



# NEW RICHMOND FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

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**2023**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department is to preserve life and property, promote public safety, and foster economic growth through leadership, management, and actions as an all risk life safety response provider. The Department focuses on responding rapidly to emergencies and providing appropriate intervention and community education.

## **OUR COMMUNITY**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department proudly provides fire prevention, fire suppression, fire inspections, extrication, and rescue operations for a 150-mile radius consisting of the following local units of government:

City of New Richmond  
Village of Star Prairie

Town of Erin Prairie  
Town of Star Prairie

Town of Richmond  
Town of Stanton

## **FIRE BOARD**

Tom Weinmeyer  
Ron Volkert  
Mike Montello  
Rita Keating  
John Van Dyk  
Tom Heintz  
Dave Naser  
Dave Stephens  
Dick Hesselink

## **CITY COUNCIL**

Mayor Jim Zajkowski  
Craig Kittel  
Greg Gartner  
Mike Montello  
Tom Weinmeyer  
Ron Volkert  
Pete Vrieze

## **POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION**

Jon Hailey, Kirk Lindell, Andrea Kier, Michael Hedges

## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Tom Weinmeyer, Ron Volkert, Greg Gartner,  
Bill O'Connell, Shawn Demulling



## **OUR FIREFIGHTERS**

Josh Bell  
Chris Bendix  
Daryl Chute  
Marc Chute  
Jonathon Haffner  
Tyler Harris  
Noah Hughes  
Brad Johnson  
Jocelyn Kahonen

Antonio Kappos  
Kiel Kwiatowski  
Tony Leblanc  
Dan Maslowski  
Tristen Mortel  
Brad Niederer  
Brad Olek  
Vivian Roberts  
Noah Rud

Jerry Smith  
Mike Strey  
Jeff Swanson  
Jeremy Sylvester  
Maddie Sylvester  
Michael Tobritzhofer  
Josh Walczak  
Nick Watters  
Oliver Wettstein

## **OUR EXPLORERS**

Local youth ages 14-18 who are interested in learning more about firefighting are encouraged to join our Explorers Program to participate in some classroom training and hands-on lessons. Explorers can also participate in many of our community events throughout the year. Students who earn certifications in EMT, EMR, Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and/or Fire Inspector can earn a \$500 Career and Technical Education Incentive Grant per certification from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) upon their high school graduation.



VEHICLE	DESCRIPTION	YEAR
3261	Engine	2003
3262	Engine	2017
3263	Ladder Truck	2010
3264	Chief's Vehicle	2017
3265	Rescue Pumper	2006
3266	Brush Truck	2009
3267	Brush Truck	1999
3268	Tender	2006
3269	Tender	2001
3270	Rescue	1996
3271	Engine	1997
3272	Assistant Chief's Vehicle	2021
N/A	UTV	2018

## **OUR VEHICLE FLEET**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department uses a variety of specialized vehicles to respond to vehicle accidents, structure fires, grass and off-road events, and water/ice rescues.

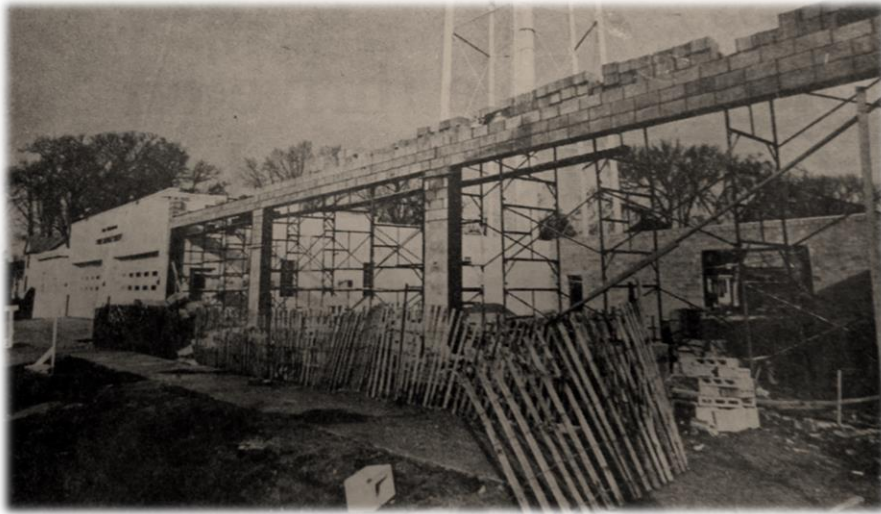




## **OUR HISTORY**

New Richmond was established in 1857 and the community slowly grew with churches, schools, the Omaha railroad, financial institutions, businesses, and houses. It's believed that organized firefighting followed shortly thereafter. A "truck house" for the first fire truck – a hook and ladder truck twenty feet long with pails on both sides – was constructed in 1880. Fires wiped out much of the City in 1892, and again in 1899 following the infamous cyclone that destroyed much of the city. Early bucket brigades advanced thanks to the invention of water-pumping engines and municipal water supplies. Common citizens selflessly participated on the fire department to help protect their communities and their fellow citizens, and this tradition continues to this day. We are appreciative of the hundreds of citizens who have served on the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department over the years and helped their fellow citizens during a time of need. The fire station, trucks, and specialized equipment have certainly changed over past 150 years, but the principle at the core of the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department – service to the community – has not changed.

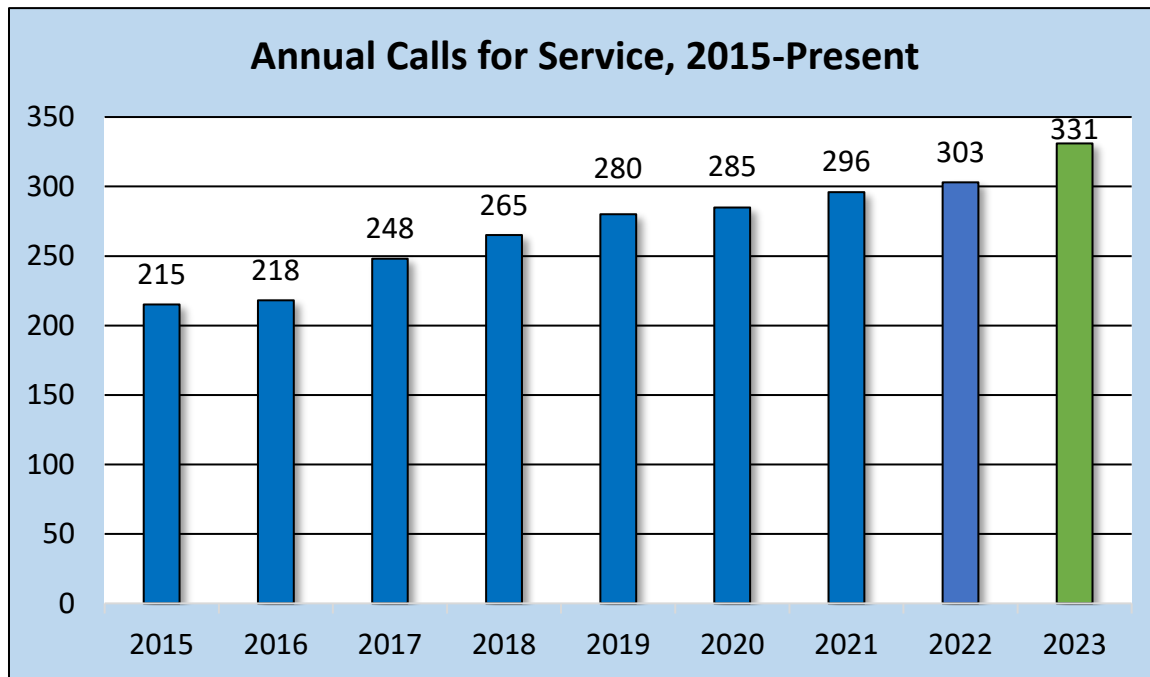




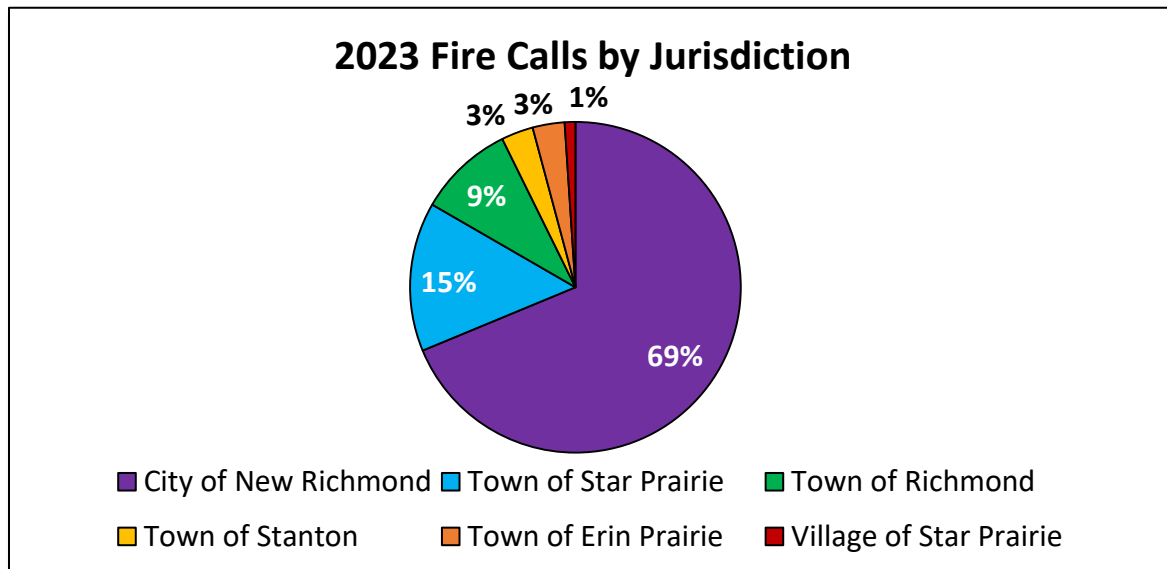


## **2023 CALL VOLUME & INCIDENT SUMMARY**

As St. Croix County continues to grow, so too has the number of calls for service. The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department received a record-high 331 calls in calendar year 2023.



The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department directly serves residents and businesses in the City of New Richmond, Town of Star Prairie, Town of Richmond, Town of Stanton, Town of Erin Prairie, and Village of Star Prairie. The graph below illustrates the calls for service received in the 2023 calendar year according to jurisdiction.

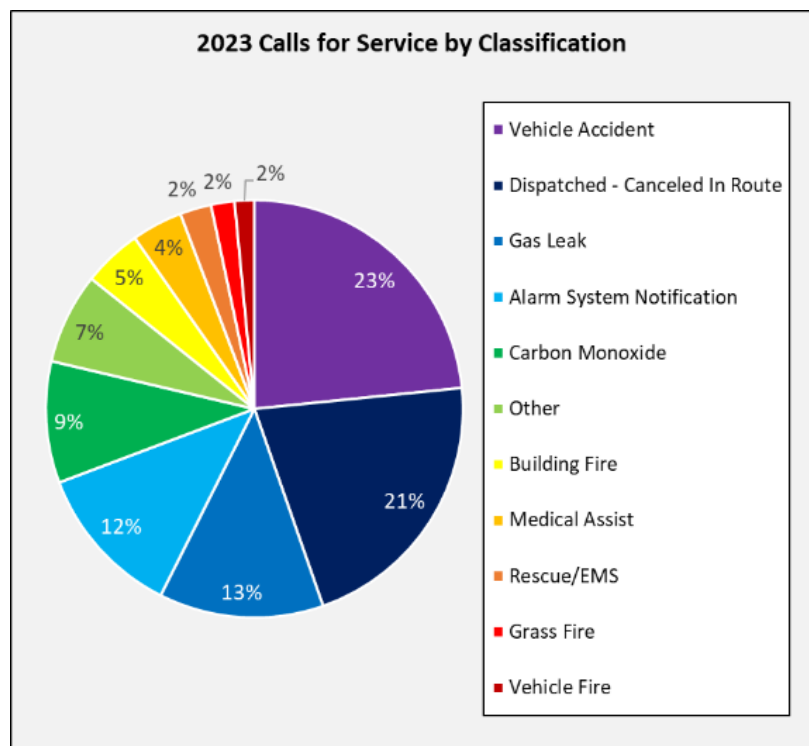
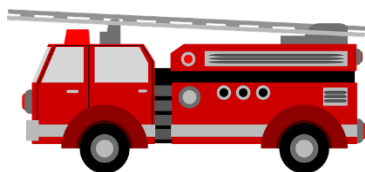


Department and Type of Aid	Count
<b>Deer Park</b>	
Automatic Aid Received	2
Automatic Aid Given	7
Mutual Aid Received	3
<b>Somerset</b>	
Automatic Aid Received	8
Mutual Aid Received	1
Mutual Aid Given	2
<b>Roberts/Warren</b>	
Mutual Aid Received	1
<b>Dresser/Osceola/Garfield</b>	
Mutual Aid Given	1
<b>United Fire</b>	
Mutual Aid Received	1
<b>Hudson Fire Department</b>	
Mutual Aid Given	1

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department has a positive working relationship with its neighboring agencies, who assist each other when the need arises. “Automatic Aid” refers to when the St. Croix County Communications Center (Dispatch) pages more than one fire department simultaneously for a single incident, without a request initiated by a fire department. “Mutual Aid” refers to when Dispatch pages a fire department after the first responding fire department requests assistance. In 2023, an automatic agreement was approved with Deer Park Fire, and staff are currently preparing an automatic agreement with Roberts/Warren Fire & Rescue, to better serve our residents who live on the edges of the respective jurisdictional boundaries.

The most frequent type of call for service in 2023 was to assist with motor vehicle accidents. It might surprise some people to learn that fires make up a relatively small number of the total calls received by the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department. Firefighters are asked to assist with an increasingly wide range of emergency situations, thus they require a variety of specialized equipment, tools, and training.

Incident Type	Count
Vehicle Accident	77
Dispatched, Canceled in Route	70
Gas Leak	42
Alarm System Notification	39
Carbon Monoxide	31
Building Fire	15
Medical Assist	13
Rescue/EMS	8
Grass Fire	6
Vehicle Fire	5



## **CEDAR LAKE SPEEDWAY**



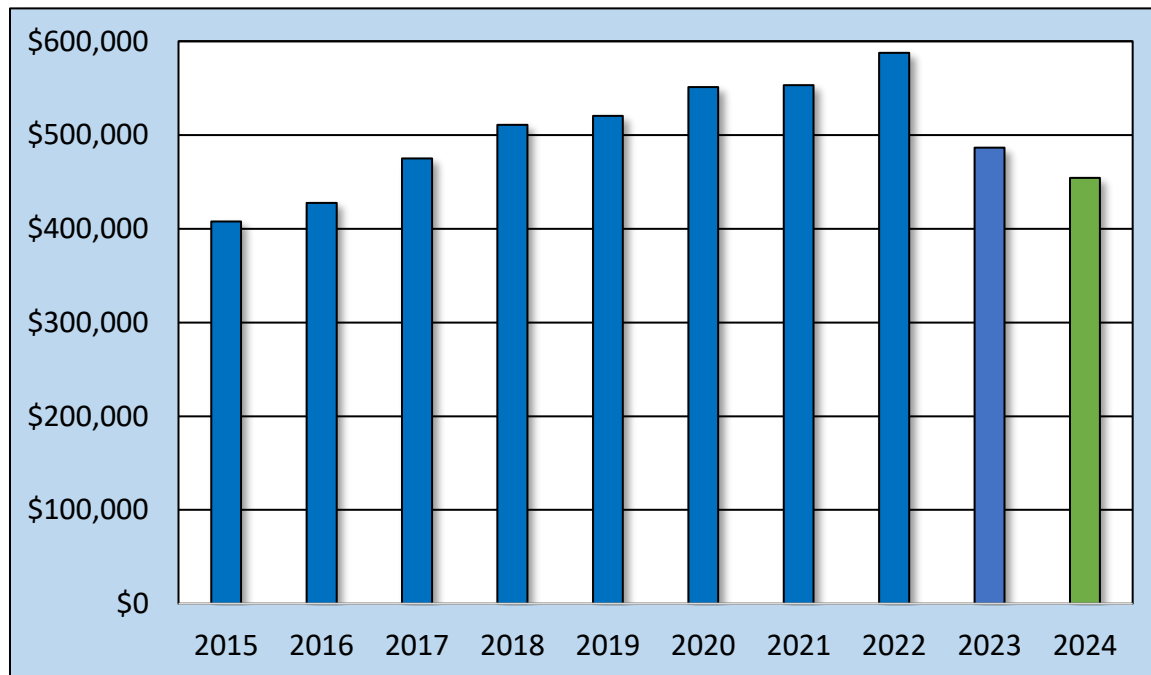
The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department provides contracted fire services to Cedar Lake Speedway, supplying two firefighters and a brush truck at all races during the outdoor season.

## **FIRE INSPECTIONS**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department performs annual inspections of commercial and industrial businesses, office buildings, nursing homes, apartment buildings, etc. to identify possible fire hazards. In 2023, the City Council adopted an ordinance requiring emergency access boxes be installed near the front entrance of new commercial buildings, to allow for faster and safety entry into the building for first responders and reducing property damage. Beginning in 2024, a re-inspection fee of \$50 can also be imposed for third and subsequent re-inspections, to further encourage voluntary compliance.

## **HISTORICAL OPERATING BUDGETS**

Over the past two budget cycles, operating expenditures have decreased roughly \$133,000 from where they were just two years ago. Due to greater operational efficiencies, the operating budget for 2024 will be lowest operating budget since 2016, despite inflationary pressure.





# **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Recent investments in capital projects include the following:

- Replacement of airbags and harnesses
- Reconstruction of the fire station parking lot
- Establishment of a future vehicle replacement fund
- Installation of a diesel exhaust removal system at the fire station
- Replacement SCBA cylinders
- Hose drying racks
- Rescue boat motor
- Replacement of large diameter hoses
- Grain bin rescue equipment



Hose drying racks

Some notable upcoming capital projects in 2024 include the acquisition of a forcible entry prop and a fire extinguisher demonstration tool.



Above, Left to Right: Rescue boat motor, grain bin rescue equipment, exhaust removal system

# **EXPLORERS COMPETE AT MN STATE FAIR**



The New Richmond Explorers participated in the Governor's Fire Prevention Day at the Minnesota State Fair, and received fourth place overall in the Explorers Competition. This was the first time participating in the event, and New Richmond had the smallest team, so this was a huge accomplishment. Congratulations to Eli, Vivian, Maddie, and Katelyn, and program advisor Daryl Chute, on a job well done.

## TRAINING

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department has regular trainings throughout the year and encourages firefighters to obtain additional certifications and complete additional continuing education courses. One of the highlights of the year was in late 2023, when the Department was able to participate in a live burn training with other local fire departments in a vacant house in New Richmond that was scheduled to be razed. This was a great (and rare) training opportunity in a controlled environment.



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department hosted its second **pancake breakfast** in June during the weekend of the New Richmond Park Art Fair, and the event was very well-attended. Thank you to Not Justa Café and Kwik Trip for their in-kind contributions towards the breakfast, and to everyone who made a free-will donation. Attendees enjoyed pancakes, eggs, sausage, donuts, and juice, as well as the opportunity for kids to view the fire trucks.







The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department not only participates in the **Fun Fest** parade, but also has a long-standing tradition of providing a fun afternoon of “water fights” for local kids who want to experience what it’s like to be on the fire hose line. Thanks to all of the families who participate and the firefighters and explorers who volunteer their weekend to assist.

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department, along with the New Richmond Police Department and New Richmond Area Ambulance Service, attended several neighborhood block parties as part of **National Night Out**, an annual community-building campaign that promotes partnerships with first responders and neighborhood camaraderie.



In recognition of **National Fire Prevention Week**, the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department visited local schools and childcare centers to help educate youth about fire safety. Special thanks to the 30+ local businesses and individuals who made generous donations to help purchase fire safety activity books, stickers, coloring books, bracelets, etc. for more than 1,300 children in our community. Families also had an opportunity to watch a vehicle extrication demonstration, enjoy a fire truck ride, learn safety tips to prevent home fires, and more.



## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

In addition to their service on the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department, firefighters gave back to the community during the holiday season by ringing bells for Salvation Army and by assisting with two great local organizations – Toys for Tots and Love Baskets – which provide gifts for hundreds of families in New Richmond and surrounding communities.



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## **HOW TO JOIN**

Are you interested in giving back to your community and serving on the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department? Please contact Human Resources Manager Sarah Reese at 715-246-4268 or [sreese@newrichmondwi.gov](mailto:sreese@newrichmondwi.gov) to complete an application form and to learn more. Applicants will be invited to participate in an interview process. New probationary firefighters are formally approved by the Police & Fire Commission, pending completion of a background check and physical exam.





## **FAQS – PROSPECTIVE FIREFIGHTERS**



### **Do I have to be a City resident?**

No. Firefighters must reside within fifteen miles of the City boundaries; several firefighters reside in the surrounding townships/villages. Many of our firefighters also work outside of New Richmond and even in Minnesota.

### **Do I need advance training to be hired?**

No. While we certainly welcome firefighters with previous experience and training, most new hires have little or no previous training or experience. Probationary firefighters must complete over 100 hours of coursework offered through Northwood Technical College (or another college) including *Firefighter I*, *Hazmat*, *Auto Extrication*, and *Emergency Medical Responder* to gain the basic knowledge and skills necessary to safely perform firefighting functions. Registration fees and the cost of books/materials are covered.

### **What is the time commitment?**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department has regularly scheduled meetings and trainings on Monday nights. Vehicle and equipment maintenance trainings are scheduled every six weeks on Tuesdays for two hours. Firefighters shall respond to a minimum of 25% of fire calls per calendar year unless they have an approved absence.

### **What is expected of my employer?**

Some professions, due to the nature of their position, may not allow for a firefighter to leave work, so communication is important to be sure that employers and employees have a mutual understanding of expectations. Employers should understand there could be instances where an employee may need to be late to work or leave work in order to respond to an emergency.

### **What are the benefits of serving as a paid per call firefighter?**

Firefighters make a direct impact in their community and find it rewarding to serve others in a time of need, and to interact with and educate their fellow citizens about fire safety. Firefighters develop strong relationships with fellow firefighters and first responders in New Richmond and neighboring agencies. Serving as a firefighter is also a great opportunity to further develop one's leadership skills, confidence, and abilities to communicate and work together on a team.

### **Are firefighters paid?**

The New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department is not a full-time career department that one might find in a larger city; our firefighters have their own full-time employment elsewhere. While firefighters receive some monetary compensation for their efforts, they serve first and foremost to help the community. Probationary firefighters who have not yet completed their coursework earn \$14 per hour. After moving to non-probationary status, firefighters earn \$18 to \$20 per hour based on years of service and position/rank.

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP US**

You can help the New Richmond Fire & Rescue Department in several different ways – big and small. We appreciate the continued support from our local community!

### **Serve As a Firefighter**

We are always looking for high-character, service-minded individuals who are interested in becoming firefighters. We welcome new recruits year-round and provide all necessary training. If you are a local employer, encourage and support your employees to serve as firefighters – it's a great way to give back to the community and your employees will become stronger leaders. If you or someone you know might be interested in learning more about serving as a firefighter, please contact us! We would be glad to meet with you and answer any questions that you or someone else might have.



### **Participate in Our Community Events**

Consider attending our various community events throughout the year, including our pancake breakfast, Fun Fest water battle, National Night Out, and Fire Prevention Week Open House. We always welcome donations, sponsorships, silent auction items, and volunteers.

### **Support Fire Safety Education**

Consider making a financial contribution to support our National Fire Prevention Week visits to local schools and childcare centers. Teach your children and grandchildren the dangers of fire and how to respond if there is a fire. Plan and practice escape routes from your home. Teach the importance of closing doors before going to sleep to prevent fires from spreading.

### **Adopt a Fire Hydrant**

Hydrants can easily get buried in snow and ice during the winter months. If there's a hydrant near your home or business, please clear at least three feet around the hydrant and clear a pathway to the street. Every second matters during an emergency, and keeping the hydrants clear saves our firefighters considerable time if they need to access them.



### **Apply for a Burning Permit**

Request a burning permit from the Fire Department (they're free) to make sure there is not a local or DNR-imposed burning ban in place, or other dangerous conditions present.

### **Install Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

It sounds simple, but installing smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors and replacing the batteries at least once a year is critical for the early detection of a fire in your home or business. Offer to assist an elderly neighbor or parent/grandparent as well.

