jose Leos
14 Years of Service

Michael Landavazo
9 Years of Service

Michael Medina
8 Years of Service

Gage Lawhorn
11 Years of Service

Shane Mouchette
13 Years of Service

Jeremiah Lay
9 Years of Service

Jason Smith
13 Years of Service

Joseph Lee
7 Years of Service

Nathan Tracey
5 Years of Service

Cody Richards
5 Years of Service

James VonSchriltz
16 Years of Service

Chris Paz
5 Years of Service

Justin Whitefield
8 Years of Service

Michael Medina
8 Years of Service

Jason Smith
13 Years of Service

Nathan Tracey
5 Years of Service
We experienced an increase of more than 5% in our calls for service over last year. With over 16,000 calls this year, we exceeded levels similar to those in 2012, before we changed certain aspects of our response models. LCFD continues to evaluate our service delivery and methods to make sure we meet the demand and provide the appropriate resources in the time of need. These numbers only account for responses by the primary unit. Many of these calls for service required more than one unit.

Calls for emergency medical services (EMS) continue to make up the majority of our responses representing 65% of our overall call volume. We also responded to 207 fire calls during the year which made up 1.3% of our total call volume. The 4,602 calls for “All Other Responses” include incidents involving lockouts, reports of smoke, animal rescues and other incident types that we do not classify under EMS or fire. We experienced 678 false alarms during the year which is a small increase from the false alarm calls in FY15. False alarms are made up of fire, medical and other types of alarms.

Of the 207 fires we responded to during the last fiscal year, 58 were structure fires. Structure fires include any fire that occurs in single family homes, apartments, places of public assembly, schools or businesses. Fires involving commercial and passenger vehicles, brush fires or wildlands and rubbish/dumpsters accounted for 62% of our fire responses. Regardless of the incident type, our focus is always on life safety, property conservation, incident stabilization and customer service.
EMSI Patient Contacts

We treated 8,674 patients during FY16. Medical conditions varied from minor first aid for scrapes and bumps to cardiac arrest. To meet the increase in demand and various medical conditions LCFD continues to provide EMS continuing education to all of our providers. The 30% shown in the chart as “Other” represent patients who had illnesses that fall outside of the listed categories.

Responses by Station

There were a total of 16,372 emergency and non-emergency responses in FY16. These numbers take into account all responses by unit which is why the totals here are larger than the call volume chart. Fire District 1 continues as the busiest district with Engine 1, Truck 1 and Battalion 1 answering 3,837 calls for service in FY16. Engine 3 is our busiest unit followed by Engine 6, Engine 2, Engine 1 and Engine 4.

Fire and EMS Response Times

During FY16 our percentage of arriving on scene while driving with lights and sirens within five minutes was 54%. An increase in call volume, the distance between stations and City growth have influenced our response times. We strive for the quickest response possible with safety in mind. We look forward to the positive impact that Station 8, the Squad Program and the Alternate Response Vehicle program could have on our response times. We will continue to look for innovated ways to provide the highest level of service delivery.
Fire Inspections/Code Enforcement

The Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for enforcing the state and local fire safety codes and ordinances in the City of Las Cruces. This is accomplished through the annual business inspections of all manufacturing, storage, educational, business, mercantile and places of assembly. All new businesses within the City must pass a Fire Department inspection prior to the issuance of a business license by the City of Las Cruces.

Code enforcement is a critical element in the success of fire prevention programs. Almost every aspect of a thorough fire prevention program is affected by code enforcement in some way. It plays a major role in fire and life safety inspections, plans review, hazardous materials and environmental investigations, and the issuance of fire prevention code permits. Code enforcement plays an important but more limited role in fire investigations, public education programs, and fire research and analysis.

The Fire Prevention Bureau and operations personnel are responsible for completing over 3,400 business inspections annually in the City of Las Cruces. Business inspections are an important component of fire prevention tasks for the purpose of reducing the risk of fire.

Fire Investigations

Fire investigation, sometimes referred to as origin and cause investigation, is the analysis of fire-related incidents. Investigations of such incidents are challenging, requiring a systematic approach and knowledge of basic fire science, building construction, electricity, human behavior, mechanical devices, constitutional rights, as well as local, state, and federal laws. A fire investigator looks at the fire remains and burn patterns to obtain information to reconstruct the sequence of events leading up to the fire.

In common with many forensic disciplines, one of the early tasks of fire investigation is often to determine whether or not a crime (arson) has been committed. The difficulty of determining whether arson has occurred arises because fire often destroys the key evidence of its origin. To ensure that fires and explosions of a suspicious nature are thoroughly investigated, the Las Cruces Fire Department employs investigators who are state-certified police officers for suspected arson cases. On occasion fire investigators solicit assistance from external resources, such as forensic experts, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, local law enforcement, and other fire investigators to assist with an accurate and timely investigation.

This fiscal year, 62 investigations were conducted throughout the City of Las Cruces.

The Las Cruces Fire Department Prevention Bureau is committed to providing life safety to our community and our firefighters through plan review for new construction, fire inspections, fire investigations, public education, and community outreach. A fire prevention program is the most effective method of keeping the community safe from fires. Although firefighters and their fire engines do amazing work to put out fires, the damage to the community begins before they even get the call. Fires devastate communities, costing billions of dollars, destroying vital infrastructure, and taking thousands of lives. Despite the nationwide fear of terrorism, fire is the greatest threat a community faces. In Fiscal Year 16, local residents and business owners were affected by approximately $1,038,277.35 worth of damage/loss due to fire incidents within the City of Las Cruces.
At the end of Fiscal Year 16, Las Cruces Firefighters/ Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) responded to 10,640 calls for emergency medical services, approximately 65.4% of our total call volume. Medical service calls range from motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) involving motorcycles, pedestrians and bicycles to cardiac arrests, behavioral, suicidal and welfare check responses.

**New Squad**
The new Squad Unit responds to calls in Fire District 2 that do not require a larger fire engine and full crew. It can also transport patients who are in critical condition if an ambulance will be delayed because of system overload. A system overload exists when there are no readily available ambulances from the county contracted service with American Medical Response.

**Public Education**
The Las Cruces Fire Department knows that prevention in the key to reducing injuries and incidents, which is why fire prevention education remains at the forefront of our overall mission. Each year, LCFD provides an array of fire prevention education presentations to thousands of children and adults. All programs and materials are available at no charge to schools, businesses, service clubs, senior citizen groups, childcare classes and parent groups. Public education programs include, fire extinguisher training, Youth Fire Setter Intervention, and general fire safety education.

**Facebook**
This year the Las Cruces Fire Department launched our very own Facebook page. Previously, we were distributing information regarding our department through the City of Las Cruces and Police Department Facebook pages. With the implementation of our own department page, we have been able to keep information flowing to the community to increase public outreach and education. Our ultimate goal with our social media communication is to keep the public informed about fire safety and medical wellness as well as showcase our continuous training efforts that improve our level of service to the community.
As part of our ongoing commitment to training and in accordance with the City’s Strategic Plan for the Fire Department, crews log many hours training on everything from basic firefighter skills to advanced training such as hazardous materials scene mitigation, aircraft rescue and firefighting, and technical rescue such as structural collapse or confined space rescues. Currently, our firefighters are improving their hose deployment and advancement skills. We are utilizing a “best practices” curriculum that makes hose line management and fire attack more efficient.

In addition to spending many hours training at their stations and at our training facility on the west mesa, many department members attend classes and trainings at other locations, such as the New Mexico State Firefighters Academy in Socorro, New Mexico, the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and the Security and Emergency Response Training Center in Pueblo, Colorado. These additional trainings assist us in providing the most current information and techniques to our members, in order to be able to handle any emergency that may arise within our community. Las Cruces Firefighters logged more than 30,000 hours of training this fiscal year.

Vehicle Extrication
All department members undergo regularly scheduled vehicle extrication training. Extrication is the removal of the automobile from around the occupants. All department members regularly train with the tools and techniques to safely and efficiently rescue occupants from vehicle crashes. Additionally, the department sent four members to attend the Santa Fe Auto X, a training class where attendees learn about the latest in automotive technology, including “Gorilla Glass,” electric and hybrid technology, the latest in metal alloys, and “heavy extrication” involving industrial equipment, farm machinery, and large over-the-road vehicles. These members then bring the information back to teach it to the entire department.

Live Burns- Night Evolutions
The Las Cruces Fire Department remains committed to providing our members with the most realistic training possible in the safest and most efficient manner. This year we continued providing live-fire training at our Public Safety Training Facility, delivering training sessions in both the first floor and the second floor burn rooms. Nighttime training sessions are conducted to give crews more experience with the different looks that nighttime provides.

Physical Ability Test (PAT)
Our department remains dedicated to the health and safety of our Firefighters. A large part of our safety is determined by our physical health. A high level of physical ability is required and evaluated from the initial hiring process and each year while in the department. We provide annual physical assessments that include vision and hearing screening, lab work (blood draws), and bi-annual electrocardiogram and a yearly Physical Ability Test or “PAT.” The PAT is a series of events that must be performed while wearing structural firefighting protective equipment. Our PAT recently went through a recertification process and was moved to the training tower adjacent to Fire Station 7. The certification process was performed by Industrial Organizational Solutions. The new location allows for a more efficient course and safer conditions for our employees, applicants and the public. We often host public PAT days as a part of our recruitment process.
Technical Rescue Team

The Las Cruces Fire Department Technical Rescue Team (TRT) comprises of 21 members that are trained in six disciplines requiring advanced level training: Rope Rescue (considered the foundation of technical rescue), Confined Space Rescue, Trench Rescue, Heavy Extrication, Building Collapse, and Water Rescue. The Las Cruces TRT is the only complete response team in South Central New Mexico. During Fiscal Year 2016, the Las Cruces Fire Department assisted in not only local rescues, but also regionally with a small group sent to Hidalgo County to assist in a potential rescue. The TRT is committed to the highest level of training and services provided to the citizens of Las Cruces and surrounding communities.

Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF)

The Las Cruces Fire Department Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Team (ARFF) comprises of 12 full time members at Fire Station 7 and 8 satellite members that can be called to assist. The LCFD ARFF Team is the only team in the Las Cruces Fire Department that is evaluated annually by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and an essential part of the airport’s 14 CFR Part 139 certification. The ARFF Team is currently able to respond with two apparatus to any aircraft crash: Crash 7 (CR7) and Engine 7. The ARFF Team has responded to seven aircraft crashes with six fatalities since the opening of Fire Station 7 at the airport in 2014. The ARFF Team actively participates in airport operations and training with the tenants at the airport. Training requirements are strict and mandated by the FAA. The ARFF Team is committed to providing the highest level of service to the citizens of Las Cruces and the tenants at the Las Cruces International Airport by maintaining a superior level of training.

Crash 7 Unit extinguishes mock aircraft fires.

Hazardous Materials Response Team

The Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT) is NIMS (National Incident Management System) Type 1 response capable team serving the City of Las Cruces and the NM Preparedness Area 6. The team is comprised of 24 specialists and 10 technicians responsible for handling hazardous materials incidents at the technician level. The team is capable of handling highway, rail, and fixed facilities incidents in accordance with the New Mexico Hazardous Materials Plan and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s 29 CFR 1910.120.

The HMRT has a 40-foot tractor trailer that contains monitoring equipment, mitigation equipment and personnel protective equipment and a Ford F-550 with cargo trailer containing Decon equipment capable of providing Hot Zone decontamination as well as Mass Decontamination of public in the event of a large scale incident. The team members have 4 levels of protective equipment that include 1 hour SCBA’s, Level A suits, Level B suits, and bunker gear. In recent years the HMRT has responded in the area to assist with mitigation of incidents in Luna County and Dona Ana County. HMRT strives to maintain a high level of training and continually improves to meet the needs of Las Cruces and the entire NM Preparedness Area 6.
Promotions and Recognition
The community continues to recognize our employees for their efforts on and off duty.

Recognition Highlights

Chamber of Commerce Firefighter of the Year
Lieutenant Chris Mount received the Chamber of Commerce Firefighter of the Year award.

POLICE ACADEMY Valedictorian Michael Danner
Fire Inspector/Investigator Michael Danner completed the Las Cruces Police Department’s 45th Training Academy with Valedictorian honors.

Live Fire Training: Fixed Facility Ron Schulmeister
Fire Department Training Officer Ron Schulmeister earned the “Live Fire Training: Fixed Facility” credential from the International Society of Fire Service Instructors. Lieutenant Schulmeister joins an elite group of approximately 700 people who have earned this international credential.

Honorable Mention Donated Bell- Mr. Staffeldt
Fire Chief Brown and Retired Fire Captain Charles “Chuck” Staffeldt pose in front of an antique house gong from the 1800’s. The bell would notify firefighters of an emergency call and was used in a Massachusetts fire house until the early 1900’s. The house gong was donated to LCFD by Capt. Staffeldt and is now on display at Fire Station One.

Sons of the American Revolution Firefighter of the Year
Sons of the American Revolution recognized Lieutenant Justin Allen as Firefighter of the Year.
**Code Inspector of the Year (State Fire Marshal’s Office)**

**Ted Sweetser**

Fire Marshal Ted Sweetser was recognized as Code Inspector of the Year at the 4th Annual New Mexico Fire and EMS Expo held at the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy in Socorro, NM.

**Jon Tibbett’s Memorial Award (NM EMS Innovations Conference)**

**Kristen Andersen**

On September 15, 2015, EMS Battalion Chief Kristen Andersen was the recipient of the Jon Tibbetts’ Memorial Award at the New Mexico EMS Innovations Conference. This award honors an EMS professional whose leadership and humanitarian efforts have significantly benefited a member or members of our EMS family in challenging circumstances.

Battalion Chief Kristen Andersen was also recognized by the Optimist Club at one of their weekly breakfast meetings for her dedicated service and contribution to enhancing public safety for our community. Kristen has been instrumental in LCFD’s increased level of medical service delivery.

**Promotions**

- **Battalion Chief- EMS, SHANE MOUCHETTE**
  Promoted on 05/29/16

- **Driver/Operator KEVIN PAPKE**
  Promoted on 01/10/16

- **Lieutenant WILLIE MEZA**
  Promoted on 04/03/16

- **Lieutenant ROBERT BROWN**
  Promoted on 05/29/16

- **Lieutenant BEN MYERS**
  Promoted on 05/31/16
Inevitably, our employees move on to the next chapter in their lives. We congratulate all five of our retirees this year and thank you for your years of service to our department and the community.

City Manager Robert Garza congratulates Chief Travis Brown on his retirement.

Travis Brown, Fire Chief
Retired 26 years, 11 months of service.

Kristen Andersen
Battalion Chief- EMS
Retired 18 years, 6 months of service.

Charles MacGregor
Fire Lieutenant
Retired 20 years, 2 months of service.

John Avila
Fire Lieutenant
Retired 17 years, 9 months of service.

Gilbert Paez
Driver/Operator
Retired 19 years, 7 months of service.

Kristen Andersen
Battalion Chief- EMS
Retired 18 years, 6 months of service.

We wish you health and happiness as you move forward.
PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

As we work on our current goals in support of the City’s Strategic Plan, we are always looking ahead. The future looks very bright for the City of Las Cruces and the Las Cruces Fire Department. Some of the highlights for next year include:

Battalion 2

Our City has seen an enormous amount of growth over the past two decades. During that time the Las Cruces Fire Department has expanded to add additional stations and crews. We added Station 6 in 1997, followed by adding a Truck Company (Truck 1), to Station 1 in 2006 and we opened Station 7 in 2013. This fiscal year we celebrated the ground breaking for construction of the East Mesa Public Safety Complex. This is a joint use facility that will house Fire Station 8 as well as the East Area Command for the Las Cruces Police Department. Construction is scheduled to be complete at the end of November 2016. Once complete, the Fire Station will be the home of Engine 8 and Battalion 2. Battalion 2 is a significant step forward for our department. The number of personnel assigned to emergency response has grown and now to be able to effectively manage our staff and respond to the increasing number of emergencies a second Battalion Chief is needed for each shift. Our response area will be split into two Battalions; Battalion 1 and Battalion 2. Each battalion will be comprised of a Battalion Chief, four engine companies and one truck company. Within each battalion several special programs such as Technical Rescue and Hazardous Material Response will be managed.

Fire vs PD Boxing Match 2016

The Las Cruces Professional Fire Fighters Union #2362 presented Battle of the Badges, a boxing event that helped support several local charities and causes. This exciting event was held at the Las Cruces Convention Center on Saturday, June 18, 2016. Battle of the Badges featured “the Finest vs the Bravest: Police vs Fire” along with public service personnel that volunteered to support the firefighters’ fundraising efforts. Fundraising at this event supported Presents for Pediatrics, a program where firefighters bring gifts to children in the local hospitals on Christmas Day; Honor Flight chaperones, who accompany WWII veterans to visit the WWII Monument in Washington D.C.; Fill the Boot, to support Muscular Dystrophy Association; and PAL Gym, where firefighters get involved with at-risk youth teaching discipline, honor and trust through boxing.

6th Annual Firefighter’s Ball

The Las Cruces Fire Department and the Las Cruces Professional Firefighters Association hosted the 6th Annual Firefighters Ball and Recognition Ceremony on March 05, 2016 at the Ramada Palms. With a fun casino night theme, employees past and present gathered for a night of peer recognition, dining, dancing, games and prizes. This event brought together current Fire Department personnel and retirees to recognize achievements, years of service milestones, promotions and other contributions to the organization.
For more information on the 2015-16 Fire Department Report to the Community and other public safety programs, call the Las Cruces Fire Department at (575) 528-3473, or visit us on the web at www.clcfd.com