Welcome to the DeKalb Fire Department’s 2020 annual report. Within these pages lays a complete breakdown of the array of services our personnel provide daily, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The year 2020 is a year of infamy. The world faced an international pandemic involving a virus identified as SARS-CoV-2, commonly known as COVID-19. Scientists, health organizations, and governments sought to understand the magnitude of its spread and its effect on people, while developing effective mitigation measures and life-saving medical treatments. The DeKalb Fire Department was no different.

We can all reflect on significant accounts during this year, but most impressive was the world, country, state, and, most importantly, communities came together to aid each other. Our community showed its support for the City of DeKalb and the DeKalb Fire Department throughout the pandemic. Countless citizens provided meals, treats, face coverings, cards of well-wishing, and yard signs of support. Numerous local restaurants and community organizations provided meals to our firefighters. It is not possible to acknowledge every contribution, as they are too numerous.

Other supporters of the Fire Department were Northern Illinois University Athletics, Housing and Residential Services, and Administration; the hotel group of the Hampton Inn and Home 2 Suites, DeKalb; DeKalb County Health Department and Emergency Service Disaster Agency; Melissa Butts and the Taking Care of our Caretakers - DeKalb County organization; Northwestern Medicine-Kishwaukee Hospital; Illinois State Representative Jeff Keicher; Lowe’s Home Improvement; and Walmart.

I personally thank each and every one of you for supporting the DeKalb Fire Department and its firefighters while we responded to the needs of our community.
Mission Statement

We are committed to providing the highest level of service to the citizens of DeKalb and those who visit. We strive to continuously seek innovative and effective ways to protect the lives and property of those we serve through suppression, emergency medical services, education, prevention, and training.
Core Values

Professionalism
We are a career professional organization dedicated to providing the best possible customer service 24/7 365 days of the year. Our commitment is reflected through highly trained, hardworking, and competent members.

History & Tradition
We are rich in tradition. We are very respectful of those who have served before us and the sacrifices they made. Firefighters are a close-knit family. Our lives depend on each other and we take that very serious. We strive to make the organization better for those who follow.

Trust & Respect
We are committed to the community and maintaining public trust is a key part of this. We are honored to be members of the DeKalb Fire Department and hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards. Self-discipline is the foundation for managing quality behavior.
Our department is responsible for responding to all emergency service requests within the City of DeKalb corporate limits, including Northern Illinois University campus locations, as well as adjacent portions of rural DeKalb County, in the DeKalb Community Fire Protection District.
Annual call volume in 2020 decreased by 343 calls compared to 2019, averaging one fewer call per day.

State COVID-19 mitigation measures greatly reduced normal activities and special events throughout DeKalb, including Northern Illinois University, where on-campus students and staff were almost entirely absent.

Total annual call volume is expected to reach 7,000 calls by the year 2024.
During the past decade, the busiest day of the week for our fire department has been Saturdays; while Sundays have been the calmest.

During 2020, daily call volume records were exceeded on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays.

The average daily call volume for 2020 was 17.38, which is slightly lower than 2019.

<table>
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**INCIDENT RESPONSES BY DAY OF WEEK**
Prior to 2017, the ratio of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls, include motor vehicle accidents, versus other incident types was approximately 3:4 (75%). Just three years later, that ratio has risen to 4:5 (80%).
Requests for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) increased modestly during the first seven years of this decade. This pattern changed beginning in 2018 when EMS call volume began to increase sharply, year over year.

Despite the absence of most university students and staff during the pandemic, as well as limited social activities, only thirteen (13) fewer requests for medical-related services were received in 2020 compared to 2019.
In general, fire-related call volume has decreased annually; however, fire-related call volume increased unexpectedly in 2020. Future years’ data will tell if this increase was an anomaly or if an upward trend is forthcoming.
Our department responds to all requests for assistance with hazardous conditions, including fallen utility wires, flash floods, potential explosives, and known and unknown volatile liquids, gasses, and other materials.

The frequency of these types of calls has increased modestly during the past decade.
Call Trends: False Alarms

More false alarms occur in multi-family housing, due in part to increased population density, as well as aging systems. Several apartment buildings recently upgraded alarm systems to reduce false alarms triggered by activities, such as cooking and showering.
We are DeKalb County’s largest emergency response agency, in terms of personnel, equipment, and vehicles. As such, our department is responsible for responding to requests for Mutual and Automatic Aid from surrounding communities.

When other departments’ resources are insufficient to handle an emergency situation, our crew members come to help as we are able, providing whatever required: manpower, apparatus, specialized equipment, and expertise.
Mutual & Automatic Aid Received

Fire departments from surrounding communities reciprocate by providing aid to DeKalb when we request assistance.

This tradition of Mutual and Automatic Aid ensures every emergency in DeKalb can be met, even while our department is experiencing several simultaneous incidents, multi-vehicle accidents, or other complex emergencies.
Most patients (67%) who received emergency medical services were transported to the hospital; however, nearly one-third (32%) chose not to be transported.

Patients who refuse ambulance transportation typically have non-serious complaints or conditions, including:
- lift assists;
- minor car accidents; and
- symptoms of known chronic diseases, such as diabetes and asthma.

Fewer than 2% of patient refusals were against medical advice (AMA).
Standard Medical Orders (SMO) developed by Illinois Department of Public Health Region 1 and administered by Northwestern Medicine-Kishwaukee Hospital Emergency Medical System determine which treatments are provided by paramedics in the field.

Basic Life Support includes assessment of vital signs, oxygen perfusion, and bleeding control; treatment of minor injuries and illnesses; or CPR/AED administration.

Advanced Life Support includes IV administration; 12-lead cardiac monitoring; advanced medical procedures, such as airway insertion; or administration of multiple medications.
In 2020, a total of 222 fire-related incidents occurred, most of which (60%) involved a building or other structure.
The majority of fires (66%) in 2020 occurred on residential properties. These fires often begin in the kitchen due to unattended cooking or appliance malfunctions.
Fire Incidents

One in five fires occurred in buildings containing more than two dwelling units, such as apartments or rooming houses. Apartment fires are among the most devastating to our community due to the amount of personal property destroyed and the number of individuals and families affected.
Training at the DeKalb Fire Department is based on standards, regulations, and requirements set forth on the minimum number of training hours needed annually by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Insurance Service Organization (ISO), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Illinois Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA), Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM), and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).

The Training Division is responsible for managing and providing training to all department members. Ongoing training ensures crews are well prepared to provide emergency services to the community. Our training programs is compromised of two types: internal and external training.

- Twenty-three (23) members attended external training.
- Personnel spent a total of 18,051 hours in training.
EXTERNAL TRAINING

In the early months of the pandemic, all external training was cancelled, and training switched to internal settings or environments that allowed for social distancing.

Mandatory EMS Continuing Education became a remote learning experience, led by the Northwestern Medicine-Kishwaukee Hospital EMS office, which provided printed training materials and quizzes to maintain required training hours.

In the meantime, the process to recertify personnel in Hazardous Materials Operations, Rope Operations, Inspector I, and Fire Investigator began. In addition, a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) group was established to review EMS reports to improve service delivery and documentation.
INTERNAL TRAINING

Internal training was accomplished while maintaining social distancing. Companies participated in drills and exercises at their respective stations as much as possible or, if needed, at a site that allowed companies to remain separate. Masks were required except during activities involving SCBA.

Much of this training was developed by our department’s deputy chief of training and implemented by the company officers at each station.

Training topics covered included various aspects of hazardous materials response, rope training, airport familiarization, and other specialized response areas and situations.
CONSTRUCTION SITE TRAINING

In November of 2020, the fire department began response and familiarization training with Mortenson Construction at the Facebook site, developing response routes, integrating fire personnel with Mortenson personnel, and assigning responsibilities to each agency during emergency operations.

Mortenson Construction and the fire department will continue to hold practice exercises to prepare for potential emergencies, including EMS, confined spaces, hazardous materials, light machinery accidents, and severe weather.

Regular building and site tours have helped keep our department personnel familiar with the project’s layout.
The department’s fire prevention officer performs annual and biannual inspections of establishments to help ensure residents and visitors in DeKalb have safe and sanitary places to live, work, and play. Each establishment that successfully completes its required inspection is licensed by the City of DeKalb.

Establishments subject to these inspections include the following:

• Restaurants, bars, banquet halls, and other places where food and beverages are served and consumed;
• Amusements, such as theaters and bowling alleys;
• Rooming houses and other group living residences; and
• Hotels and motels.

Inspection standards are set forth by the City of DeKalb, State of Illinois, International Code Council, and the National Fire Protection Association, which help protect lives and properties.
In 2020, the six (6) fire investigators from our department collected evidence for the purpose of determining the cause and origin of fire-related incidents. By examining burn patterns and materials, fire investigators can determine the fire path.

Photos and witness statements are gathered to help complete an official fire investigation report.

The Fire Investigation Team works closely with law enforcement when arson is suspected or confirmed.
All fire personnel are trained to the Operations Level in handling hazardous materials, which includes skills and knowledge in chemical identification and defensive measures, such as damming or absorption. As part of the MABAS Division 6 Hazardous Materials Team, thirteen (13) members of our department are trained to the Technician Level to allow taking offensive measures with highly dangerous chemicals, including

- Flammable liquids and solids;
- Gases;
- Explosives;
- Radioactive material;
- Toxic and infectious substances; and
- Any unknown substance or material.

In 2020, our department responded to 320 calls involving hazardous substances or conditions.
As part of MABAS Division 6’s Technical Rescue Team, fifteen (15) members of our department are trained to rescue individuals in dangerous situations, like construction sites, underground utilities, grain silos, towers, and other extreme circumstances.

Team members receive external training in areas such as:
- High angle rescue;
- Structural collapses;
- Trenches; and
- Confined spaces.
In addition to preparing for typical emergency responses in our community, our department also helped support the region with emergency planning, mitigation efforts, and strategies to rebound from COVID-19. Our efforts included the following:

- Assisting Northwestern Medicine-Kishwaukee Hospital to set up temporary COVID-19 testing and treatment centers;
- Assisting to establish a COVID-19 testing center at for essential workers at Rochelle Hormel Foods processing plant, in Rochelle, Illinois;
- Participating in emergency planning meetings for responding to, caring for, and providing emergency housing for suspected and known COVID-19 patients;
- Working with local group-living and medical facilities to review and adapt emergency plans, to prepare response strategies, and to monitor illness rates within these facilities;
- Participating in personal protection equipment distribution planning meetings;
- Piloting a COVID-19 testing program for first responders; and
- Providing COVID-19 related data to governmental agencies.

COVID-19 Response
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January 2020</th>
<th>April 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States President declared a public health emergency under the Public Health Service Act</td>
<td>United States enacted the Families First Coronavirus Response Act</td>
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<td>February 2020</td>
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<td>DeKalb Fire Department began daily on-duty personnel health screenings</td>
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<td>Illinois Department of Public Health provided guidance for identifying potential COVID-19 patients</td>
<td>First COVID-19 patient housed in public housing as part of the DeKalb County-wide quarantine housing plan</td>
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<td>March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>DeKalb County Health Department announced initial COVID-19 mitigation plans</td>
<td>First DeKalb Fire personnel quarantine due to on-duty COVID-19 exposure</td>
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<td>Illinois Governor declared all Illinois counties disaster areas due to the COVID-19 outbreak</td>
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<td>Illinois Department of Public Health provided guidance to Emergency Medical Services agencies for treating COVID-19 patients</td>
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<td>MABAS Illinois issued warning to fire departments that firefighters were being exposed to COVID-19 in record numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>DeKalb Fire Administration issued the first General Order for Personal Protective Equipment due to COVID-19</td>
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<td>DeKalb City Hall closed to pedestrian traffic</td>
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<td>DeKalb Fire Administration began campaign to contact and visit each high-risk group residential facility for emergency planning purposes</td>
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<td>Illinois Governor issued a “Stay-at-Home” order</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>DeKalb Fire Administration received COVID-19 rapid testing kits for personnel testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>DeKalb Fire personnel received first COVID-19 vaccinations</td>
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Like the rest of the nation, in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, our department faced the challenge of procuring the usual medical supplies, along with additional personal protective equipment (PPE) and disinfectants. While these items were in short supply, we were not alone, acting fast to place orders when essential supplies became available and paying premium prices. Not only were these supplies required, but more were needed to provide the essential medical care our patients required.

Our department procured its own stockpile of necessary supplies, according to recommendations from the CDC, IDPH, and OSHA, as well as our careful analysis of current and projected needs. Our goal of never depleting our stock was achieved through community donations, supply sharing, access to the national stockpile, and relationships with other government bodies and new vendors. Meanwhile, we were vigilant to avoid purchasing from unscrupulous businesses looking to scam unsuspecting buyers.
Firefighting and emergency medical services are labor intensive, requiring personnel to provide essential services, at times, under extremely hazardous conditions.

Complex emergency scenes require specialized skills, scene organization, and critical decision-making completed in rapid succession.

Emergency scenes require well-trained, experienced personnel staffed to accomplish these tasks, while maintaining safety margins for firefighters and civilians.
The most significant source of revenue for our department is derived from ambulance fee payments, accounting for 61% of the department’s revenue generated. These fees are paid for primarily by public insurance and private insurance providers.

Fire Services fees are the second largest source of revenue (36%), provided through agreements between the City and DeKalb Community Fire Protection District, Northern Illinois University, and others.

Fees collected for rooming house licenses, fire-life safety licenses, and false alarm penalties are small source of revenue, accounting for approximately 2% of our department’s annual revenue.
During 2020, our department transported a total of 3,301 patients, making 5,110 trips to the hospital. Most patients (79.92%) were seen only once during the year, while others were seen more than once each month (0.64%).

The City of DeKalb contracts with Andres Medical Billing to provide ambulance billing services, including submitting insurance claims and payment collection.
Pursuant to City ordinance, each ambulance trip is assessed a fee of $1,800, plus mileage. In 2020, the average payment received was 26% of the original charges.

Patients with private insurance coverage accounted for 14% of all ambulance trips, generating 39% of the total ambulance fee revenue.

 Patients with either Medicaid or Medicare coverage accounted for 79% of all ambulance trips, generating 57% of the total ambulance fee revenue.
This department’s annual budget expenditures are separated into two divisions: Administration and Operations.

Administration Division expenditures include personnel expenses for the fire chief, deputy fire chief, and administrative assistant, as well as everyday goods and services, such as office supplies, technology, equipment, fuel, and others.

Operations Division expenditures include personnel expenses for all firefighter/paramedics, including department officers, as well as supplies, equipment, and services necessary to respond with emergency services, such as vehicle repairs and maintenance and station upkeep.
Non-personnel expenses shared by both the Administration and Operations Divisions accounted for 5% of expenditures in 2020.

These expenses include goods and services crucial for the operation of the entire department, such as supplies and equipment for

- Medical items;
- Firefighting items;
- Vehicle repairs and maintenance;
- Buildings and grounds upkeep;
- Utilities;
- Printer/copier contracts; and
- Office supplies.
2020 Non-Personnel Expenditures

While non-personnel expenditures vary some year-to-year, the average spent has remained relatively flat. These expenses include:

- Vehicle parts, supplies, and preventive maintenance;
- Ambulance supplies and billing service contract;
- Training costs, including registration fees, materials, and travel;
- Annual physical exams and stress tests;
- Professional memberships;
- Office supplies, printers, copier, postage and shipping costs;
- Service/repairs for phones, pagers, and headsets; and
- Buildings and grounds, including janitorial supplies, building repairs and maintenance, water/sewer, gas, and electric services.
Non-Personnel Expenditure Trend
Nothing can replace the fire service professionals who are dedicated to responding immediately to fires, medical emergencies, and other crisis situations. That is why personnel expenses accounted for 95% of all 2020 expenditures. These expenses include wages, health insurance, payroll taxes, and others.

The Fire Department’s daily minimum staffing for the Operations Division is thirteen (13) members per day on a rotating work schedule of 24 hours on-duty/48 hours off-duty.

- Station 1: five (5) personnel, including shift commander;
- Station 2: four (4) personnel; and
- Station 3: four (4) personnel.

Fire Administration personnel work a 40 hours/week schedule while maintaining a 24-hour on-call fire chief or deputy fire chief.
Personnel Expenditure Trend
2020 Personnel Changes

New Hires
- Firefighter/Paramedic Jonathon McDermott
- Firefighter/Paramedic Michael Ralston

Promotions
- Battalion Chief Todd Stoffa
- Captain Tim Morey
- Lieutenant Noah Millard

Retirements
- Battalion Chief Jeffrey Jossendal
- Firefighter Sean Freeman

Battalion Chief
Captain
Lieutenant
Emergency Response Heat Map
Fire Station #1, located at 700 Pine Street, was built in 1972 and serves the central and northeast portions of DeKalb. This station also houses the administrative offices.

Fire Station #2, located at 1154 South Seventh Street, was built in 1957 and serves the southern portion of DeKalb.

Fire Station #3, located at 950 West Dresser Road, was built in 1994 and serves the northern and western portions of DeKalb.
Fire Station Response Areas

Historically, Station 3 has been the busiest station, responding to the majority of requests for emergency services. Located in DeKalb's northwestern corridor near Northern Illinois University, this area's population density is the highest in DeKalb, so more calls are likely to occur there.

In the near future, the call volume at Station 2 is expected to increase as the industrial construction projects in the southeastern part of DeKalb are completed. When businesses operations fully commence, more employees will be driving to and working in those facilities.
For more information, please...

- Contact the DeKalb Fire Department Administrative Office at 815-748-8460 or dekalb.fire@cityofdekalb.com;
- Visit our website: https://www.cityofdekalb.com/148/Fire; or
- Follow us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/dekalbfire.

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