

# 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT



### CITY OF RHOME





# VISION

## MISSION

*Provide the highest level of customer service while fulfilling our duty to protect life, property, and the environment.*

## CORE VALUES

### DUTY

*To ensure that our organization and our members are at an optimum state of readiness when called upon to respond at a moment's notice.*



### HONOR

*To stand united in promoting excellence of character and integrity while adhering to what is right and ethical.*

### COMPASSION

*To treat every person with respect and empathy when confronted with those in distress and take action to alleviate the situation.*

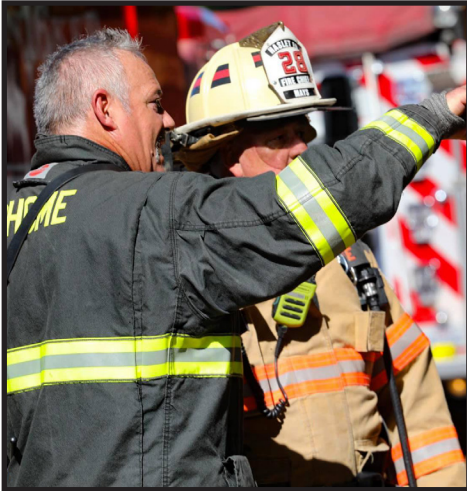


### SERVICE

*To positively impact our community and members of our organization by placing the needs of others before self, without judgment or thought of reward.*



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# FIRE CHIEF



**DARRELL FITCH**  
FIRE CHIEF

On behalf of the men and women of Rhome Fire Rescue, I am honored to present our 2020 Annual Report. The following report is a summary of the activities and achievements of the organization over the past year.

The content of this report is designed to provide insight into how our efforts are focused on providing the highest level of customer service, while also maintaining accountability and fiscal responsibility.

This past year has presented unique challenges with Covid-19. Those challenges required full attention and ability to continually anticipate the next step and update and adjust on a moment's notice all while seeing that the Department's Standard Operating Guidelines matched that effort.

We have learned through this global pandemic that nothing is constant and that change is inevitable in order to keep up with what many are saying is the new normal. I truly appreciate the dedication and sacrifice that was exhibited from each member of this department towards the community that we serve during these challenging times. I could not ask for a better group of colleagues. It is my hope that after you read the 2020 Annual Report, you will share in the appreciation that I have for this crew on what they were able to accomplish.

As we look forward to what 2021 offers, we will strive to build on our past accomplishments and to exemplify the honor, pride, and long standing history of providing quality and caring service.

Thank you to the City Council, the Mayor, and all the citizens for your support.

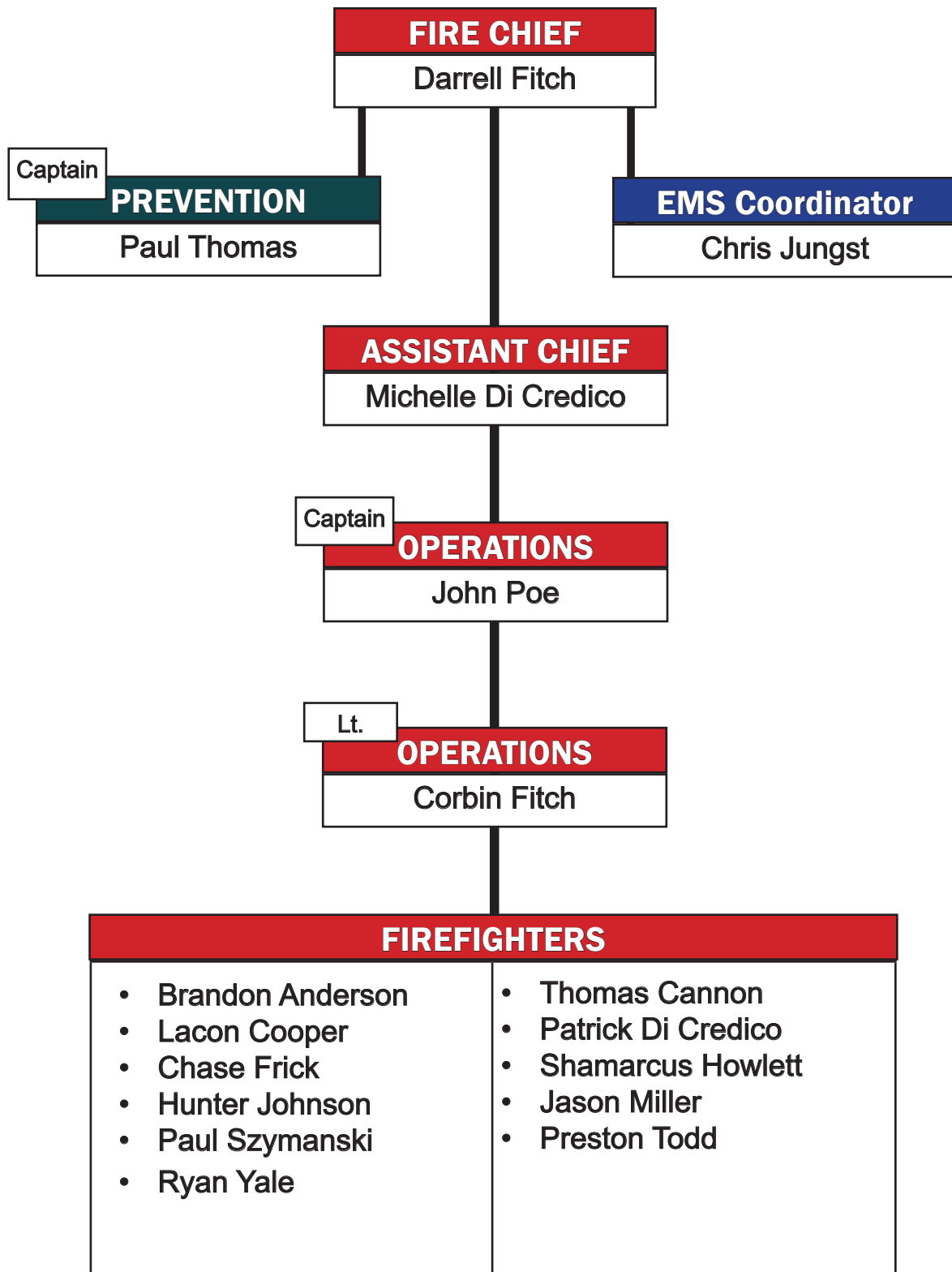
Fire Chief

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell Fitch".





# ORGANIZATION



# STATION



which was built in 1929. It houses two fire engines, one rescue truck, two brush trucks, one squad as well as a utility truck. The facility also contains the fire administrative offices, the emergency management command post, a training room, a bunk room and a workout room.

## COVERAGE

Rhome Fire Rescue covers approximately 50 square miles and currently serves approximately 5,000+ residents. The fire district also encompasses nine miles of State Highway 287/81 and eight miles of State Highway 114 which intersect in the City limits of Rhome as well as three miles along FM 3433 which includes Chisholm Trail Middle School, Prairie View Elementary School as well as the entrance for the Rolling V Ranch development first phases with over 1,200 new homes expected in the next 5-7 years. The Rolling V Ranch includes approximately 2,000 acres in the fire district.

## DID YOU KNOW?

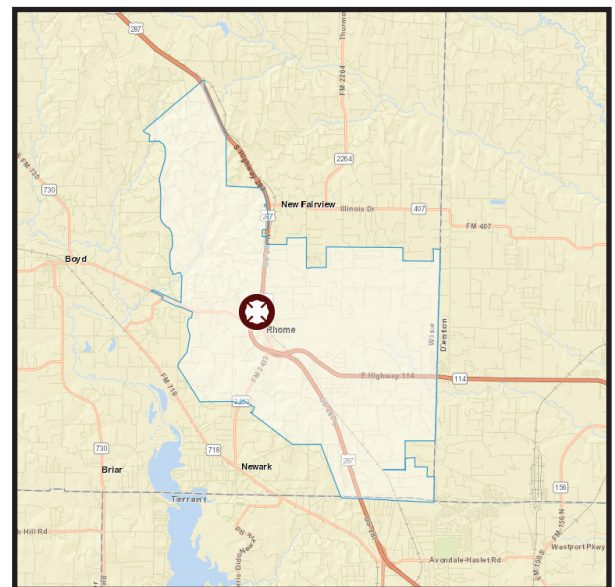
# 17

The number 17 is Rhome Fire Rescue's department number. Each fire district in Wise County has a unique station number which is used to identify the department to other departments in the area. Apparatus are also uniquely identified and are combined with the station number to identify the unit. For example, fire engine number 3 is identified as Engine 317 when dispatched to calls.

## STATION 17

Rhome Fire Rescue is a combination department that consists of 17 current members. The Fire Chief is a paid part-time position with the City of Rhome while the remaining 16 members are volunteers. All members operate out of one central fire station located at 261 N. School Road in Rhome.

The fire station is housed in a converted gymnasium in the old Rhome High School



2020 map from the Texas Forestry Service with recent County updates not shown.



# BUDGET

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020 *
Resources					
City Funding	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$78,000	\$128,000	\$132,000
Mutual Aid Funding	57,900	53,700	57,900	58,400	63,352
Grants	5,572	28,398	6,426	18,125	15,050
Donation & Fundraisers	14,139	20,201	17,072	22,358	12,920
Cost Recovery	11,327	2,555	12,310	9,214	5,878
Loan Proceeds	0	0	0	0	153,777
Total Resources	\$136,938	\$152,854	\$171,708	\$236,097	\$382,976

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020 *
Expenditures					
Salaries & Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$24,177	\$34,655	\$31,362
Apparatus	27,928	17,164	20,230	24,824	25,102
Equipment/EMS Supplies	22,177	44,805	67,113	64,888	108,959
Training (non-grant)	1,226	1,703	991	1,496	1,410
Utilities	9,225	7,713	8,204	7,033	3,261
Property Insurance	8,670	10,645	10,630	11,092	13,420
Debt Service	49,372	49,372	49,372	49,372	49,743
Capital Outlay	0	29,325	5,249	48,083	153,777
Total Expenditures	\$118,598	\$160,727	\$185,966	\$241,443	\$387,034

\* Amounts are from the City's audited financial statements with the exception of fiscal year 2020 which did not have audited financials as of the date of this document.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Rhyme Fire Rescue's departmental budget represents approximately 7 percent of the City of Rhyme's \$3.6 million total annual operating budget for fiscal year 2020-2021.

# ADMINISTRATION

## COMMAND STAFF

Fire Administration is responsible for the departmental daily operations and is made up of the Command Staff. The Command Staff includes all the department's elected and appointed officers along with the EMS Coordinator. The Command Staff includes:

- Fire Chief
- Assistant Chief
- EMS Coordinator
- Prevention Captain
- Operations Captain
- Operations Lieutenant

The Command Staff maintains the focus of the department on carrying out the mission, vision, and values by providing oversight and management of the department on a day-to-day basis.

The Command Staff helps to maintain a proper span of control to ensure the organization's efficiency. Administrative functions include, but are not limited to:

- Overall Vision & Planning
- Strategic Planning
- Budget Development
- Financial Accountability
- Reporting Requirements
- Training & Professional Development
- Maintenance & Replacement Program
- Purchasing & Supplies
- Inventory Management
- Records Management
- Public Relations
- Emergency Management

### 2020 Accomplishments

- The Command Staff was instrumental in successfully addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigating its effects within the department by actively addressing the actions and policies of the department and its members to mitigate potential threats and to continue to provide that uninterrupted emergency response duty to the community. In an unprecedented year, the Command Staff was instrumental in setting the tone and the example at the top for the entire department.
- The Fire Chief continued to serve in his capacity as President of the Wise County Firefighters Association which is the county level organization that serves as a forum for all Fire Chiefs in Wise County to collaborate and to improve the emergency services provided. Chief Fitch actively disseminated information to all the fire departments in Wise County during the pandemic in coordination with Wise County Emergency Management.

### Admin Duties

**899**  
HOURS

### FD Related Meetings

**132**  
HOURS

### Admin Total Hours

**2,190**





*When In Rhome...*

**OPERATIONS**



# OPERATIONS

## PERSONNEL

Shield #	NAME	YEARS	RANK	EMS
00	Jason Miller	12	Firefighter	EMT-P
1701 (01)	Michelle Di Credico	10	Asst. Chief	EMT-B
1703 (03)	Corbin Fitch	6	Lieutenant	EMT-B
1700 (04)	Darrell Fitch	6	Fire Chief	EMT-P
1702 (05)	John Poe	6	Captain	EMT-B
1704 (08)	Paul Thomas	5	Captain	EMT-P
09	Chris Jungst	5	EMS Coordinator	EMT-P
10	Patrick Di Credico	3	Firefighter	EMT-P
11	Thomas Cannon	3	Firefighter	In Progress
12	Lacon Cooper	2	Firefighter	In Progress
13	Brandon Anderson	2	Firefighter	EMT-P
14	Chase Frick	2	Firefighter	EMT-P
15	Shamarcus Howlett	1	Firefighter	In Progress
16	Preston Todd	<1	Firefighter	
P	Hunter Johnson	<1	Probationary	
P	Paul Szymanski	<1	Probationary	
P	Ryan Yale	<1	Probationary	

### Volunteer Shift Hours

*Out of District Members*

1,243

### Total Man Hours

6,899

### Paid Shift Hours

*Began Oct 2020*

456

### Apparatus & Station

*Maintenance & Projects Hours*

856

### FF of the Year

Thomas Cannon

### Officer of the Year

John Poe

### Weather Watch Hours

*Storm Siren Testing*

95



# OPERATIONS

## ***FIRE TRAINING***

### **Search & Rescue**



Training is an essential component to providing effective firefighting services. Firefighters are required to meet minimum training requirements mandated by Rhome Fire Rescue to comply with state and federal regulations. The Command Staff is responsible to develop departmental training standards and schedules that ensure all mandated requirements are met. Firefighters in Texas comply with regulations from two organizations, Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) for paid firefighters and State Firemen's and Fire Marshal's Association (SFFMA) for volunteer firefighters.

RFR has four TCFP Instructors and two SFFMA Instructors who teach and oversee the majority of internal training which encompasses topics such as vehicle extrication, forcible entry, search and rescue, water supply, fire control and extinguishment, hoses, ladders and rapid intervention training.

All new members are required to complete the following coursework within the first year:

- CPR/AED Training
- NIMS ICS 100, 200, 700, 800
- Traffic Incident Management
- Courage to Be Safe
- Introductory Firefighter
- Firefighter I
- Firefighter II
- Emergency Driver Training

Focused and effective training helps to achieve the high standards of the department. It creates personal and organizational pride, efficient and effective use of modern fire rescue equipment resulting in excellent and safe performance while providing quality customer service that meets the needs of the community.

### **Total Training Hours**

# 487

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Thirty years ago, you had on average about 14 to 17 minutes to escape a house fire, according to Consumer Safety Director John Drengenberg of Underwriters Laboratories (UL). "Today, with the prevalence of synthetic materials in the home, occupants have roughly 2 to 3 minutes to get out," said Drengenberg.

# OPERATIONS

## ***FIRE TRAINING***

### **Training Grants**

The fire department has ongoing training grants that are 100% grants up to a maximum of \$12,000 per year that are utilized to train all members in various firefighting duties. Firefighters are required to complete all the same training as fully paid departments to provide its customers with the expected level of service in the community. Currently, RFR has open training grants totaling \$2,830 which will be reimbursed in the current budget year. The current budget includes a line item for training that is not grant reimbursed, but that cost has been minimal over the last several years due to utilizing 100% grants for the majority of the training that members complete.

### **2020 Accomplishments**

- **New Recruits** - Four new recruits joined RFR and completed Introductory Firefighter and are currently enrolled in or have completed Firefighter I or are in the process of completing Firefighter II.
- **RFR Training Plan** - Due to social distancing requirements in 2020, the training program has been adapted as shown in the Annual Training Plan created for 2021. This plan includes an increase in virtual online Fire and EMS training that is required for continuing education (CE), but does not require hands-on training.
- **Professional Development** - Created a plan for 2021 to evaluate and assist each member with the tools and instruction needed to meet that member's professional development goals.
- **Target Solutions** - Purchased web-based Fire training program that fulfills the objectives of the 2021 RFR Training Plan.

### **HOURS PER CATEGORY**

#### **Firefighting Class Hours**

249

#### **Medical & Trauma Class Hours**

54

#### **Extrication Class Hours**

35

#### **SOG Class Hours**

9

#### **Total Class Hours**

347



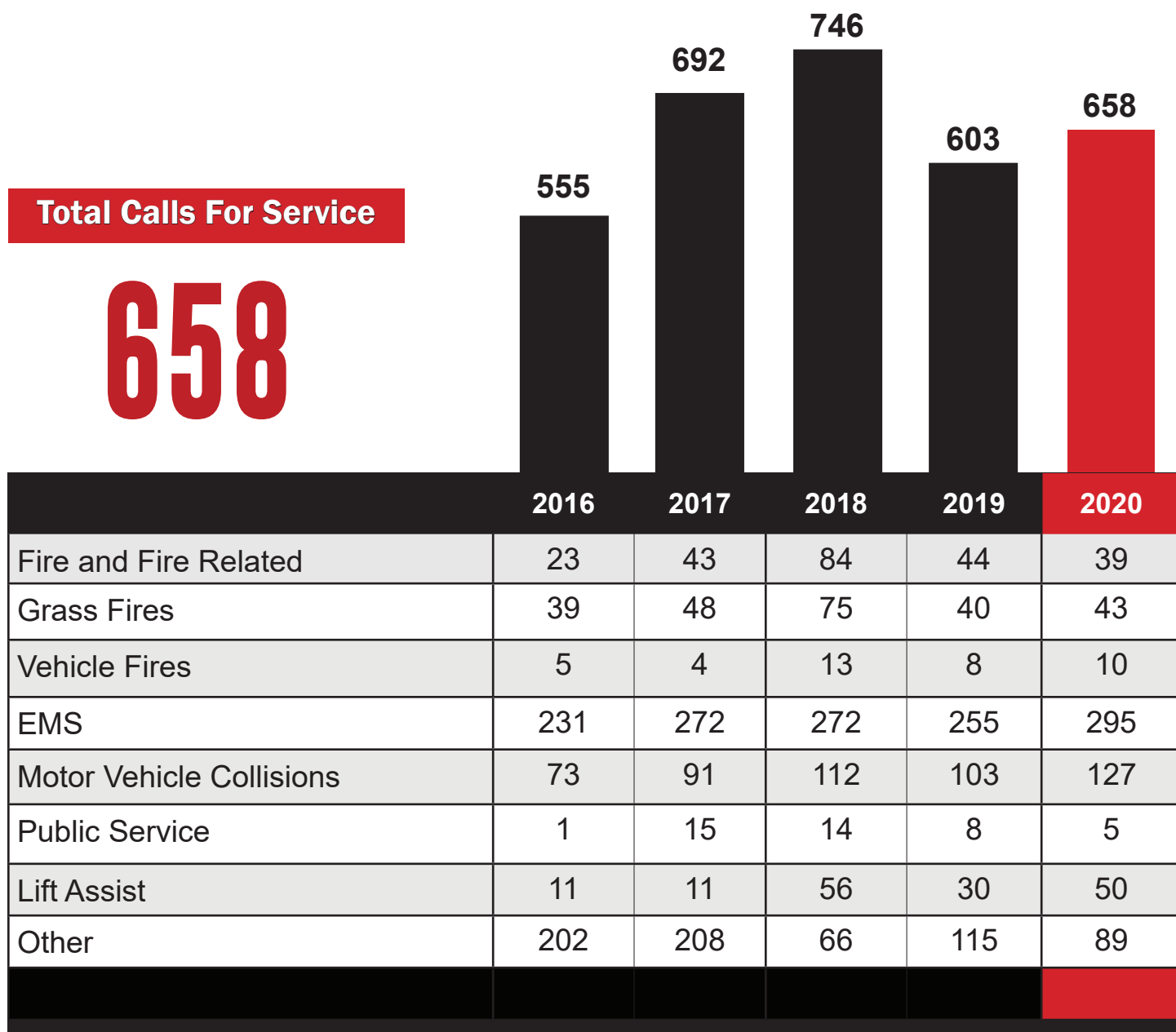
# OPERATIONS

## CALLS FOR SERVICE

### Incidents 2016-2020

Total Calls For Service

658



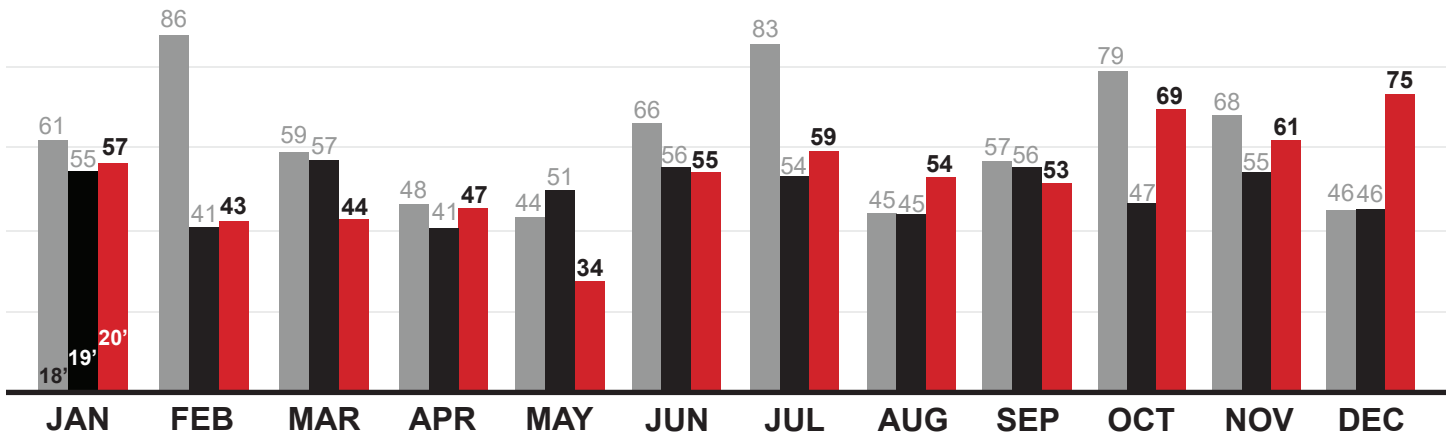
*Statistics do not include Controlled Burns.*

Categories listed are selected from the NFIRS reporting system and have been chosen for this report based off the monthly Fire Department City Council Report.

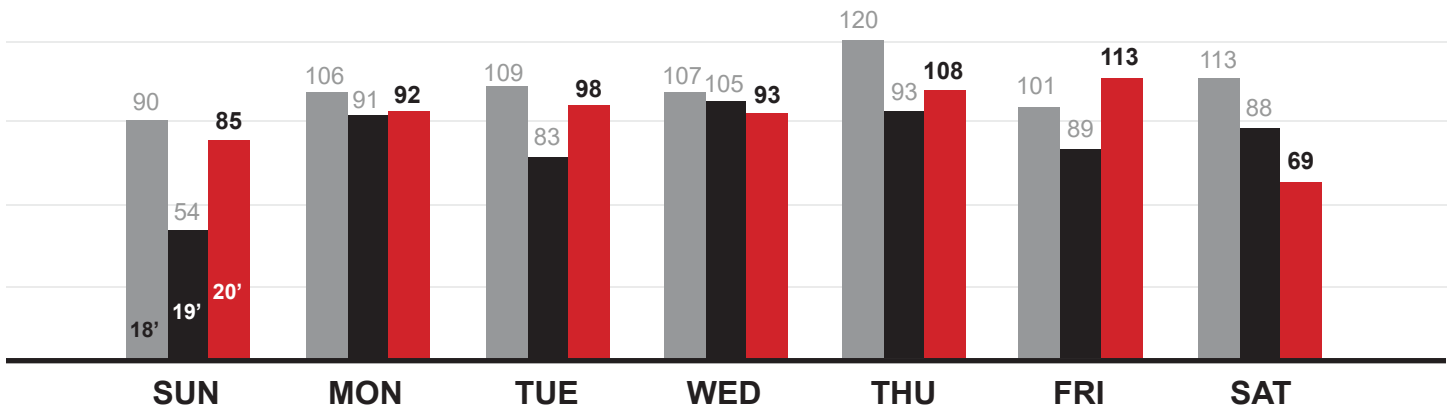
# OPERATIONS

## *CALLS FOR SERVICE*

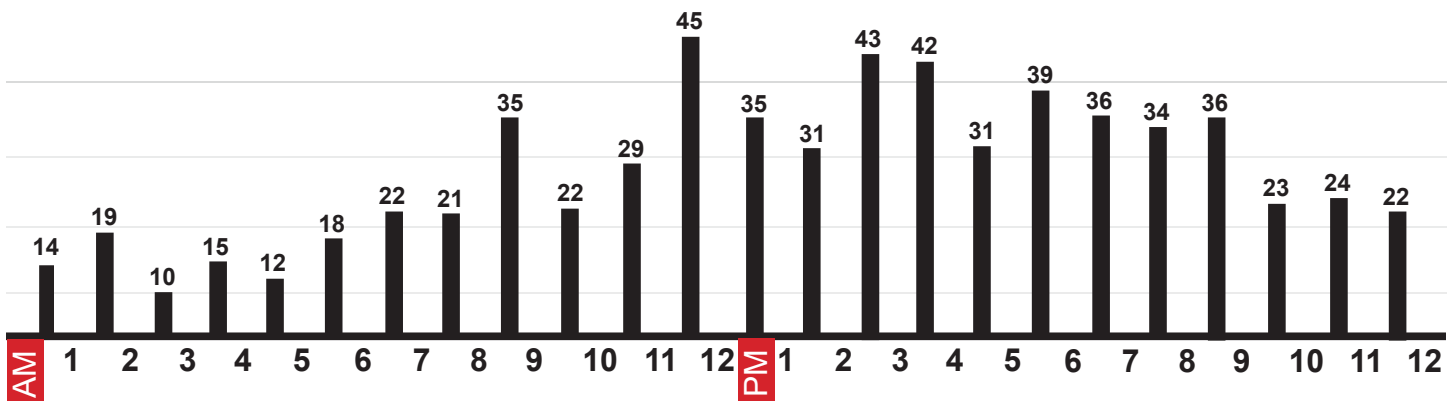
### CALLS BY MONTH



### CALLS BY DAY OF THE WEEK



### CALLS BY TIME OF DAY 2020

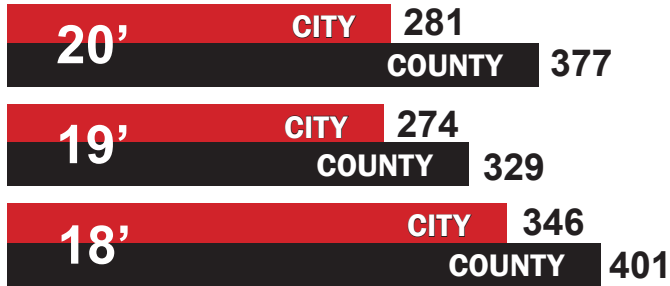




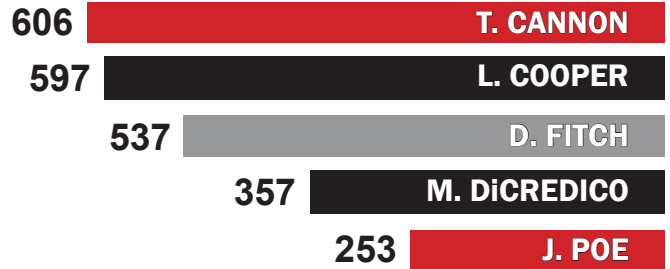
# OPERATIONS

## CALLS FOR SERVICE

### CALLS BY ZONE



### TOP 5 - CALLS BY MEMBERS



### Automatic/Mutual Aid - 2020



### TOTAL INCIDENT HOURS

2158

5.73

AVG. NUMBER PERSONNEL  
PER CALL

### AVG. TIME ON CALLS

32.22  
MINUTES

2020	Average Travel	Average Turnout	Average Response
City Limits			
Fire	4:12	3:14	7:25
EMS/Rescue	5:40	1:59	7:40
County			
Fire	8:45	3:54	12:38
EMS/Rescue	8:56	1:41	10:41

### BUSIEST CALL DAY

9

### OVERLAPPING CALLS

106

# OPERATIONS

## APPARATUS



### HAAS Alerting System

Drivers in Rhome can now receive real-time digital alerts when fire apparatus are active nearby through a service equipped on Rhome Fire Rescue apparatus when emergency lights are activated. Safety Cloud by HAAS Alert protects firefighters and improves driver compliance with Move Over laws by sending real-time notifications to drivers approaching active fire apparatus en-route or on-scene. The service, which was installed on four RFR apparatus in February 2020, reduces the risk of drivers colliding with fire crews in the field and improves awareness for all drivers.

Drivers can receive the alerts through the Waze navigation app available on mobile devices or in the dashboard of many newer-model vehicles. HAAS Alert is working to expand the alerts to other services and vehicles so that all drivers can receive these critical road safety alerts. Statistics show that vehicle collisions and struck-by incidents are the second leading cause of line-of-duty death for firefighters.

Rhome Fire Rescue covers large sections of Highway 287 and Highway 114 which intersect in the Rhome city limits. Safety Cloud alerts give drivers up to 30 seconds of advance warning to help with time to actively respond by slowing down or moving over to assist emergency crews on-scene or while responding.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Rhome Fire Rescue was one of the first fire department's in the State of Texas to utilize the Safety Cloud by HAAS Alert in their apparatus.

# OPERATIONS

## APPARATUS

### Squad 17 (S17)

In the Spring of 2020, the Rhome Police Department donated a 2013 Chevrolet Tahoe to the fire department. The members of the fire department alternated time, due to social distancing, working on the vehicle to get it set up for fire response. Crews spent over 100 man hours working on the exterior with new vinyl wrap and fire department decals, emergency lighting, along with a full maintenance check up.

Squad 17 is a multi-functional vehicle that was placed into service on April 27, 2020. Squad 17 will be utilized on Emergency Medical responses, as a Command Unit on large scale incidents, additional warning vehicle on highway incidents, along with transporting additional personnel when needed.



### CALL RESPONSE BY APPARATUS

				2018	2019	2020
<b>R17</b>	2013	Pierce Mini Pumper	Rescue	447	385	237
<b>E217</b>	2004	American LaFrance	Engine	-----	*81	186
<b>E317</b>	2008	Rosenbauer	Engine	282	121	149
<b>S17</b>	2013	Chevrolet Tahoe	Squad/Command	-----	-----	**319
<b>B17</b>	2000	Ford	Brush	145	68	91
<b>B217</b>	1999	Chevrolet	Brush	87	41	26

\*E217 Placed in service May 2019 - \*\*S17 Placed in service April 2020



# OPERATIONS

## EQUIPMENT

Without the appropriate equipment and tools, it would be impossible for firefighters to accomplish their assigned tasks.

Equipment and tools must be well located and trained on before placing in service. Most equipment goes through rigorous annual inspections and service testing following established NFPA and TCFP guidelines along with daily and weekly crew checks.

### SCBA



Rhome Fire Rescue took delivery of 15 new Air-Pak X3 Pro SCBA's by 3M Scott. These Air-Paks are accompanied by 30 new 5500 psi 45 minute air bottles. The Air-Pak is one of the most important components of our gear that keep firefighters safe while working in hazardous atmospheres. This also allows the department to stay current on the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1852 standards.

Our old Air-Paks were nearing 20 years of service and needed to be retired. Thank you to our community for the support that allowed us to replace our current Air-Paks and help us continue to provide the highest level of service to our residents and visitors!

### DID YOU KNOW?

An SCBA air pack and bottle adds an additional 30 pounds of weight to the firefighter's gear.

# OPERATIONS

## EQUIPMENT

### CASCADE SYSTEM

Rhyme Fire Rescue took delivery of a Bauer CFS5.5 containment fill station suitable for refilling air in the new SCBA. The new Bauer system replaces an older fill station that had been purchased used years ago from another fire department. The older system was not adequately refilling air bottles, and the commercial compressor was not designed to refill air bottles.

The most important part of a firefighter's respiratory system protection is the quality of the air contained in their SCBA cylinder. Having cylinders full of quality air is critical for the overall health and well being of the firefighter while on the fireground. This ultimately comes down to the fill station.

There are several organizations that promulgate standards that influence SCBA fill stations and containment units including the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1989: Standard on Breathing Air Quality for Emergency Services Respiratory Protection, 2008 and NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program); the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; UL; and the Compressed Gas Association.

An SCBA fill station system is composed of:

- High-pressure air compressor
- Electrical motor
- Air-purification system
- Refill station
- Storage system
- All operating controls and appliances



### DID YOU KNOW?

A typical 45 minute 5500 SCBA bottle will last approximately 30-35 minutes when a firefighter is actively working in an IDLH (immediate danger to life and health) environment due to the physical exertion on the fireground.

## *First Responder Organization*



**CHRIS JUNGST**  
EMS COORDINATOR

### EMS RELATED CALLS

# 423

### DID YOU KNOW?

Rhyme Fire Rescue (RFR) is unique as being the only Fire Department that provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) capabilities to the City of Rhyme and within Wise County.

Rhyme Fire Rescue is dedicated in providing compassionate, life-saving emergency medical care to our residents and visitors making Rhyme a safer place to call home.

As a licensed Texas Department of State Health Services first responder organization, our Paramedics and EMTs work closely with Wise County EMS to provide initial care so there is no delay in treatment to ensure the patient has the best possible outcome. RFR is fortunate to have medical oversight provided by Dr. Kevin Senser, M.D. Dr. Senser provides the EMS protocols, medical advice, quarterly EMS continuing education sessions and chart reviews.

### 2020 Accomplishments

- **UV Sanitizer** - The department received one through a 100% grant. The UV Sanitizer that helps to sanitize vehicles and rooms that may contain harmful pathogens that cause COVID-19. This was given through the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council (NCTTRAC).
- **Target Solutions** - Purchased web-based EMS training program that fulfills the objectives of the 2021 RFR Training Plan and promotes social distancing.
- **EMT School** - One member is currently in EMT school with a projected completion 1st quarter 2021 while two others are enrolling in EMT school with completion anticipated in 2021.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR  
**KEVIN SENSER, MD**  
QUEST CARE



# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## *Emergency Preparedness*

In 2020, Rhome Fire Rescue dealt with an unprecedented global pandemic with the discovery and spread of COVID-19 in addition to all the normal emergency calls for service the department typically addresses.

Under the direction of the EMS Administrator and Medical Director, the EMS protocols used by the department were expanded to address how the department responded to and address patients with the potential of being COVID positive. The Command Staff also worked closely with Wise County Emergency Management throughout the year through regular meetings and communications to keep abreast of the latest orders from the Governor's office as well as coordinate the distribution of much needed PPE to protect personnel from the virus.

### Phases of Emergency Management

- **Mitigation** - The effort or action done before an event occurs to prevent or lessen the impact on life and property. For example, the department's prevention efforts in the community help to reduce the likelihood of a preventable event.
- **Preparedness** - Planning, training, resource procurements and interlocal agreements to increase response readiness within the community. For example, the City of Rhome has agreements in place with Wise County to assist with additional resources when needed.
- **Response** - The mobilization of resources needed following a disaster or incident affecting the community. For example, as the incident size increases, the fire department will call for mutual aid from other organizations to assist when necessary.
- **Recovery** - Social services or other organizations help to return the affected areas of the community to a pre-incident state, for example, the Red Cross is called upon to help residents dislocated from their homes due to a structure fire.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Each emergency call in 2020 required additional sanitization and disinfection efforts of apparatus and station to ensure the virus was not spread among the members of the fire department.

### Number of COVID-19 Deaths in Texas

29,691+

# PREVENTION

## *Functions*

The purpose of Rhome Fire Rescue's Prevention Division is to reduce the community's risk of fire and preventable injuries. The Division places community and firefighter safety at the forefront. This is achieved with a coordinated effort between the residents, businesses, community groups, and fire personnel. The groups work closely to identify hazards, mitigate potential loss, and educate the community with diverse fire and life safety programs and events.

The Fire Prevention Division was officially created in 2020. While the Division was officially created this year, RFR has performed the Prevention functions as needed over the last 10 years. The creation of the Division has allowed RFR to assume all prevention duties excluding fire sprinkler testing. This function is done by a third party contractor approved through the City with close involvement and supervision from the Fire Prevention Division. Duties of the Prevention Division include, but are not limited to, fire pre-plans, fire inspections (old and new construction,) and life safety events/ programs. Restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 virus have limited community interaction. However, the Division is in close contact with new construction projects and developing the standards for RFR Fire Prevention

### DID YOU KNOW?

The City of Rhome currently has an ISO rating of 4. A lower rating typically decreases the out of pocket insurance premiums that a homeowner pays.



**PAUL THOMAS**  
PREVENTION  
CAPTAIN

### Fire Prevention Functions

- Occupancy inspections
- Annual Business inspections
- Plan review
- Attend meetings regarding new building projects
- Respond to inquiries regarding fire codes and regulations
- Fire investigation
- ISO Review
- Hydrant testing
- Coordinate events with PIO
- Community Risk Reduction

# PREVENTION

## *Community Risk Reduction*

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is the identification and prioritization of risks, threats, and hazards followed by the evaluation and implementation of strategies to lessen their impact.

Prevention activities have expanded from fire to identifying other risk factors that threaten the safety of our community. Community Risk Reduction is a system and process used by Rhome Fire Rescue in which programs, actions, and services within our community are utilized to prevent injuries, loss of life, loss of property, and damage to the environment. Fire Prevention Division works closely with the Public Information Officer to identify the needs of the community and to continually update CRR goals and objectives based on the RFR Strategic Plan. Functions include:

- CPR/AED Initiatives
- Station Tours
- Fire Truck Demos
- Smoke Detector Checks
- School Programs
- Outdoor Warning Sirens
- Social Media Outreach
- Community Events



### DID YOU KNOW?

Every October, RFR firefighters present the Annual Fire Prevention Program to approximately 400-500 Prairie View Elementary School students to reinforce fire safety in young children.

### EVENTS FOR 2021

- June 12 - Splash Days
- October 23 - Open House
- October 31 - Trunk or Treat
- December 6 - Santa Sighting
- December 13 - Santa Sighting



# COMMUNICATIONS

## *Public Information*

The Public Information Officer (PIO) is responsible for coordinating the department's press releases, social media posts, public service announcements and intergovernmental relations. This office is further tasked with the organization of seasonal activities, publicity/marketing campaigns, managing crisis and addressing negative publicity. Other duties involve developing the day to day management of all internal and external communication strategies as well as long term strategies for both.

The Public Information Officer also assists the Fire Chief in producing various professionally written documents, such as company brochures, summaries, in-house manuals, and reports of all pertinent fire department activities.

The role of the Public Information Officer is quite diverse in the sense that PIO must function in dual or multiple roles to meet the demands for public information in this present era.

The PIO is an intricate part in establishing positive relationships with all outside entities and the community. The primary goal of the position is to disseminate information and keep the public informed, in conjunction with working with the media to allow this to happen. The PIO works closely with the Prevention Division for community outreach programs for public education and prevention, supervised tours of the department, planning, organizing, and creating community events, as well as participating in other programs.



**Michelle Di Credico**  
Public Information Officer  
Assistant Chief



# SPECIAL SERVICES

## *Honor Guard*

The Rhome Fire Rescue newest special service, Honor Guard, was formed in 2019 with two members. In 2020, two additional members were added for a current total of four members. The Honor Guard represents the department at funerals and memorial services. In addition, they may also be called to post colors, march in parades, and other ceremonial events with a focus on maintaining a commitment to the traditions of the Fire Department.

Their mission is to strive to honor firefighters in life, as well as death, and to exhibit the best possible image to the entire community. They strive to accomplish this with the highest degree of professionalism, dedication, loyalty, honor and dignity possible.

While the Honor Guard is new to RFR, the members are continually seeking out resources made available by other departments and educational programs to assist in carrying out their mission.



### DID YOU KNOW?

The leading cause of line of duty deaths in firefighters is sudden cardiac arrest many times brought on due to exertion and stress on the job.

### 2020 Firefighter Line of Duty Deaths

# 78

# Alternative Funding Sources

## *Grants Pending Approval*

Rhome Fire Rescue strives to maximize available grant opportunities for apparatus, equipment, gear, training courses and training materials, as well as health and wellness. As of the end of 2020, the fire department had \$673,400 in open grant applications that have been filed but have not been awarded. With Texas A&M Forestry Service grants, the grant application stays on file and waits for the board to meet quarterly to award grants based on a ranking system with all the fire departments in the State of Texas, as well as with limited available funding in a year. Many of these departments have had these grants on file for years. Our oldest grant was filed back in 2015 and is still pending.

This is the grant program that we used to purchase our biggest fire engine, Engine 317, back in 2008, so the grants are filed in hopes that in 5-10 years the department may be awarded. This is in line with the department's Apparatus Replacement Program to try to mitigate the cost to the taxpayers in the City. The grants are typically 90% grants up to a maximum amount. A match is required, however, until the grants are formally awarded, the total cost is unknown without the final apparatus specs. If one of these grants receives approval, the Fire Chief would bring that before City Council to discuss funding prior to accepting the award. These are highly coveted grants, so it would be imprudent to turn them down since the waiting period is so long. If you reapply for the same grant after turning it down, you fall to the bottom of the list and risk another 5-10 years of waiting to be considered again. Based on our ranking from the last Forestry meeting, we are getting close on either a chassis or brush truck within 1-2 years, which is the right time for replacement of our well worn brush trucks that are having more maintenance issues and will be planned for in the budget process over the next 1-2 budget cycles.

In addition, we have an grant application in for a health and wellness grant through our insurance provider, VFIS of Texas. This program has been in place for about 5 years now and has allowed the fire department to develop its health and wellness program. This is especially important as the fire service is emphasizing cancer prevention in our fire personnel. We are continuing to develop this program to ensure the firefighters are provided with tools and resources for their health while they serve their community in an ultra-hazardous environment.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Engine 317 was funded in part by a grant from Texas A&M Forestry Service and saved the taxpayers of Rhome \$108,000.

### **Pending Grant Applications**

# **\$673,400**



# Alternative Funding Sources

## *Grants Awarded*

Rhyme Fire Rescue was awarded a Texas Forestry grant for personal protective equipment (PPE) for \$8,401, which is a 90% grant with an out of pocket match of \$933. This grant is accounted for in the current fiscal year budget. The department reapplies for the PPE grant after each time it is awarded. It typically takes 2-3 years to get approval for the PPE grant which usually purchases 4-5 sets of bunker gear to replace worn gear or gear nearing the 10 year NFPA requirement for retirement of gear.

### 2020 Grants Awarded

- **Training Aids Grant** - \$9,971.77 awarded for a forcible entry training door, textbooks and instructor materials for vehicle extrication.
- **Health & Wellness Grant**- \$957.92 awarded for decontamination supplies and fire wipes to stock on apparatus.
- **Rural VFD Insurance Grant Program** - \$2,975 awarded for death and disability insurance to offset costs for policy.
- **Training Grant Program** - \$2,395 awarded for various training courses throughout the year.



### DID YOU KNOW?

The current cost to outfit one firefighter in structural firefighting gear is approximately \$4,100 which includes bunker coat, pants, helmet, boots, glove and hood.

### 2020 Grant Reimbursements

# \$16,300

# Alternative Funding Sources

## *Coronavirus Relief Funds*

As part of the federal government's aid package to local governments, the City of Rhome received an allocation of funding that was partially allocated to items needed to combat the fight against COVID-19.

The previous list of grants does not include any of the items that have been purchased under the Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF), which included a list of items that City Council approved in 2020. These included an extractor to clean PPE (gear) properly as a standard washer/dryer should not be used to decontaminate the carcinogens and pathogens that the firefighters/EMS personnel are exposed to.

In addition, the CRF grants are putting AEDs in all City buildings to provide that quick response in the event of a cardiac issue with one of our employees, volunteers or visitors to City buildings.

Items covered by Coronavirus Relief Funds for Rhome Fire Rescue:

- **Extractor** - \$17,363
- **Bunker Gear** - \$18,650
- **Second Set of Uniforms** - \$5,250
- **AEDs for All City Buildings** - \$14,200
- **Supplies for Cleaning & Disinfection** - \$2,000+

### DID YOU KNOW?

Wise County Emergency Management partnered with all of the local fire departments to provide PPE throughout the entire pandemic. PPE included N95 masks, simple masks, gloves, gowns, face shields and hand sanitizer. Wise County provided these through the County's allotment of CRF funds and provided much needed supplies at no cost to the fire departments.

### 2020 CRF Grant Fire Portion

# \$43,263

# THE FUTURE

## *What to Watch For in 2021*

- **Engine 317 Paid in Full** - The last note payment will be made in 2021 which is due to the payment of additional principal in 2020 that reduced the overall interest cost for the note by paying off in 12 years instead of 15 years.
- **CPR/AED Community Outreach Initiative** - As part of the Community Risk Reduction program, this initiative is to educate and train the community in how to be a part of the chain of survival in the event of a cardiac emergency. The goal is to provide low cost or no cost training to the community through underwriting by sponsors.
- **ISO Rate Survey** - In February 2021, the department will be completing its grading and evaluation for its ISO rate. The last evaluation was in 2007 and is typically reviewed about every 10 years. The ISO rate is factored into property insurance premiums. As the department continues to add more paid personnel, that will assist in acquiring a lower ISO rate and therefore, lower out of pocket costs for the citizens
- **Professional Development Initiative** - Created a plan for 2021 to evaluate and assist each member with the the tools and instruction needed to meet that member's professional development goals.
- **Prevention Initiative** – Prevention staff will be taking an active role in ensuring the community is operating with appropriate safety standards and building codes with inspections, pre-fire incident surveys as well as raising awareness in the community through events and other outreach programs.





# THE FUTURE

## *What to Watch For in 2021*

- **Specifications for New Brush Truck** – In anticipation of potential award of a Texas Forestry grant in the next 1-2 years, the Command Staff will be detailing the specifications needed for a new brush truck to service the community and replace one of the aging brush trucks that are on the front line.
- **Fire Station Upgrades** - In coordination with the City's Facilities Manager, upgrades to the fire station have been identified and are awaiting City Council approval and funding. Upgrades include electrical and safety, communications, ADA compliance, HVAC, insulation, and roofing.
- **Grant Writing Initiative** – Command Staff have developed a strategic grant plan and will be focusing on larger grant applications than in previous years. These grants will help position the fire department to address future anticipated needs over the next 5-7 years.
- **Coordination with Developments** – Command Staff will be working closely with developers on the required emergency services that will be needed as the mixed-use developments expand and build out. It is anticipated that new developments in the Rhome fire district have the potential to require the addition of a second fire station, as well as a larger pool of paid fire positions with the anticipated population projection to increase to 10,000 or more over the next decade.









## **RHOME FIRE RESCUE**

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