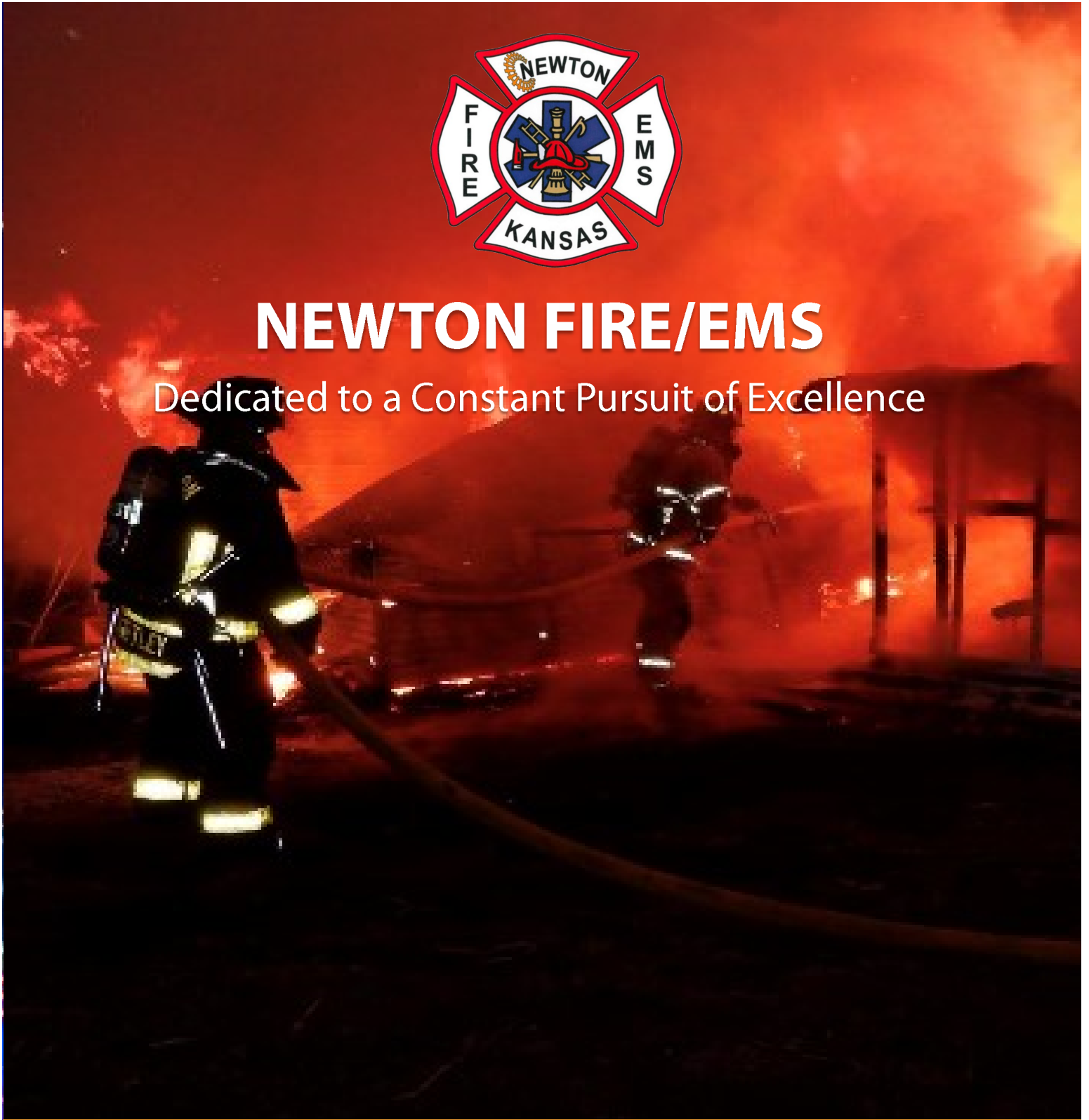




NEWTON FIRE/EMS

Dedicated to a Constant Pursuit of Excellence



2022

Annual Report

The vision of the Newton Fire/EMS Department is to build a premier Fire/EMS Agency.

Year in Review

For more than three years now, the global healthcare system has faced unparalleled challenges with staffing, supply chain scarcity, and hospital bed shortages. While some of these problems can be attributed to the global Covid-19 pandemic, others cannot. Newton Fire/EMS has been rather unscathed by staffing shortages. However, we have seen our fair share of medical supply, fire equipment, and medication shortages. Newton Fire/EMS members have remained flexible and have adapted well to continued increases in call volume and requests for services. The community we serve continues to change and diversify so we adjust our practices accordingly in order to meet those needs. Newton Fire/EMS plays a critical role in the health and safety of this community and we will continue to serve our citizens with compassion and a caring hand.

For the second straight year, Newton Fire/EMS set an all-time high in call volume. In 2022, we responded to 4,280 calls for service, which is nearly 12 calls per day and 170 more calls than we responded to in 2021. Of those calls, 3,743 (87%) were EMS calls. While most of our patients opt to go to Newton Medical Center Health, we have protocols which allow us to take patients to the most appropriate facility given the patient's medical needs. On 383 occasions, we utilized this provision to transport to other hospitals, most of which were to Wichita. Additionally, we transferred another 420 patients out of local facilities for specialized care. We will continue to collaborate with local healthcare professionals to provide our patients with the best possible care available.

Training is still paramount for our members to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by this profession. With such a young department, training is of critical importance in achieving the standard of care that we expect and our citizens deserve. In 2022, a new 12-month rookie training program was developed for all new hires. This standardized training program provides a mix of map learning, policy/protocol review, performance skills and online learning. In 2022, four new hires completed this new training program and the feedback has been positive.

Our Community Risk Reduction division remained busy throughout 2022, completing 730 code inspections and identifying 384 code

violations. Our public education team provided 53 community service events, with approximately 8,800 citizens taking part in these educational sessions. Our investigation team completed 39 fire investigations, determining that 24 were accidental, five were incendiary, and eight were undetermined. Based on our investigator's documentation, one suspected arsonist was sentenced to 49 months in jail for their role in a house fire. Additionally, three juveniles completed the youth fire setter program in an effort to stop suspicious fire setting activities.

Another notable accomplishment during the past year included Chief Steve Roberson's completion of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. This is a four year program consisting of graduate and upper baccalaureate level courses; it focuses on fire service training, technology and research, data collection and analysis, and public education. The Executive Fire Officer Program is the pinnacle of the U.S. Fire Administration and is considered the highest level of distinction in the American fire service.

Our specialized teams were also very busy in over the past year. The Technical Rescue Team had two deployments. In March, when the team was deployed to Eastern Reno County to support search and rescue efforts following the large Cottonwood Complex Wildfire that charred thousands of acres and destroyed over 35 houses and hundreds more outbuildings. The Technical Rescue Team was again deployed in late spring to Butler County following the EF3 tornado strike of Andover. Two four-person crews were called on over several operational periods to conduct wide-area search and rescue operations. This two day operation brought together Task Force 5 members from eight different departments in south central Kansas. Overall, more than 1,000 structures were damaged with approximately 400 of those destroyed during the tornado's 13-mile path.

Newton Fire/EMS had two high profile fires in 2022. The first fire, as previously mentioned, occurred in early March in Eastern Reno and Western Harvey Counties and was known as the Cottonwood Complex Fire. Due to the size and complexity of the fire, overhaul spanned multiple days.

Newton crews worked through the night on overhaul and continued staffing 12-hour operational periods for many days. In total, Newton Fire/EMS responded to the Cottonwood Complex Fire with nine apparatus and 16 crew members. The second major fire occurred at Fox Meadows Apartment complex in Newton. A well-involved fire in a four-plex destroyed 12 individual apartments. Multiple agencies assisted with the incident, including Hesston Fire/EMS, Halstead Fire/EMS, and Walton Fire Department.



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Division Chief Beebe Retires After 25 Years

“It was one of those perfect Kansas summer mornings and I found myself wedged in the cab of old Engine 4 between Captain Wedel and Vince Garcia, responding to a grass fire east of town. The steering wasn’t great on that truck and Vince was busy trying to keep it between the lines. As we came over the hill by the water tower on East 12th Street, we saw the most beautiful Kansas sunrise and smoke in the distance. It was in that moment I knew this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.”

Division Chief Phil Beebe hung up his helmet for the last time in November of 2022. He points to that grass fire response 27 years earlier as a defining moment, a combination of excitement and contentment, knowing his hard work of becoming a firefighter was paying off.

A Wichita native, Phil attended Blessed Sacrament Grade School, Brooks Middle School, and graduated from Wichita Heights High School. During the summer, he worked at the Sedgwick County Zoo, where he met his future wife.

Phil said, “When I was a senior in high school, there was a guy in my horticulture class who’d just joined the Sedgwick County Fire Reserves and invited me to come along with him and check it out. I soon joined, loved it, and realized that’s what I wanted to do.”

After high school, Phil took a job driving a boom truck for United Rentals in Wichita. A couple of years later, marriage and the prospect of starting a family led Phil and his wife, Lynn, to move to Newton, looking for a job with health insurance and better benefits. He recalls reaching out to Dean Davis at Newton Fire Department, but full-time openings were not available. In his memory, the conversation went something like this: “Yeah, there’s no way you’re getting a job here because turnover never happens. But we do have a reserve program.” Chief Davis said if he got his EMT and FF1, Phil could join the reserves.

And so, Phil took a job at AGCO in Hesston. “While there I could think of nothing other than getting on the Newton Fire Department,” he says. He began taking night courses at “the old Halstead Hospital,” working on his EMT-Basic certification. Eventually, he obtained this along with basic fire certifications. In 1995, Phil joined the Newton Fire Reserve Program.

Staying focused on the goal, Phil began taking evening fire science courses at Station 2. Additionally, he did 12-hour ride-along shifts on the weekends, gaining valuable experience. He recalls his first structure fire: “Sauerwein and I were first in on the hose. We went in and it was all blacked out with smoke. We were going in circles in a room but couldn’t find the seat of the fire, or a way to get out of the room. Perkins ended up knocking it down with a hose line from the outside. When it was all said and done, we realized the house was being remodeled and they’d stacked sheetrock against a wall, blocking the door to the rest of the house.”

Eventually, the Newton Fire Department had openings for full-time positions. Phil recalls going through something like four different hiring processes to get the job. In 1997, he became the first person hired in the newly created Newton Fire/EMS Department, which was the result of a merger between the fire and ambulance departments. “It was a challenging time to get hired, culturally,” he said. Guys were butting heads because they weren’t all fans of the merger. Of course, I didn’t care. I was just so happy to be there, I kept my head down and did my thing.” Over the next several

years, Phil gained valuable experience and worked to increase his education. He completed paramedic school at Hutchinson Community College Yoder campus, graduating in 2000.



He has many fond

memories of early years on C-shift. “At fires, I used to fight Metzler and Moon for the nozzle,” he said. “Cooking was a big deal at the firehouse; I wasn’t used to all the rich foods they ate—ham loaf and stuff like that.” Phil remembers taking some heckling for his own cooking but he says, “I used to say I was my own favorite cook...which was a complete lie.”

A not-so-fond memory came when Phil accidentally damaged one of the department vehicles. “Flavin and I were out on Engine 4 at a grass fire. Tank 1’s pump filter had plugged up, so Brackeen came out in Truck 8 with a new filter,” he recalls. “Truck 8 was a brand new pickup and Milt had just finished putting all the striping on it. I was backing up Engine 4 and backed right into the rear quarter panel of that new truck.” He said, “That’s when I learned that all trucks had two mirrors, one on each side, and all I’d have to do was look at both of them.”

In 2009, Phil was promoted to Fire/EMS Lieutenant, alongside the opening of the department’s new Station 3. He recalls, “The experience of opening a new station was significant to me. We had to go buy things like silverware and plates, things you take for granted.” He also recalls working with the other new lieutenants and chief officers to develop a new response profile, working to determine how best to serve the community’s growing south side.

Phil looks back on this time fondly and states he had many good years after that, enjoying both the job and his crew members. Eventually, a retirement opened up a lieutenant position at Station 1 and he moved there, staying in that role until his 2017 promotion to Division Chief of Training.

Phil enjoyed the added responsibilities and had a passion for training. He says, “It was not without its struggles, but there was a lot of grace and patience extended and I really enjoyed it.” The Training Chief position also comes with an assignment of the department’s infection control officer. He said, “Understanding my role and feeling like I was being effective during all the various responses and changes of the pandemic was a challenge.”

In keeping with tradition, we asked Phil for parting advice or thoughts, especially directed towards newer firefighters. Phil said, “I will always believe, and tell anyone who will listen, how much of an honor it is to be able to respond to a medical emergency or fire call in the community that you serve.” He said, “The other thing would be, never take your coworkers for granted, whether you like them or not. Always be slow to anger and quick to forgive.”

2022 Sees Members Earning Paramedic Licenses

For more than 50 years now, Newton Ambulance Department and Newton Fire/EMS have been providing citizens with the highest level of pre-hospital care, Advanced Life Support. In 2022, three members of Newton Fire/EMS earned the title of Paramedic. Jeremy Newhouse, Garrett McKinney, and Vincent Quentin completed the 18-month Hutchinson Community College Paramedic Program, each earning their Associate Degree of Applied Science. The HCC Paramedic Program is comprised of classroom lectures, clinical rotations, and a minimum of 528 hours of field internship. Newton Fire/EMS currently employs 26 firefighter/paramedics, 21 firefighter/EMTs, and three firefighter/A-EMTs.



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This was one of the largest fires in the City of Newton in the past five years, with an estimated 70 responders and volunteers providing assistance throughout the incident. The Fox Meadows fire is considered a “career fire” for many of the responders, as it will be one of the biggest fires they battle in their entire fire career.

Early in 2022, Newton Fire/EMS was the sponsoring agency for a regional Federal Assistance for Firefighters grant for communications equipment that meets industry standards. Halstead Fire/EMS and Sedgwick Fire partnered in this grant, which totaled nearly \$500,000 of federal funds. Newton Fire/EMS’ portion of the funds was just over \$370,000. The grant has allowed Newton Fire/EMS to purchase 50 new handheld radios, along with 10 apparatus radios and three base station radios. This is the third largest grant awarded to Newton Fire/EMS.

The members of Newton Fire/EMS are committed to serving the citizens of Newton and Harvey County. To do so, we must continually adjust, adapt, and evolve to meet the needs of our community. We take great pride in this community and would like to thank our stakeholders, community partners, and elected officials for their long-standing support of our mission.



4,280	Calls for Service
3,331	Hours of Training
53	Community Service Events
38	Building Plans Reviewed
9	Building Projects Completed
730	Fire Code Inspections
384	Fire Code Violations
39	Fire Investigations
\$1,109,074	Estimated Property Loss from Fire