

2025



ANNUAL REPORT

BOWLING GREEN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

2025 in the books...

In 2025, the chapters of the Bowling Green Fire Department's book grew. The stories created and now told from last year are of both challenges and opportunities inside the firehouse and at home. These opportunities and challenges were embraced, and lessons were learned, yet both remain possible in our future.

**"LEANING INTO THE GROWING DEMANDS OF OUR CITY, THE BGFD CHOSE TO MOVE FORWARD TOWARDS THE MISSION."
CHIEF JUSTIN BROOKS**

Looking in the mirror and reflecting on 2025, the BGFD found challenges in the pursuit of excellence which allowed for the team to experience growth in the form of our deployment of operations. Whether it was improving our staffing model or adding resources to the next call, the challenges were identified along the way.

The opportunities found to serve the citizens in 2025 saw a record year of incidents. 10,229 calls were processed as planning and preparations continue today for a greater service delivery for the next call in 2026.

Through both the challenges and opportunities, the BGFD stayed locked-in and focused on our number one priority, our citizens.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to far, go together." - African Proverb

Knowing now of the roads taken along the journey, the excitement found in 2026 starts with knowing the BGFD is moving forward, stronger, but more importantly, together. Together as one mission-minded family, and not as 179 individuals that make up the BGFD.



Justin Brooks

FIRE CHIEF

Looking forward to 2026, the BGFD will continue to choose the pain of sacrifice rather than living with the pain of regret. Sacrifice is an expense that the men and women in the uniform today are willing to make for the greater good of others. These sacrifices are found in the effort to serve, save, and protect the next one.

Learning from 2025 and turning the page into 2026, we are hoping to continue writing a story that will last long after we are gone.

Handwritten signature of Justin Brooks

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW



The Bowling Green Fire Department is a fully-paid, all-hazard department providing professional service to the City of Bowling Green since 1898. The BGFD protects an estimated 79,000 residents in a 42.5 square mile area with strategically-located fire stations, ensuring adequate coverage of the City.

In effort to increase compliance with NFPA 1710 staffing recommendations, and with the support of City leadership, in 2025, additional minimum staffing was added to Rescue 1 and Engine 2, bringing daily minimum staffing to 40 among 13 frontline apparatus: seven engines, three aerials, one rescue, and two command vehicles.

The Bowling Green Fire Department operates out of eight fire stations located throughout the response district to effectively respond to all types of hazards.

\$24.6 MILLION

FY 2026 OPERATING BUDGET

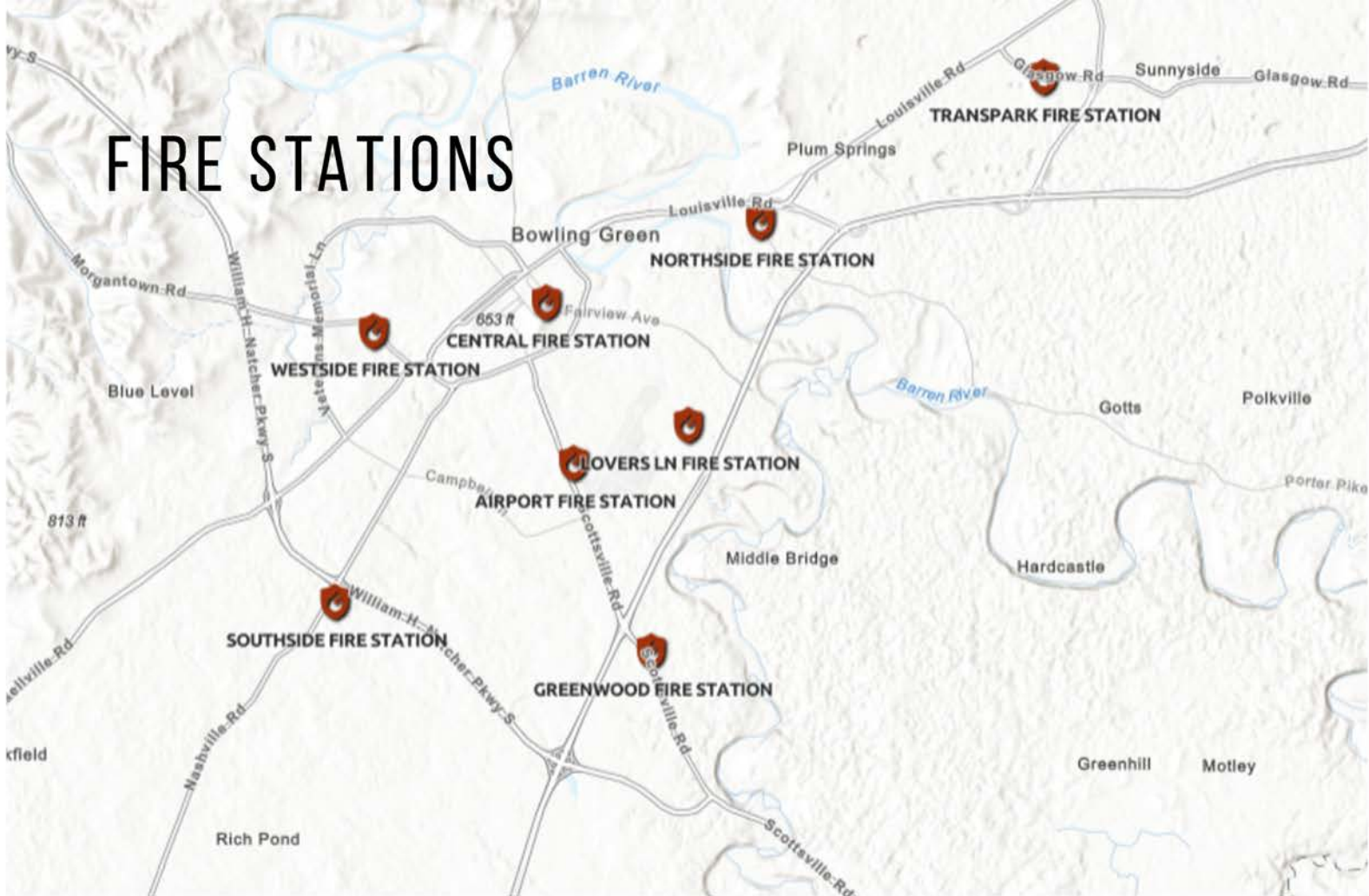
\$311

FY 2026 COST PER CAPITA

JANUARY 23, 2025

BREAK EVEN DATE
WHEN PROPERTY SAVED EXCEEDED
\$24.6M BUDGET

FIRE STATIONS



1 Central & Admin

701 E. 7th Avenue

Battalion 1, Rescue 1, Truck 1
Technical Rescue

2 Airport

1102 Woodhurst St

Battalion 2, Engine 2, ARFF 22
Aircraft Rescue & Firefighting

3 Southside

150 Bennet Ln

Engine 3
Hazardous Materials Support

4 Westside

835 Morgantown Rd

Truck 4, Engine 4
Fire Suppression Program & High-Rise

5 Northside & PSTC

250 Porter Pike

Engine 5
Technical Rescue & Water Recovery

6 Greenwood

201 Cherry Farm Ln

Truck 6, Engine 6
Hazardous Materials Response

7 Lovers Ln

385 Lovers Ln

Engine 7
Aircraft Rescue & Firefighting Support

8 Transpark

756 Glasgow Rd

Engine 8
Hazardous Materials Response

ACCREDITATION & ISO



CFAI Accredited

Since 2008

The Bowling Green Fire Department has been internationally accredited through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) since 2008. In 2023, the Department achieved re-accredited status through an in-depth self-assessment and peer team review. BGFD is one of 336 accredited agencies worldwide.

In 2025, the Commission approved the BGFD's annual compliance report and the Department maintained accredited status.



ISO Class 1

Since 2020

The BGFD was awarded a Class 1 Public Protection Classification (PPC) from ISO in 2020; this is the highest rating available.

In August of 2025, ISO completed an on-site review of the BGFD's Fire Suppression program, Water Supply, Communications Center, and Community Risk Reduction activities to re-assess the PPC.

At the time of this report, the Department is awaiting the final determination on maintaining Class 1 status.

128

DEPARTMENTS NATIONWIDE
HOLD CFAI ACCREDITATION
AND ISO CLASS 1

AUGUST 12, 2025

ISO COMPLETED ON-SITE
PPC REVIEW

BY THE NUMBERS

The Bowling Green Fire Department responded to a total of 10,229 calls for service in 2025. This represents a 7.8% increase from 2024 total calls for service of 9,488. 82.7% of calls required emergency response.

Approximately 66% of calls were for emergency medical service and 2.8% were fire-related. In 2024, 70% of calls were EMS-related, the decrease is due to changes in EMS response protocols.

The BGFD responded mutual aid to the surrounding area for 62 incidents, including:

- 12 Fires, including 6 Investigations
- 9 Vehicle Extrications
- 7 Water Rescues

For 90% of all types emergency calls within the response district, total response time city-wide was 5 minutes and 45 seconds for the first arriving unit. This outperforms the BGFD's benchmark response time goal of 6 minutes and 20 seconds for Fire, Rescue, and HazMat and 6 minutes and 45 seconds for EMS calls.

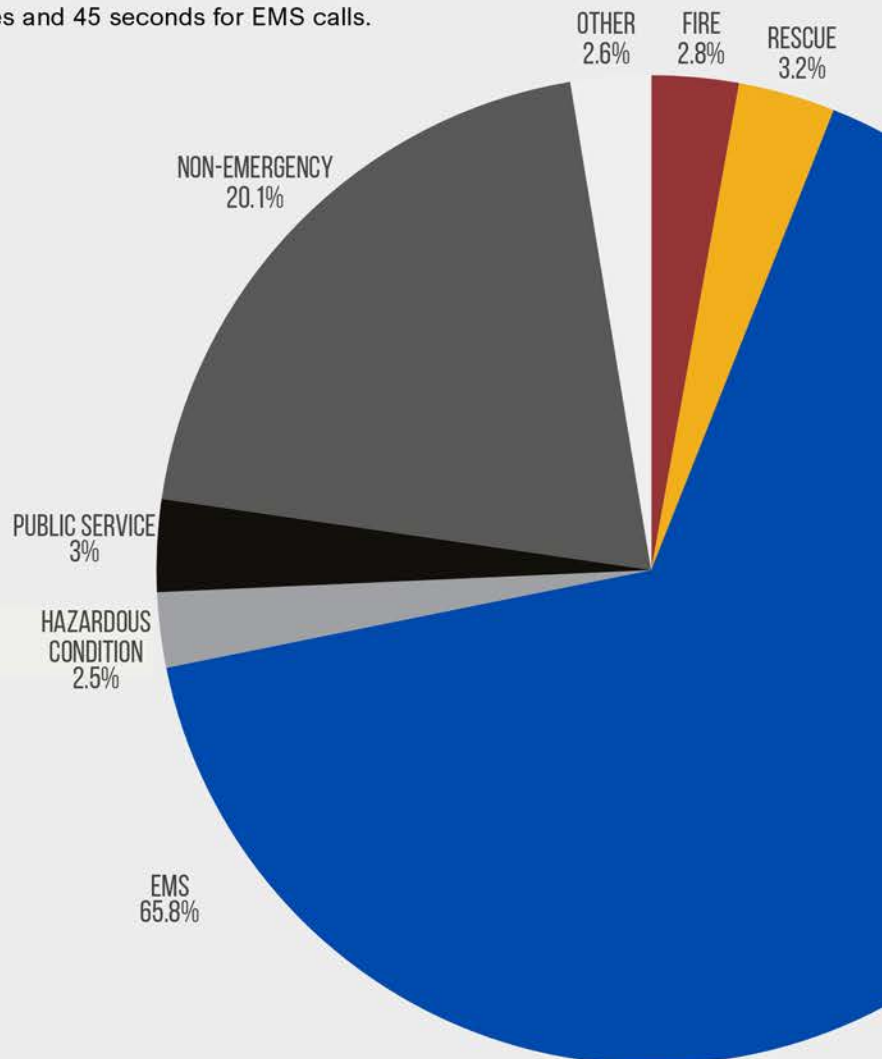
Call Types

Fire	291
EMS	6,732
Rescue	324
Hazardous Condition	251
Public Service	308
Non-Emergency	2,054
Other Call Types	268
Total Calls for Service	10,229

10,229
TOTAL CALLS IN 2025

7.8%
CALL VOLUME
INCREASE FROM 2024

5:45
90% RESPONSE TIME
ALL EMERGENCY CALLS



MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

In 2021, a committee was formed to redefine the Department's Mission, Vision, and Values statements. The committee included 12 personnel from all ranks and all shifts. The first step was to ensure common ground and shared definitions. Hours were spent brainstorming, charting, crossing out, and prioritizing. The committee landed on the following guiding principles for the Bowling Green Fire Department:

Mission

To Serve, Save, and Protect. Make it Better

Vision

Continuous improvement through intentional efforts for excellence

Values

Honor, Integrity, Professionalism



**MISSION: TO SERVE, SAVE, & PROTECT
MAKE IT BETTER**

**VISION:
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
THROUGH INTENTIONAL EFFORTS
FOR EXCELLENCE**

HONOR - INTEGRITY - PROFESSIONALISM



MEETING THE MISSION



In February, a team of six was deployed to Eastern Kentucky to provide flood assistance. They traveled to Richmond, KY and then Leslie County to work with other agencies to provide aid and evacuation to residents who were completely cut off due to flood waters. The mission was a success as they helped numerous families and assisted on a residential fire.



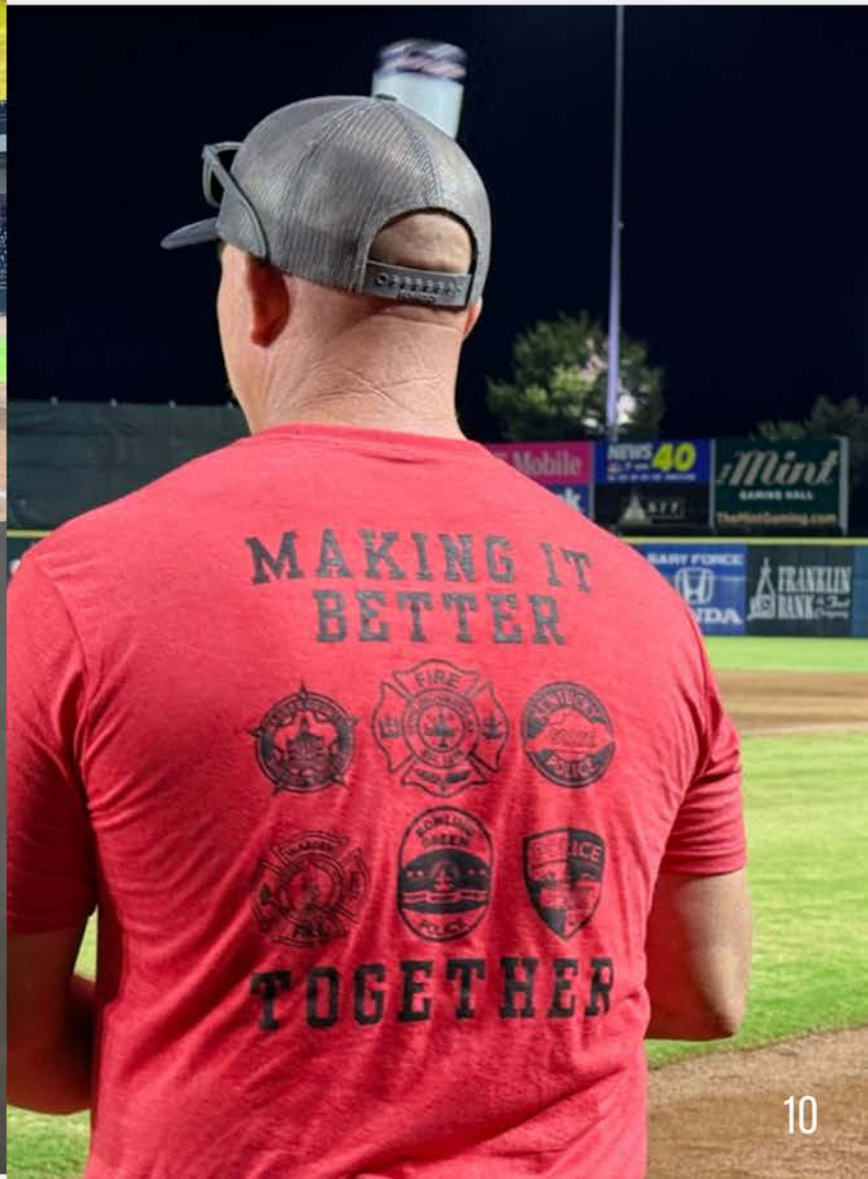
In May, a third Safe Haven Baby Box was added to the City of Bowling Green at Station 6 (Greenwood) at 201 Cherry Farm Ln. Two babies have been surrendered in Safe Haven Baby Boxes within the City of Bowling Green, both at Station 7 on Lovers Lane. Adding a third location to serve the southern portion of Warren County meets the mission of the BGFD.



In September, the BGFD hosted two spouses nights for food and fellowship with our support systems at home. Spouses were given an update on department events and activities, a time to meet with command staff, and a tour of the new Public Safety Training Center. A newsletter was also implemented to keep families up-to-date on what is happening in the BGFD.



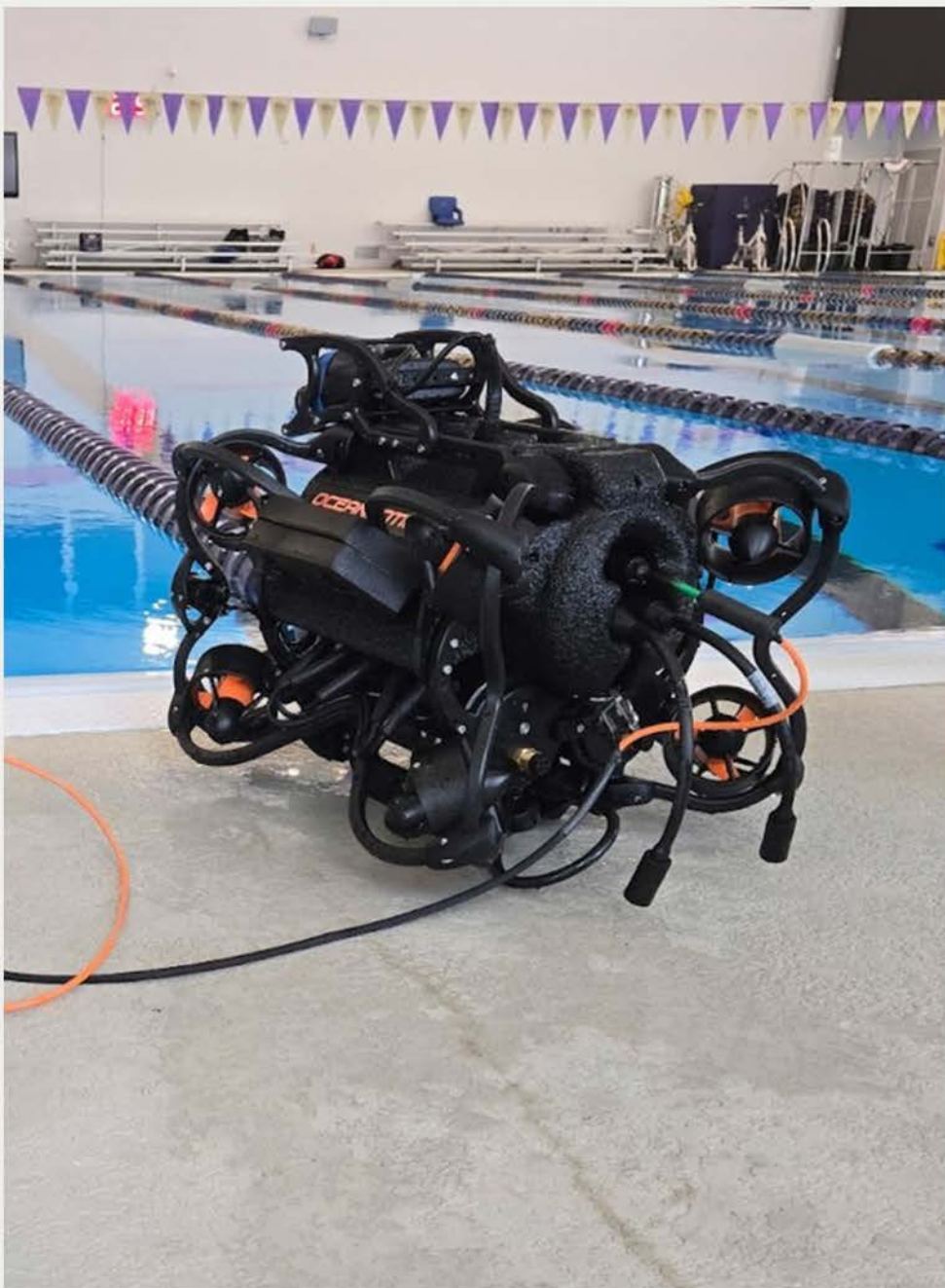
\$1,500 was raised for Riley and her family in t-shirt sales and donations. Riley has since received a transplant and is doing well.



WATER RECOVERY

Following multiple tragic incidents that have occurred within the response district on the Barren River, the BGFD, with support from City leadership, added Water Recovery to the Technical Rescue program with the purchase of a new boat with side-scanning sonar, and an Oceanbotics ROV (remotely operated vehicle).

These resources were placed in service in the Spring of 2025, and by June, all crews had been trained on the new equipment.

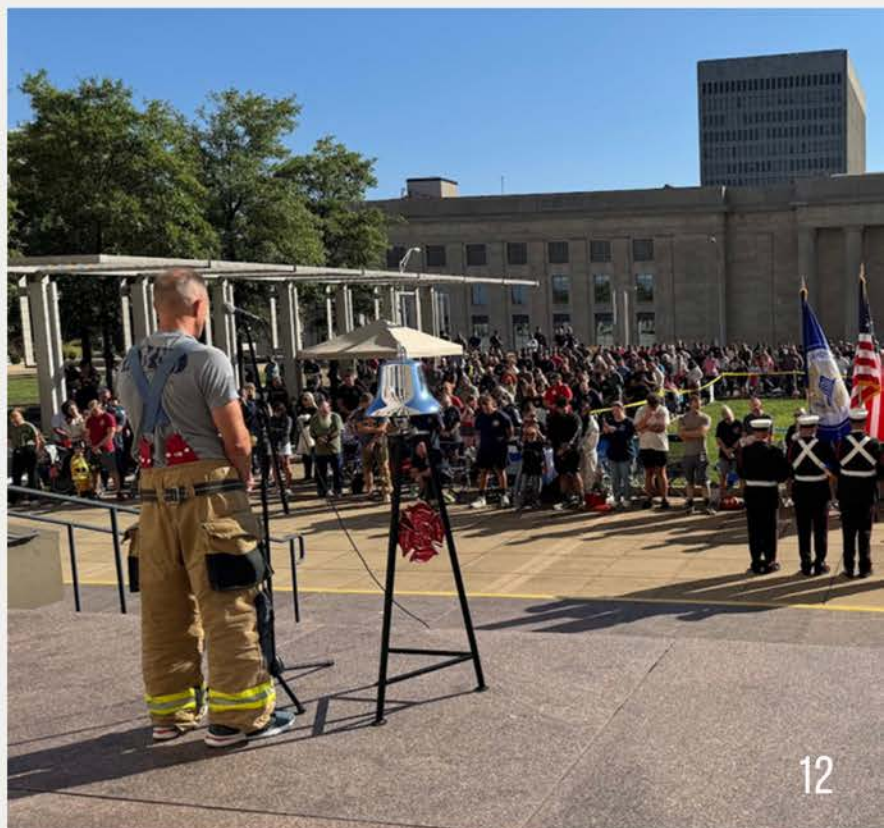




NASHVILLE 9/11 STAIR CLIMB

For many years, members of the Bowling Green Fire Department have traveled to Nashville for the 9/11 Stairclimb. This year, the BGFD Honor Guard had the honor to present the colors, and Deputy Chief Bret Smith gave the prayer for the event.

Instead of simply showing up to climb, the BGFD was honored to serve this event in a more profound way.



RUN FOR ROSIE

On September 20, 2025, members of the Bowling Green Fire Department participated in the Medical Center 10k Classic in honor of our brother, Engineer Stephen "Rosie" Rosebrook.

The Bowling Green Firefighters Association provided team t-shirts for the "Run for Rosie" and over 30 members of the BGFD, along with other friends and family, ran in his honor.

We forever remember Engineer Rosebrook and his dedicated service to the City of Bowling Green.

**"I KNOW YOU WILL BE THERE.
I KNOW YOU WILL SHOW UP. YOU ALWAYS
DO! THAT'S WHAT FAMILY DOES."
CHIEF JUSTIN BROOKS**



IN LOVING MEMORY OF

*Engineer
Stephen "Rosie" Rosebrook*

1994 - 2024



TRAINING

The Training Division coordinates, tracks, and records training for all Department members in firefighting, search and rescue, hazardous materials, and all types of specialty rescue. The Training Division assists with the development of training initiatives that include the latest methods, techniques, and skills. The fire service is a dynamic, changing profession requiring constant training to provide a high level of service.

Class of 2025 (alphabetically)

Jerry Adams, Ayden Barrick, Ryan Cowles, Charles Davis, Bill Jones, Jack Jones, Matthew Jones, Ben McCarty, Carsen Meredith, Samuel Muniz-Allgeier, Nathan Perkins, Dimitri Pierce, Josiah Reckart, Mauro Scali, Josh Vance

63,363

TOTAL DEPARTMENT-WIDE
TRAINING HOURS LOGGED

395

AVERAGE TRAINING HOURS
PER FIREFIGHTER

15

RECRUITS GRADUATED
FEBRUARY 7, 2025





OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL

In March of 2025, the BGFD held the 7th annual Officer Training School (OTS). Twenty-four upcoming leaders from six departments spent the week learning skills to help them develop on and off the fire ground, to be the best version of themselves for their crew, department, community, and family at home. 2025 was the third year this class was open to students outside of the BGFD, and the last held in the old Public Safety Training Center.

This was the largest OTS class to date, and the week was kicked off with a keynote address from Fire Engineering Editor in Chief David Rhodes.

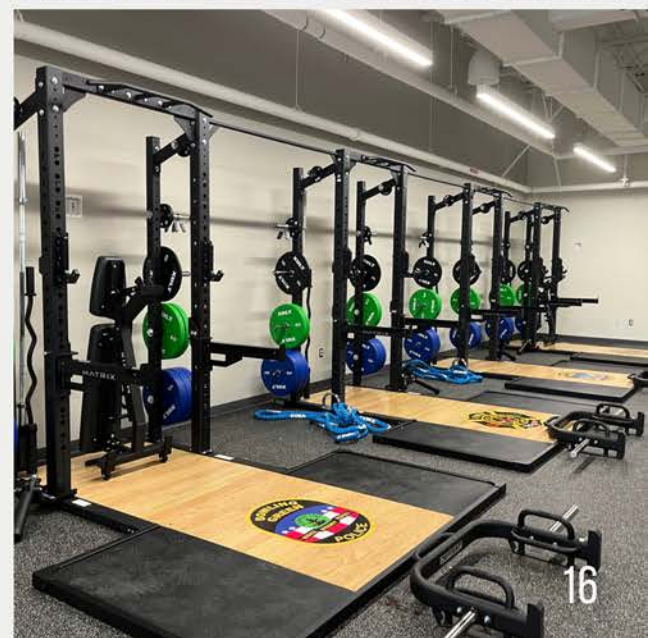


PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER

On October 31, the Public Safety Training Center was officially opened and dedicated to Bowling Green Police Officer David “Slim” Whitson who tragically passed away in the line of duty in 2006.

The \$20.6 million facility houses the Training Divisions for both the Bowling Green Fire and Police Departments, as well as the Bowling Green Law Enforcement Academy (BGLEA) and BGFD Station 5.

Improvements were also made in 2025 to the training grounds including refurbishment and dedication of the Bob Sanborn Drill Tower (see page 17) and preparations were made for a new live burn facility arriving in 2026.



FROM THE SHADOWS TO THE SPOTLIGHT:

The Bob Sanborn Drill Tower

BY FIRE CHIEF JUSTIN BROOKS

From the shadows to the spotlight... some legacies will be remembered forever. On April 23rd, the Bowling Green Fire Department honored the career of Retired Captain Bob Sanborn by naming the drill tower after him. The "Bob Sanborn Drill Tower" will forever stand as a lasting tribute to a life's legacy worth honoring and remembering.

The Bowling Green Fire Department in Bowling Green, Kentucky recently renovated the 1980 drill tower. From shoring up the structural components to a complete paint job, the drill tower makeover was almost complete, but the job wasn't finished until Wednesday, April 23rd when the drill tower was officially named after the man in the shadows who's been on scene for decades.

The mission at the BGFD is to serve, save, and protect. To make it better. By his passion for the profession, and for his 46+ years of service and sacrifice, Captain Bob Sanborn deserved the recognition, but more importantly earned the honor of having the drill tower named after him.

Beginning his career in 1979 with the BGFD, he would retire in 2006, but not really. The same year he retired, he chose to come back and he's never left. Spending countless hours around the country, he has dedicated his life's efforts to the profession by learning from others and then choosing to pay it forward. Bob Sanborn stands as a foundational pillar for the BGFD that remains in place today. Bob is one who never looks for recognition or attention, but simply works behind the scenes in the shadows. Naming the drill tower after him was symbolic, as Bob has invested himself into hundreds of recruits and firefighters that have passed through the drill tower under his mentorship.

At the age of 75, Bob can still be found on-site at the BGFD's training center, teaching, molding, and serving others. His latest fire service contributions include standardizing the fundamentals of the job with his creation of the "Field Operational Guides" for the BGFD.





His head, hands, and heart have touched us all. As the BGFD family gathered on Wednesday morning for the unveiling, both retired and active duty, the realization was clear, Bob had impacted everyone there, no one was excluded. He made each one of us better, which has allowed us to better serve, save, and protect the citizens of Bowling Green. His reach is far greater than just Bowling Green. Becoming a Georgia Smoke Diver in 1986, he routinely goes back to the established Smoke Diver programs across the nation to give back and learn more.

Former Western Kentucky University football coach Jack Harbaugh once said, "Who's got it better than us? ... nobody." The BGFD feels that way today because we still have Captain Sanborn working in the uniform as a part-time Training Instructor. Understanding the mission from day one, he's remained a selfless servant leader to anyone and everyone.

Bob... thank you for all of it, job well done!



PREVENTION DIVISION

The Prevention Division prioritizes community safety through targeted outreach and fire prevention activities. The Division encompasses all aspects of fire prevention and community risk reduction for the Department. This includes investigations, fire code inspections, public education, public information and the Department's drone program. Millie, the Department's accelerant detection canine, is also assigned to this division with her handler, Captain Michael Cornwell.

Seventy investigations were completed in 2025. Determination breakdown listed below:

Incendiary	7
Accidental	30
Undetermined	32
Natural	1

51

COMMUNITY EVENTS

11,464

COMMUNITY CONTACTS

2,502

FIRE CODE INSPECTIONS

70

ORIGIN & CAUSE INVESTIGATIONS





FIREHOUSE FESTIVAL
SEPTEMBER 27, 2025





AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

On January 23, 2026, the fifth annual employee awards ceremony was held at the new Public Safety Training Center. The following awards were given in recognition of excellent service.



FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR
DYLAN HAWKINS

For exceptional commitment to outstanding service and professionalism

FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR
DYLAN HAWKINS

ENGINEER OF THE YEAR
STEPHEN ESTES

OFFICER OF THE YEAR
CHRIS BRITTON



ENGINEER OF THE YEAR
STEPHEN ESTES

MEDAL OF VALOR

For their conspicuous act of valor and heroism performed under hazardous and life threatening conditions

- CAPTAIN DANIEL ASHLEY
- FIREFIGHTER JOHN EMBREY
- FIREFIGHTER JOHN POTTER

MEDAL OF HONOR

For their outstanding service provided under difficult and demanding conditions

- ENGINEER JOEY HERNANDEZ
- ENGINEER BRIAN HOPE
- ENGINEER BRETT PITCHFORD
- FIREFIGHTER EVRON CARLSON
- FIREFIGHTER JONATHAN HARRELL



OFFICER OF THE YEAR
CHRIS BRITTON

CITIZEN LIFESAVING AWARD

For her involvement in lifesaving efforts and extraordinary assistance to a fire department member at an emergency scene on September 15, 2025

- SARA BETH EMBRY

SAFETY AWARD

For outstanding service and dedication with regard to the safety of fire department members

- NICK COOK



AWARD OF MERIT

For performance of duties which have been carried out in an outstanding manner such as to merit recognition

- CAPTAIN LARRY WEHR
- CAPTAIN MERV HOCHSTETLER
- ENGINEER BEN MOCK
- ENGINEER TAYLOR KISER

SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

For outstanding service and dedication to the citizens of our community and to the BGFD

- CAPTAIN MICHAEL CORNWELL

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

For commendable time and effort donated toward the betterment of the public safety community

- CINDY LEMON
- CLIFTON PHELPS

FITNESS AWARDS

For outstanding commitment to their own fitness and the fitness of their fellow firefighters

- CAPTAIN MIKE HARVEY
- ENGINEER TRAVIS KEOWN
- FIREFIGHTER LEVI ANTHONY
- FIREFIGHTER GRIFFIN SPAINHOWARD

LEGACY AWARD

In honor of his legacy of leadership, determination, and commitment to the mission of the BGFD

- RETIRED DEPUTY CHIEF JASON SOWDERS

CHIEF'S AWARDS

For their commitment to selfless service and commendable time and effort given toward the betterment of the Department

- BATTALION CHIEF JOE HARBIN
- KIRSTEN HOMER

CITIZEN HEROISM AWARD

BGFD recognized retired Captain David Roemer on May 30, 2025 for a conspicuous act of valor and heroism under hazardous conditions. Captain Roemer has carried forth the mission into retirement and is worthy of recognition



RETIREMENTS

In 2025, the Department celebrated the retirement of three members. We congratulate these men on their retirements and thank them for their many years of dedicated service to the City of Bowling Green.

Engineer Caleb Hulsey

20 YEARS OF SERVICE
MAY 2025



Captain John Ballance

20 YEARS OF SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 2025



Battalion Chief Tim Buchanon

23 YEARS OF SERVICE
NOVEMBER 2025





PROMOTIONS

Each year, eligible members compete in the promotional process for the opportunity to advance in the leadership of this department. In 2025, several promotions were made possible due to resignations and retirements. The future of the services provided by the BGFD is in good hands due to the current and upcoming leaders found in the uniform.

ENGINEER

BRETT PITCHFORD - MAY 7, 2025
BRAD CAFFEY - SEPTEMBER 3, 2025
DYLAN HAWKINS - NOVEMBER 5, 2025
DUSTIN BLAIR - NOVEMBER 19, 2025

CAPTAIN

JUSTIN DONNELLY - SEPTEMBER 3, 2025
KYLE HAMPTON - NOVEMBER 5, 2025
SEAN HAMILTON - NOVEMBER 19, 2025

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

BUFFY WATT - JULY 1, 2025

BATTALION CHIEF

DANIEL ASHLEY- NOVEMBER 5, 2025

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT/PIO

ELYSE JONKER - DECEMBER 17, 2025





AGENCY PERFORMANCE TRACKING

STRUCTURE FIRE

Benchmark:

For 90 percent of all risk categories in structure fire responses, the total response time for the arrival of the first-due unit, staffed with 3 firefighters, shall be: 6 minutes and 20 seconds in all districts.

For 90 percent of all moderate/significant risk structure fire responses, the total response time for the arrival of the effective response force (ERF), staffed with 20 firefighters and officers on 6 fire apparatus and 1 command vehicle shall be: 10 minutes and 20 seconds in all districts.

There were no low risk structure fires and only 5 structure fires in maximum risk occupancies within the reporting period. Neither are reported below.

MODERATE/SIGNIFICANT RISK STRUCTURE FIRE	BENCHMARK	2025 PERFORMANCE	GAP
Alarm Handling	1:00	1:02	0:02
Turnout Time	1:20	1:51	0:31
Travel Time - First-Due	4:00	4:21	0:21
Travel Time - ERF	8:00	9:43	1:43
Response Time - First-Due (n=34)	6:20	5:50	-0:30
Response Time - ERF (n=27)	10:20	10:56	0:36



EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE

Benchmark:

For 90 percent of all emergency medical services (EMS) responses, the total response time for the arrival of the first-due unit, staffed with 3 firefighters, shall be: 6 minutes and 45 seconds in all districts.

There were no high risk EMS incidents (mass casualty/active shooter) within the reporting period. Only moderate risk EMS incidents are reported below.

MODERATE RISK EMS	BENCHMARK	2025 PERFORMANCE	GAP
Alarm Handling	1:45	0:42	-1:03
Turnout Time	1:00	1:45	0:45
Travel Time - First-Due	4:00	4:29	0:29
Response Time - First-Due (n=6496)	6:45	5:44	-1:01

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

For 90 percent of moderate risk hazardous materials response incidents, the total response time for the arrival of the first-due unit, staffed with 3 firefighters, shall be: 6 minutes and 20 seconds in all districts.

For 90 percent of moderate risk hazardous materials responses, the total response time for the arrival of the effective response force (ERF), staffed with 11 firefighters and officers on 3 fire apparatus and 1 command vehicle shall be: 10 minutes and 20 seconds in all districts.



There were no low risk haz-mat and three max risk haz-mat incidents within the reporting period. Neither type is reported below.

MODERATE RISK HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	BENCHMARK	2025 PERFORMANCE	GAP
Alarm Handling	1:00	0:30	-0:30
Turnout Time	1:20	1:49	0:29
Travel Time - First-Due	4:00	5:01	1:01
Travel Time - ERF	8:00	10:40	2:40
Response Time - First-Due (n=77)	6:20	6:13	-0:07
Response Time - ERF (n=34)	10:20	12:01	1:41

TECHNICAL RESCUE

For 90 percent of low risk technical rescue responses, the total response time for the arrival of the first-due unit, staffed with 3 firefighters, shall be: 6 minutes and 20 seconds in all districts.

For 90 percent of all low risk technical rescue responses, the total response time for the arrival of the effective response force (ERF), staffed with 7 firefighters and officers on 2 fire apparatus and 1 command vehicle shall be: 10 minutes and 20 seconds in all districts.

LOW RISK TECHNICAL RESCUE VEHICLE EXTRICATION	BENCHMARK	2025 PERFORMANCE	GAP
Alarm Handling	1:00	2:15	1:15
Turnout Time	1:20	1:48	0:28
Travel Time - First-Due	4:00	4:07	0:07
Travel Time - ERF	8:00	5:50	2:20
Response Time - First-Due (n=10)	6:20	5:07	-1:13
Response Time - ERF (n=3)	10:20	6:54	-3:26



For 90 percent of moderate risk technical rescue responses, the total response time for the arrival of the first-due unit, staffed with 3 firefighters, shall be: 6 minutes and 20 seconds in all districts.

For 90 percent of all moderate risk technical rescue responses, the total response time for the arrival of the effective response force (ERF), staffed with 20 firefighters and officers on 6 fire apparatus and 1 command vehicle shall be: 10 minutes and 20 seconds in all districts.

There were no ERF responses within the reporting period.

MODERATE RISK TECHNICAL RESCUE	BENCHMARK	2025 PERFORMANCE	GAP
Alarm Handling	1:00	1:39	0:39
Turnout Time	1:20	1:31	0:11
Travel Time - First-Due	4:00	3:57	0:03
Response Time - First-Due (n=11)	6:20	5:26	-0:54

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BGFD Command Staff

Justin Brooks

FIRE CHIEF

Bret Smith

DEPUTY CHIEF, OPERATIONS

Doug Morris

DEPUTY CHIEF, LOGISTICS

Daniel Ashley

BATTALION CHIEF

Michael Bean

BATTALION CHIEF

Jason Brooks

ASSISTANT CHIEF, PREVENTION

Matt Ferguson

BATTALION CHIEF

Joe Harbin

BATTALION CHIEF

Shannon Pardue

ASSISTANT CHIEF, TRAINING

Eric Scott

BATTALION CHIEF

Craig White

BATTALION CHIEF

Elected Officials

Todd Alcott

MAYOR

Carlos Bailey

COMMISSIONER

Dana Beasley-Brown

COMMISSIONER

Melinda Hill

COMMISSIONER

Sue Parragin

COMMISSIONER

Annual Report By

Elyse Jonker

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT/PIO

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#MAKEITBETTER

