



# 2019

## FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

**“This past year was filled with more milestones in building our foundation as we progress to meet the evolving demands of our growing community”**

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REFLECTION

On behalf of the South Sioux City Fire Department, I am pleased to present the 2019 Annual Report. This report offers insight into the direction of the department, highlights our collective achievements, and demonstrates the impressive range of services we provide to the community; and surrounding towns. Most importantly, this report allows me the opportunity to recognize the men and women of the South Sioux City Fire Department for their exemplary performance in 2019.

The men and women in our department are highly trained and motivated professionals. We take great pride in serving our community while pursuing our mission of providing the highest quality emergency services with integrity and respect. In 2019 we again encountered many adventures in the dynamics of Emergency Services to which the members rose to the occasion, meeting each challenge with an unwavering commitment to service.

We again encountered another year of rising Missouri River waters in flooding yet again. The department was there to give assistance to our citizen's needs.

As Fire Chief, I am proud of our members and how far the South Sioux City Fire Department has come in the last three years. I know that decisions made today will impact the department in the years to come and thus this past year was exceptionally critical in paving the way to the future.

Respectfully,

Clint Merithew, Fire Chief

*The brightest of the brightest, cannot outshine the pride, integrity and perseverance of those who dedicate their lives to saving who are in need.*

**-David Stormont**

# ANNUAL STATS

In 2019, we responded to yet another record high of 1,540 calls, averaging more than 4 calls per day.

Fire Station #1 which is the main and administrative station holds the bulk of the calls. However Station #2 took many calls this year due to geographic location and the busy rail line.



## FIRE FACTS

### POPULATION:

South Sioux City- 13,353

### PROTECTS:

South Sioux City- 5.96 sq mi

### STATIONS: 2

Station #1- 1501 Dakota Ave

Station #2- 3203 Dakota Ave

### MINIMUM DAILY STAFFING: 3, 1-Chief

### STAFFING RATIO:

Averages 1 on-duty Firefighter  
For every 1,483 residents

### SHIFTS: 3

**BUSIEST MONTHS:** May ,June,  
September with 128 calls for service

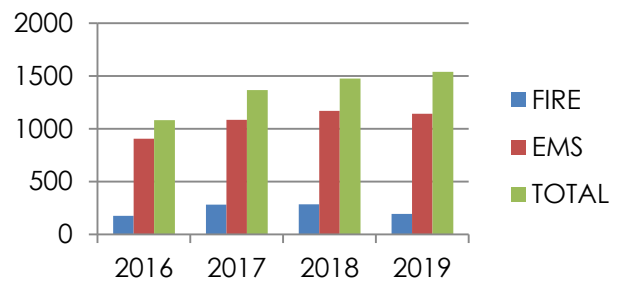
**SLOWEST MONTH:** October: 101

**IN SERVICE:** (1) ALS Ambulance  
(1) Fire Engine

**CERTIFIED MEMBERS:** 19

**VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS:** 13

## CALL VOLUME TREND



## 2019 CALL VOLUME BY INCIDENT TYPE

**TOTAL**  
1,540



**FIRE** 192  
**EMS** 1,142  
**Misc** 206

Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak, and esteem to all.

**-George Washington**



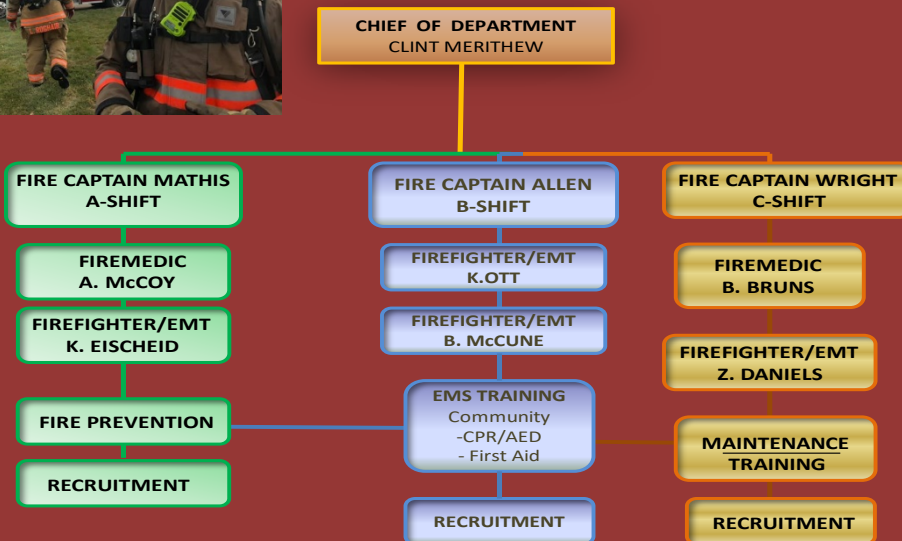
# DEPARTMENT FRAMEWORK



With commitments to exceptional customer service, our vision is to be a progressive fire department in pursuit of a safer community. We aspire to have a highly trained, well-equipped workforce that is prepared to respond to all current and future needs of those we serve.

It is the mission of the South Sioux City Fire Department to preserve life and property; promote public safety; and foster community support services in a professional manner.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART & RESPONSIBILITIES



### FIRE CHIEF

\*C. Merithew

### Captain

\*J. Mathis, NREMT-P

\*P. Allen, NREMT-P

\*Q. Wright, NREMT-P

### Firefighters

C. Antle, NREMT

D. Barkley, NREMT

\*B. Bruns, NREMT-P

E. Cruz, NREMT-P

\*Z. Daniels, NREMT

C. Dekker

\*K. Eischeid, NREMT

M. Howieson

E. Howieson, NREMT

M. Kaylor

K. Keefer

\*A. McCoy, NREMT-PU

\*B. McCune, NREMT

A. Merithew

\*K. Ott, NREMT

A. Quinn, NREMT-P

L. Roghair, NREMT

D. Ryder

P. Wolf

\* *Designates full time*



The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office.

**-Dwight D. Eisenhower**

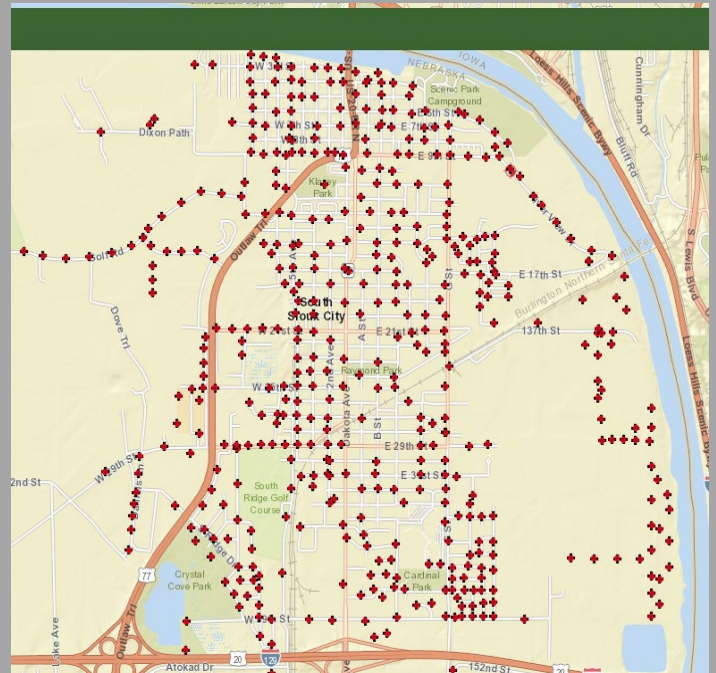
# OPERATIONS

South Sioux City Fire Department Operations is a diversified entity which can sustain all that it is handed. Encompassing the 5.96 square city miles, the department in 2019 added more acreage to ensure our citizens and services in an expeditiously manner.



Our Fire Boundary changed to incorporate the new Flat Water development and that of east 39<sup>th</sup> and Bennet Ave. This addition reduced the previous response times by several minutes by having now in the City's jurisdiction of emergency services. The GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping below indicates the responsibility areas with imbedded hydrant mapping.

Each responding apparatus has a tablet with Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD) that gives detailed information pertaining to the address, nature of the call, and layering the locations of nearest hydrant by mapping for fire incidents.



The Official Roll-Out utilizing 9-1-1- in texting emergency information was made due this 2019. It enable the user to contact the Law Enforcement Center (LEC) intake systems in the case the caller is unable to verbally give the needs. In cases of entrapment from a domestic abuse, unable to speak due to health or other unrelated conditions. The caller or sender can communicate by text messages. South Sioux City with Dakota County and Woodbury County in Iowa has these reciprocal capabilities.

**"Don't give them what you think they want. Give them what they never thought was possible".**  
-Orson Wells

# GRANTS

In 2019, the South Sioux City Fire Department was notified of a grant through FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.



The applied consecutive years for a new ambulance and replacing our aging SCBA's (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) however yet to obtain. This year we were awarded a FEMA- AFG Grant for \$29,000 for smoke and Carbon Monoxide. In the early stages we worked with local business Wilmes Hardware, on drafting the entire grant through them to obtain the materials. Including 10 year batteries, strobes for the hard of hearing. The crews were busy setting up scheduling for the last part of the year into the New year 2020 for installation of the detection devices.

# TRAINING

Training is the requirement of any job in keeping finely tuned, and honing your craft. The departments training plan is formatted to serve the members for NFPA compliance with educational opportunities throughout the year. We develop an annual plan which provides a schedule balanced throughout all risk related disciplines and services the department provides to the City of South Sioux City. Training topics and objectives are engineered to ensure that all department personnel receive adequate opportunities to continue development of knowledge, skills and abilities. Personnel are expected to perform at a competent level in all disciplines. The 2019 training schedule incorporated numerous elements of training opportunities quarterly and monthly evenings. Offering department standards of operation, specialized training, operational scenarios, and certification courses through the State Fire Marshal's Training Division of Nebraska.



The department had the OFSM Training Division in for certification in Firefighter-1 with other agencies coming to South Sioux City to complete the requirements.

We annually train and test personnel in department apparatus in EVOC (Emergency Vehicle Operators Course). This ensures both personnel and Administration that each person has been trained and tested to a level of competence to the safe handling of equipment.

We had personnel in 2019 travel to Montana to receive certified training in swift water rescue. Zach Daniels and Lee Roghair received instructional methodology in the safe practices of reading the waters, the currents, eddies, and afloat procedures. Using rope lines in rescue and recovery when the inevitable occurs, the crews are ready for any adverse scenario.

"How many times had those awful words- I know what I'm doing" been uttered throughout history as prelude to disaster?  
-Christopher Buckley





Rescue Boat Operations training with Sioux City Fire & Rescue



Training 5<sup>th</sup> Graders at Junior Fire Patrol on the aspects of home fire safety.



Crew members working their ALS skills assuring techniques are above board at all times.



Continued Community training throughout the year. In all weather conditions.

Budgets are moral documents. Federal funding should reflect the priorities and the values of the majority of the American people.  
**-Vice-President Mike Pence**

# PREVENTION

## FUNDAMENTALS

2

The Inspection division's mission is to create a safe environment for our residents and business community. We strive to prevent injury and loss of life and property.

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It's our job to ensure that all registered rental properties are inspected to the quality expected in the IPMC. With firefighters as the AHJ through the Rental Board, apartments, complexes and residential structures as rentals are inspected to assure the safety, and sanitary conditions exist for the safety of the tenants.



Another fact of the department is plan review in concert with the building department. Assuring new development has designed fire protection amenities for protection suppression systems. There in assures code and policy development and interpretation.

9

The intent of the business inspections to educate the local business owners since many have not had an inspection since they first opened. Developing a Business Partnership Inspection thus allowing adequate time for code compliance.



**32**  
**1,142**  
**960**

**Paramedic Assists required from other agencies**

**Patients received care or assistance as the result of an EMS call for service**

**Rental Inspections conducted**

**"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".  
-Benjamin Franklin**



# PUBLIC EDUCATION

The South Sioux City Fire Department has long been an established partner with the South Sioux City Schools. The dominating E.D.I.T.H (Exit Drills In The Home) was developed back in 2018 where a bedroom was built. It includes movable walls, bed, door and windows. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students are walked through a house fire scenario and what to do in order to get out safely. Each student went through the practicum. One student stated *"This is something I will always remember."*



South Sioux City School Administration and staff hosted their annual training day in which the fire department was invited. The crews with their bags of instructional kits instructed over 400 school personnel the aspects of fire and life safety. This included fire extinguisher training, breaking window glass safely, door stoppers and Stop-the-Bleed.



*Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength.."*

*-J.F. Kennedy*



# LIVES SAVED

On August 26, 2019 at the City Council meeting, South Sioux City Firefighters were recognized for the Code Save Award. This award is given to First Responders who bring back a cardiac victim to a full recovery walking out of the hospital. The crews were recognized for the three recent since January 2019 with a total of four since November 2018. The National average is 8%, the Nebraska average is 12%, South Sioux City Fire has a 36% successful recovery rate. With the assistance of First Responders and witnessed attacks initiating CPR, this all gives the cardiac victim a greater chance for a successful outcome.

**PICTURED:** Firefighter Kevin Ott, Firefighter Aaron Merithew, Firefighter Chase Antle, Captain/Paramedic Payne Allen, Firefighter Kevin Eischeid, Firefighter Brandon McCune, Paramedic Blake Bruns, Firefighter Zach Daniels, Paramedic Aaron McCoy, Captain/Paramedic Qwinn Wright, Fire Chief Clint Merithew, Captain/Paramedic Jay Mathis.

**Not pictured** were South Sioux City Police Officer Claussen, Officer Hattermann.

Nebraska State Senator Joni Albrecht was also present to congratulate the Department and the City for a sincere appreciation to a job well done.



"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years".

-Abraham Lincoln

# NEW WHEELS

In 2019 we had the pleasure of welcoming our newest first-out ambulance in many years to the South Sioux City Fire Department. This is a refurbished 2012 AEV Type -1 ambulance with four-wheel drive capabilities. Larger than other ambulances in the fleet, the versatility of the 4x4 allows access in all means of mud, snow and ice accessibilities. The new unit replaced an older and very unpredictable unit which created maintenance challenges for the department in both operationally and financially.

A new Special Operations trailer was purchased by the Volunteer Association with Pickle Tickets funds and will be set up for training, housing rope rescue, department confined space equipment. It will be used as a Command Post on large scale incidents, training evolutions and special events. When the trailer is completed it will have radio capabilities air conditioning and heating for the elements.



**HERE TO STAY** Grant funding back in 2017 allowed the City to hire five full-time firefighters awarded through FEMA's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response program (SAFER). In February of 2018 the department began expanding and accomplishing tasks and expanding on programs for educational development and NFPA mandated training. Amid all these was the acquisition of updating fire equipment in preparation of the Insurance Services Office (ISO) re-grading in 2020. The leaps and bounds which has caused a bit of a strain on the city and department will be finally spelled out after the anticipated lowering from a Class 5 to an ISO Class 3 City. This number represents residential property owners and businesses to see a relief in their property insurance. The grading has specifics addressed in three departments: Water, Dispatch and Fire. The water department with their expanding and upgrading water system and the upgrading of the communications at the LEC leaves the Fire Department to pull up the boot straps. The crews busy in their training, records, reports, call responses, vehicle maintenance, Community Risk Reduction which is the Rental Inspections and other predominate scoring will lead the way for community pride in their fire department and renewed partnership with the City.

Of the five new firefighters (SAFER-5), if it was not by the City Council taking that big step and voting for the increase in firefighters, the elevation of services would not be where it is today. Positive outcomes from the SAFER-5 have increased the livelihood in the City of South Sioux City. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, EMS Division bestowed the greatest award on the Department and the City by acknowledging that no other City in the state of Nebraska has the percentage of lives saved than in South Sioux City with the responsiveness of our City Paramedics. We have demonstrated to the city and the Council that would allow the department to continue with staffing beyond the life of the FEMA Grant.



"When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves"  
-VIKTOR F. FRANKL



## Final Thought

With forward thinking and progressive leadership, the department is prepared to carefully lay the groundwork for long range planning and to continue building upon prior achievements as we plan for the future. Together.

We are grateful to you Mayor and City Council, and our citizens for the outpouring of support and encouragement as we navigate changes in the fire service with our limited resources. In turn, we pledge to never waiver in upholding our longstanding tradition of dedication and service.

**Esprit de Corps**

## 2020 Goals

1. Preparations for ISO (Insurance Services Office) re-evaluation for lower grading
2. Training Grounds
  - a. Complete conceptual project
  - b. Develop underground utilities
  - c. Develop alliances with area agencies
3. Fire Station #2
  - a. Begin architectural remodel
4. Hire part-time 20 hour/week Admin Asst
5. Begin Commercial Inspections

## Spotlight

Often times people get caught up in the moment of their assigned tasks and are not aware of the feats of performance they have not only accomplished but the means in which it was completed.

Now we take the time to recognize those in the Spotlight. For their achievements for 2019 where they were recognized at the August Annual steak dinner.

We developed a new recognition this year, for those personnel that responded to the most Fire and EMS calls.

Volunteer Firefighter Chase Antle was recognized responding on the most **FIRE** calls with 39 for the year. Chase, additionally responded on the most **EMS** call for the year with 174.

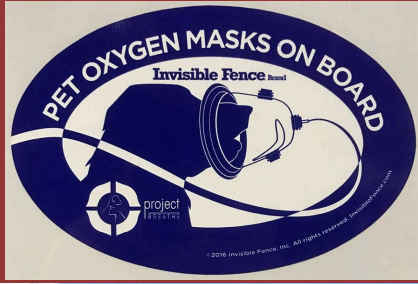
The Career Firefighter that responded on the most **Fire** calls was Kevin Ott, with 109 responses. Kevin also had the most **EMS** responses with 431.

The department recognized Firefighter/Paramedic **Aaron McCoy** as Medic of the year. Aaron responded on many of the Code Saves and handled the "JAWS" of Life the most for the year. For his achievements, we salute him for the job well done.

For Firefighter of the year 2019, we searched long and thorough for the most outstanding person fitting the bill. One who was always there, assisting almost every day at Fire Prevention Week, going to the schools, assisting with instruction and keeping the troops in line. Setting up for benefits, dinners and running the Volunteer Association. For all this we recognized **Esther Howieson** as Firefighter of the Year.

"How do you judge the brightness of a light when you're the source? A spotlight can never see the shadow it casts".  
-Neal Shusterman





"You have to learn the rules of the game".  
-Neil Coelho





"I like endings that let your imagination do a lot of the work".  
-Matt Bomer



# REFLECTION



“When we honor our flag we honor  
what we stand for as a nation-  
freedom, equality, justice and hope”.  
-Ronald Reagan