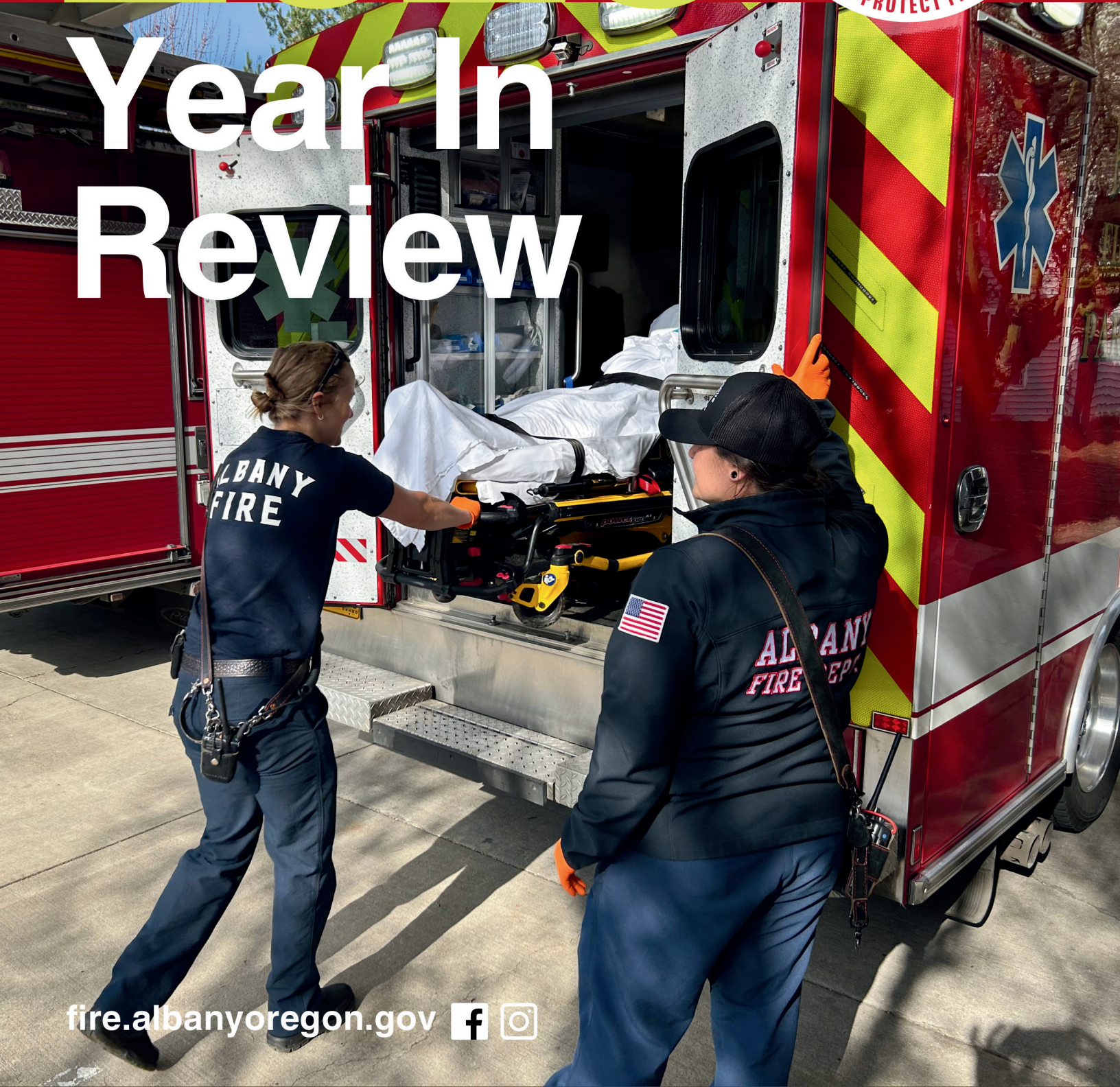


2023



Year In Review



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

On behalf of the professional and dedicated members of the Albany Fire Department, it is my honor to present our 2023 annual report.



Chief Shane Wooton

The past year was filled with impactful items that may not draw headlines, but significantly moved us towards our department's mission of *Prevent and Protect from Harm*.

In 2023 we received and implemented the federal Staffing

for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant and hired three new members for our department. In turn, we began staffing four firefighters on our truck company in the evening hours when the risk to life safety from fire is at its highest.

An additional firefighter on the truck allows us to be more effective when performing fireground activities, as evidenced by a recent fire in North Albany where enough firefighters were present early enough in the incident to rescue a citizen who was trapped in their home.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

In addition, because of funding from the Ground Emergency Medical Transport program (GEMT) the department stood up a single role EMT program. We noticed that due to high demand for EMS services, additional capacity was needed to meet the needs of the community. Additional first responders were hired to staff a peak activity ambulance.

The department also made strides towards improving our fleet and equipment. We completed the specification and purchasing process for a new fire truck using the Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) grant. The truck is anticipated to arrive in Spring of 2024. The department also purchased a refurbished ambulance to add to the fleet, saving our community a significant amount of money and adding ambulance fleet capacity to our busy EMS system. To cap things off, the department received a grant from the Oregon State Fire Marshal's office for a "Mobile Attack Tender" to augment our fleet and ensure adequate water supply can be transported to non-hydrated service areas. The tender is also slated to arrive in the Spring of 2024.

In recent years, difficult budget shortages halted the purchase of new turnouts for assigning two full NFPA-compliant sets of turnouts to our first responders. Due to an aggressive savings plan, the department was able to purchase a new set of turnouts for each responder, ensuring their primary and back-up turnouts were compliant to the highest standards.

“[With] funding from the Ground Emergency Medical Transport program (GEMT) the department stood up a single role EMT program ... due to high demand for EMS services.”

As you'll see in this report, significant progress was also made in preventing harm to our community this past year. The department received funding to expand the community paramedic program to help address the houseless situation affecting Albany citizens and the local health care system. In response to our community's growing Latino population, we offered our first free CPR training conducted all in Spanish.

We also conducted our free Youth Cardiac Screening event, which manifested itself by identifying an adolescent in our community who was predisposed to having a significant cardiac event. The teenager was able to get surgery and avoid a potential life ending event at a young age. We also partnered with local Rotary clubs and the Albany Safety Foundation to implement an AED Loaner

program that allows community members to check out an AED for gatherings and events.

As Fire Chief, I'm amazed and blessed to witness the members of our department work tirelessly to provide a high level of service in a busy department. They do so with an unparalleled dedication to professionalism, empathy, and a desire to be the best version of themselves.



Chief Shane Wooton



JANUARY

At the beginning of 2023, recruit **Davis Blackmon** graduated from academy 2022-B and started on his shift.



Budgeting for the biennium began in earnest as we geared up to plan the next two years beginning July 1. North Albany Rural Fire Protection District provided the budget for purchase of a new HVAC unit for Station 14, which is expected to be delivered in 2024. Another purchase was made by Palestine Rural Fire Protection District, who provided a new treadmill to help keep Albany's firefighters in top shape. These partnerships with our fellow fire districts are very important to AFD and we appreciate and value their contributions to the department.

Community Paramedic Hillary Kosmicki established **HEAL (Housing Empowerment Action League)**. This group connects medical professionals, police, fire, and local shelters along with organizations and agencies dedicated to addressing homelessness in the city. The group has been instrumental in helping reduce reliance on 911 calls and emergency room visits for non-emergent problems (which strain an already tight system) and providing services to help those experiencing homelessness. The group meets monthly to discuss ways in which available services can best be matched to those in need of them.



FEBRUARY



Albany Fire continued its **8th grade CPR** training program (funded by the Albany Public Safety Foundation). The location of Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests (OHCA) most often occurs in homes/residences (73.4%), followed by public settings (16.3%). According to the American Heart Association, if CPR is performed immediately, the chance of survival can double or even triple. This program has trained over 6,000 Albany children so far.



AFD was excited to resume its in-person **Annual Recognition (Awards) Banquet** for the first time since the start of COVID.

Retirees and active-duty personnel and their families gathered at Sybaris Bistro, who very generously hosted AFD to an excellent meal to celebrate as we awarded our 2022

Performers of the Year:



OFFICER OF THE YEAR:
LT BRADY HALLOCK



APPARATUS OPERATOR OF THE YEAR:
AO KEITH GILLESPIE



EMS PROVIDERS OF THE YEAR:
FF CHAD JONES (*LEFT*) AND
FF JACKSON MEHL (*RIGHT*)



FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR:
FF HANS REERSLEV



HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR:
AO MICHAEL HURLEY

MARCH

The Training Division held **Advanced Cardiac Life Saving (ACLS) training** for the department.

AFD welcomes Christopher Kinkade, Gavin Larson, Graham Steffen, Anthony Temple, and Griffin Whitney into **Recruit Academy 2023-A**. These new recruits, three of whom were hired under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response – or SAFER grant, started their 10-week academy and trained hard to work up to the AFD standard. Their presence increases operational efficiency throughout the department by ensuring that AFD operates at a safe level of staffing.



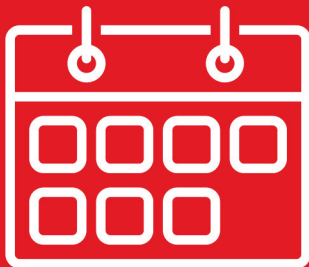
Senior DFM Alfredo Méndez and a group of the department's Spanish speakers presented the **first ever all-Spanish CPR training** to parents in the South Albany High School Spanish Parent Group. Cardiac survivability is greatly enhanced by the application of CPR and defibrillation in a timely manner, and these parents stepped up to learn how to perform CPR correctly for the benefit of the community.



APRIL

A white calendar icon with a red header and two white rings at the top, positioned behind the word 'APRIL'.

The department received an **Oregon State Fire Marshal Engine Program Grant**. This grant is funded by OSFM using monies dedicated during the last State of Oregon biennial budget process. The grant program made available a limited number of pre-specified Type 3, Type 6, and Mobile Attack Tenders to all fire departments in the state. AFD made the decision to apply for a Mobile Attack Tender due to the age of our current tender (1994) and its frequent age-related issues. OSFM received 192 applications, and 76 departments were granted the award. AFD will take possession of the new tender in 2024.



A new two-day on, three-day off schedule begins for the department. This new schedule will be for an 18-month trial period.

AFD personnel, under the guidance of APD Mental Health Intervention Specialist Kiersten Glaeser, learned about the city's **Crisis Intervention Program and methods to aid people experiencing a mental health crisis**. This included ways to approach a person in crisis, as well as de-escalation methods for when things start to get out of hand.

AFD hosted a **S-270 Basic Air Operations course** for attendees from around the state. The course, which was funded by a grant from the Oregon State Fire Marshal and put on through the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, covers aviation management, tactical and logistic uses of aircraft, and requirements for helicopter operations, including take-off and landing areas. Students attended from districts and departments throughout the state.

A graphic of a calendar page with a red header and white body. The word "MAY" is written in large, bold, red capital letters across the white area.

MAY

Community member and balloon enthusiast Tim Gale presented **hot air balloon safety training** to ensure the department knows what the correct safety procedures are in the event of a hot air balloon fire or accident. AFD personnel were glad to review this timely knowledge ahead of the Art & Air Festival in August.





JUNE

AFD crews were fitted for **new turnouts**. These replace existing turnouts, some of which were over 10 years old. This will ensure that our firefighters have the requisite gear to fight fires and stay safe while doing so.

All first responders in the department **recertified their EMS credentials**. This occurs every other year, and department EMS personnel must undergo between 24 to 48 hours of continued education in each of five different categories, depending on their level of certification. This is in addition to the experience they demonstrate while on the job. Last year 89 percent of all AFD calls were medical calls; that represents a lot of experience! Our top EMS trainees LT Shane Castle, Division Chief Scott Cowan, FF Ronnie Garcia, AO Tom Henke, FF Chad Jones, FF Christian Metzger, FF Graham Steffen, and EMS Chief Ray Wooldridge all logged over 100 hours of EMS training in the last biennium.



The **Willamette Valley Heart Screening**, funded by AFFCAF and the Albany Fire Department, and conducted in conjunction with the Cody Stephens Foundation and Albany schools, uses ECGs to screen school-age children for cardiac risk. These ECGs are then read by licensed cardiologists who notify parents in the event of any irregularities. This year at the event, the program identified a cardiac anomaly in a child who later underwent surgery for a rare heart condition. This discovery was a great success for the program.

Albany Fire took a step into the future with a **new online payment portal** for FireMed and ambulance bills, offering a much more convenient way for customers to pay.

Conflagrations: Lt. Mark Bernt deployed as a task force leader to the Hat Rock Fire.

JULY

AFD's Technical Rescue Team conducted **Confined Space Tech Rescue training** with Department of Energy-National Energy Technology Laboratory (DOE-NETL). It is important to train with our local agencies and businesses where there might be extra risk in case of an accident. DOE-NETL included AFD personnel in their collapse exercise to help train in confined space rescue – one of the most dangerous types of rescue.

NW Natural Gas provided training for line crews for what to do in cases of a pipeline fire. There are several pipelines in the area, so it is critical that crews know what to do if something goes awry. The Training Division also held **standpipe drills at LBCC.**



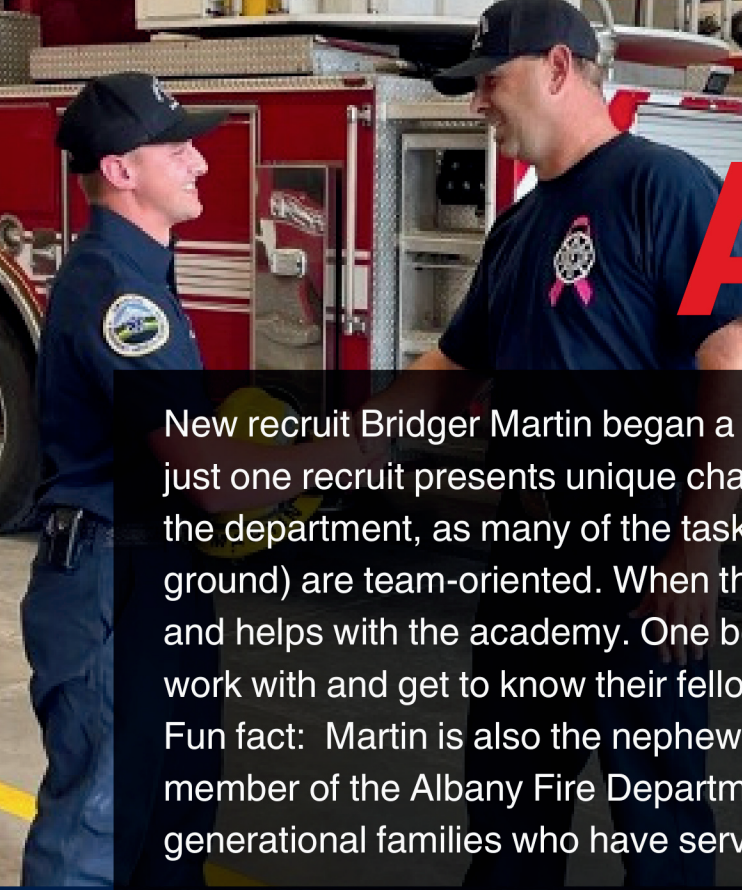
Conflagrations: Lt. Ray Wooldridge deployed to the Moon Mountain Fire as an assistant task force leader, and Deputy Chief Chris LaBelle deployed to the Golden Fire on the incident management team.



Players from around the area gathered for the friendly **Annual AFFCAF Rick Rebel Golf Tournament**, named in honor of long-time benefactor Rick Rebel. This year's tournament raised almost \$11,000 for the Albany Fire Fighters Community Assistance Fund which goes toward providing bicycle helmets, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, life vests, and other needs to the community.



AFD purchased a new (to us) medic unit from Hughes Fire Equipment with a used "box" and a new chassis, which was a significant cost savings from purchasing an all-new unit. This makes seven ambulances for the department. This ambulance was needed with the re-start of the Medic 10 program so that AFD can have adequate reserve units, and it allows the department to remount other ambulances that have high mileage.



AUGUST



New recruit Bridger Martin began a **solo Academy 2023-B**. An academy with just one recruit presents unique challenges for both the incoming firefighter and the department, as many of the tasks performed in academy (and on the fire ground) are team-oriented. When this happens, the entire department pitches in and helps with the academy. One benefit to this is that the new recruit is able to work with and get to know their fellow crew members prior to going on the line. Fun fact: Martin is also the nephew of firefighter Damon Martin, a long-time member of the Albany Fire Department. Albany is proud of the many multi-generational families who have served in the department.



AFD purchased a **new trailer for the Albany Fire Investigation Group**. The department budgeted carefully to buy the trailer for the ongoing needs of fire investigations. This 7' x 16' trailer holds all the tools, materials, and personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary for fire investigators to perform their duties.

The probability of large fires west of the Cascades is a new grim reality and this has caused a paradigm shift throughout Linn County as departments around the county refocus on the issue of wildfires closer to home. Both fires required evacuation notices and a request to the Oregon State Fire Marshal for additional task forces from outside the geographic area. All told, both fires consumed over 500 acres, but most importantly no lives or homes were lost.

Lt. Shane Castle spearheaded Fire Studio (fire simulation program) training for the department. It uses computer modeling of actual fire behavior overlaid on photos of real locations to train firefighters in strategy and tactics. The program can be used to pre-plan and review different incidents.

Conflagrations: Lt. Ray Wooldridge, Lt. Levi Lindsey, and Deputy Chief Kyle Romey deployed the Tye Ridge Fire on task forces and the incident management team. Deputy Chief Chris LaBelle deployed to the Smith River Fire on the incident management team. We also supplied mutual aid to two large incidents over multiple periods: the Priceboro Fire (Harrisburg) and Wiley Fire (Sweet Home).



SEPTEMBER

Antiques in the Streets drew crowds from around the state to display their antique and restored vehicles. Active and retired department staff proudly displayed the Steamer engine and the newly restored Seagraves engine. Every year, Antiques in the Streets selects a worthy charity to donate proceeds to; this year, they made a generous donation of \$9,000 to AFFCAF.



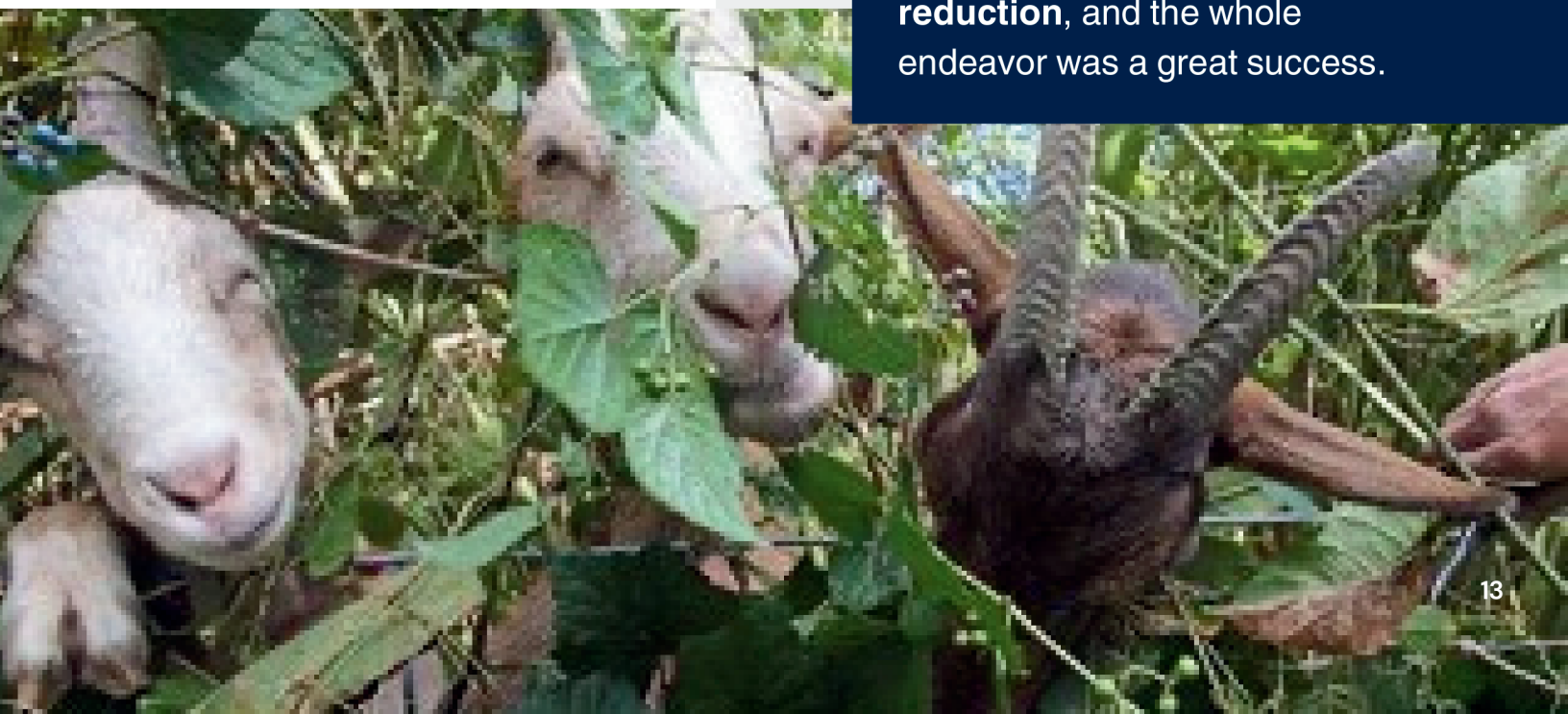
The third annual **AFFCAF Cornhole Tournament** brought together teams from the public safety fields and raised over \$1,900 for AFFCAF.

Albany City Council approved the acceptance of the **\$500,000 Samaritan Health Plans – InterCommunity Health Network grant** which will go toward growing the Community Paramedic program by 0.5 FTE for the next two years. This program, originally directed toward helping patients recently released from the hospital, has proven instrumental in helping, among others, the houseless and those recently released from incarceration. Deputy Chief Kyle Romey will transition into a half-time position in this program, working alongside current Community Paramedic Hillary Kosmicki.



Cardiac survivability is an important focus for the department because sudden cardiac arrest can happen at any time, to anyone, at any age. In addition to the speedy performance of CPR, using an AED can give a patient the best possible chance to survive. The **new AED Loaner program** makes an AED available to the public for special events. The public can sign up to borrow the AED online through the Albany Fire Department website; training is provided.

AFD was awarded a \$10,000 fire prevention grant from the Oregon State Fire Marshal to be used for defensible space/fire fuel reduction in North Albany (removing shrubs and brush from around buildings to lessen the chance of fires). After determining that hiring contractors to remove the brush would be too expensive, DFM Sandy Roberts (with approval from residents in North Albany) hired a herd of goats which ate up all the brush and climbing ivy without destroying the stability of the soil. The goats cheered up everyone, used a **novel approach to fuel reduction**, and the whole endeavor was a great success.





Representatives from **Life Flight** air medical transport came to AFD to train personnel in the hazardous process of landing a helicopter and loading patients into it. Air medical transport is especially useful in cases of critical patients who have experienced severe trauma or burns, when transport by a ground ambulance will take too long to reach the necessary hospital or burn unit. This valuable training was also attended by members of the Jefferson and Scio fire departments.

Every year AFD personnel gather to help teach local youth about firefighting and fire safety as the kids travel from station to station collecting stamps on a special passport created for the occasion. **The annual Treasure Hunt** also gives community residents valuable information on things like bike helmet fittings, car seat safety, cooking safety, and smoke alarm education with help from APD and Tangent FD.



AFD learned about **local midwife services**, discussed labor and delivery practices, and the differences in scope of practice from Mid-Valley Birth Midwives.

NOVEMBER

New EMS Division Chief Ray Wooldridge was promoted effective November 1. Chief Wooldridge is a former Field Training Officer for the department and is a paramedical instructor at Chemeketa College, so he comes to the position with a strong background in medical operations. This promotion is in line with former Deputy Chief Romey's transition into Battalion Chief, Community Health, heading the Community Paramedic program. The department is gearing up for significant transitions as several chiefs will be retiring or getting promoted in the coming year.



Five new personnel joined AFD in a **single role (EMS) academy** to staff the Medic 10 program to help accommodate the growing number of medical calls and transports the department experiences each year. AFD is pleased to welcome Lawrence Allise, Lindsay Lowen, Austin McDowell, Jared McMurren, and Micaiah Sode to the department.



NOVEMBER (CONTINUED)

AFD purchased new hose to replace the entire fleet of 2.5” hose. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends replacing hose every 10 years and AFD has 2.5” hose still in service from the 1980s. We also had no hose in reserve. This hose is a new, smaller size, allowing us to flow the same volume of water with more maneuverability and a lighter weight; it is also far more kink-resistant and easier to grip due to the smaller diameter. The new hose will go into service in 2024.

Internal candidates were interviewed for company officer openings on the line. This process generated a two-year list to draw from in anticipation of several imminent retirements and transitions. **FF Hans Reerslev was selected as the newest lieutenant** for the department.



DECEMBER



Every year, the community looks forward to the Albany Downtown Association's annual **Downtown Twice Around parade**. Entries in this holiday parade usually include a horse-drawn trolley, community groups, schools, and businesses. The highlight of the parade is the chance to see Santa, driven by FF Gabe Anderson along the parade route in the historic LaFrance fire engine.

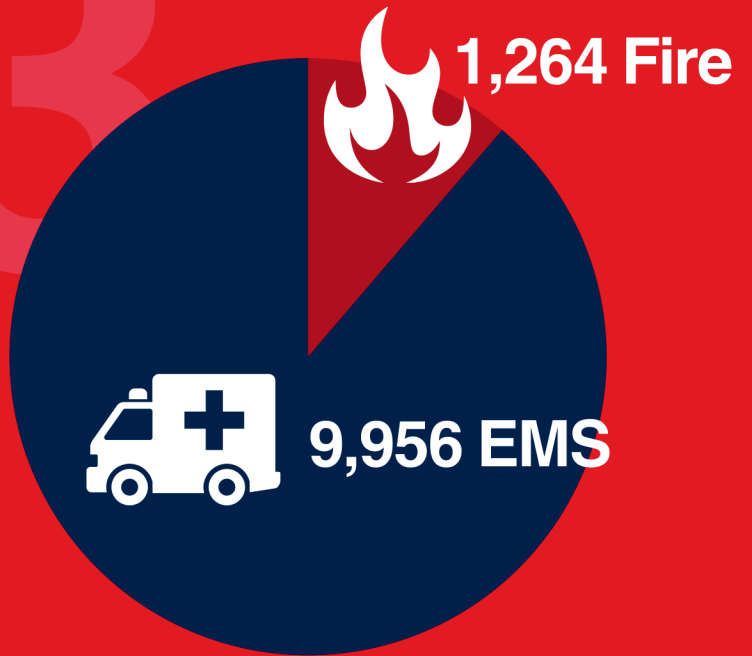


This year the department put on the annual toy drive in conjunction with AFFCAF, the City of Millersburg, and Margin Coffee. This drive partners with DHS to solicit toys for children within the DHS system. In addition to donations of toys, the department also receives monetary donations which the crews use to shop for even more presents for needy children and young people.

As a direct result of AFD starting its SAFER staffing plan on Truck 11 earlier in the year, there were sufficient personnel on-hand early enough to perform a critical rescue at a fire in mid-December. This rescue saw AFD personnel using their training to convert a window to a door in order to extricate the victim of a house fire, saving that victim's life. 17

2023

11,220 Calls



900
Inspections

Covering
14,878,643
sq. ft.

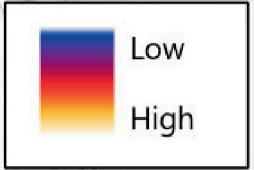
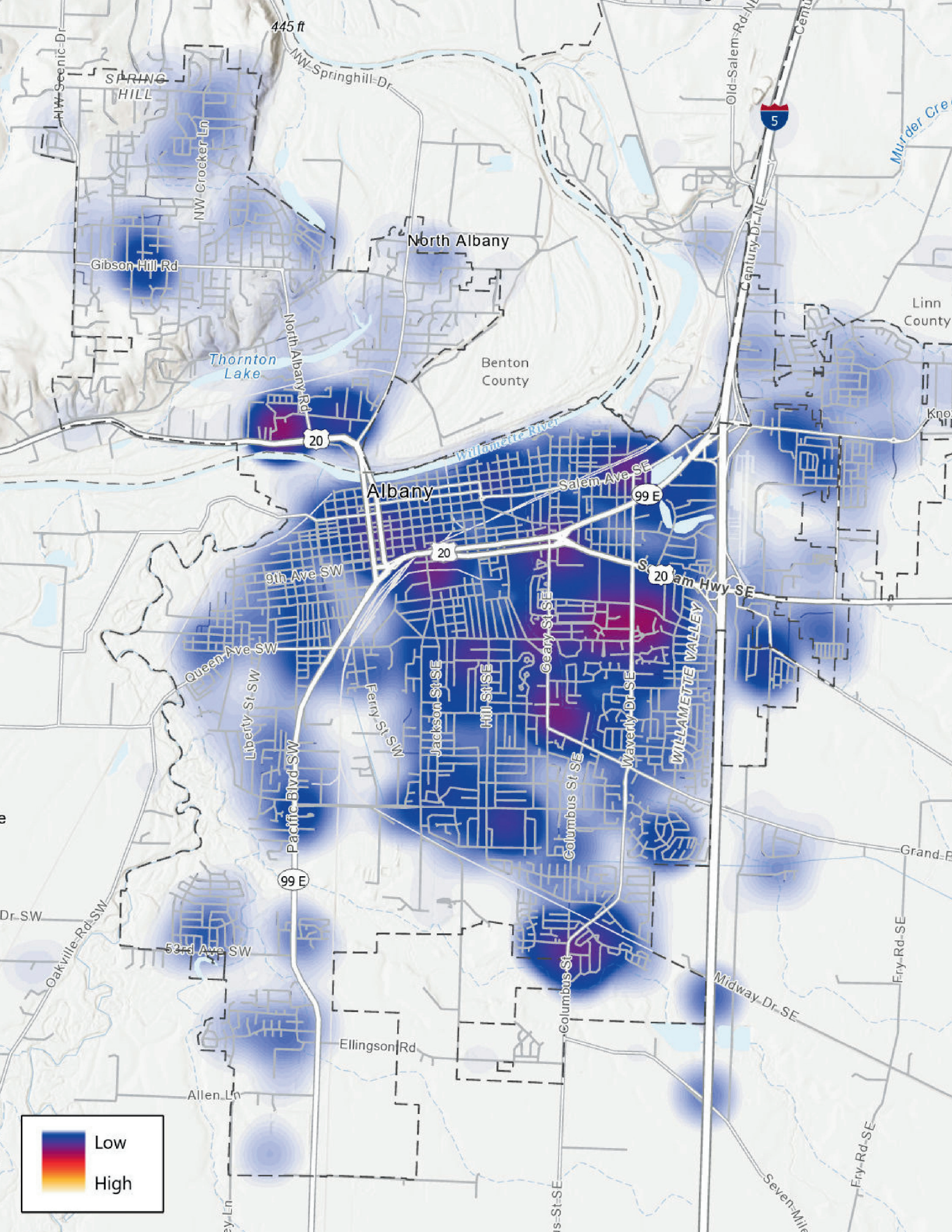
808 Cited Violations

10,222 Training Hours

589 cleared
to date

The training division also completed Academy 2022-B and staged Academies 2023-A and 2023-B, all including a live-fire training component. They also facilitated the single role EMS Academy 2023-C.







fire.albanyoregon.gov

Professional Affiliations:

Department of Public Safety Standards and Training; International Association of Arson Investigators; International Association of Firefighters Local #845; National Fire Protection Association; Oregon Department of Forestry; Oregon Fire Chiefs Association; Oregon Fire Service Office Administrators; Oregon Fire Marshals Association; Oregon Health Authority; Oregon State Fire Marshal; Oregon State Marine Board

Community Partners:

Albany Chamber of Commerce; Albany Firefighters Community Assistance Fund; Albany Public Safety Foundation; Antiques in the Streets; Costco; Greater Albany Rotary Club; Home Depot; Life Flight; Lowe's; Margin Coffee; NoDinx; North Albany Supermarket IGA; Rotary Club of Albany; Samaritan Health Services; Sybaris; Tradewinds

Government Partners:

City of Albany, especially the Albany Police Department; City of Millersburg; Linn County, especially Linn County Public Health and the Linn County Sheriff's Office; Albany Rural Fire Protection District; North Albany Rural Fire Protection District; Palestine Rural Fire Protection District