

RICEVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Adversity Meets Resilience



2024-2025

Annual Report

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN



Violet
Caramella
AEMT
LODD 6/14/2025



Mike Reid
EMT
Army
Retired



Message from Chief Thomas J. Kelly

I am pleased to share our 2024-2025 Riceville Volunteer Fire Department Annual Report. Inside, you will find not only statistics about our responses but also some of our accomplishments during the past fiscal year. You will also be provided with updates in reference to our personnel and responsibility within the department.

2024-2025 marked 60 years of the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department's (RVFD) continued dedication to serving our community with the following core values: Family, Professionalism, Compassion, Community and Dedication. The department strives to deliver exemplary customer service to the 6,000 plus residents who call Riceville home and the numerous visitors to our wonderful community. We continue to be a full-service fire department comprised of 50 with members including the support staff of the Fire Department's Auxiliary and Board of Directors.



Last year, RVFD crews were challenged to more than 400 incidents as a result of Hurricane Helene in addition to remaining resolute on emergency preparedness 6 months after the devastation to our community. We remained focused our fire prevention and education through our Fire Prevention Programs, and we supported our emergency services delivery through our Training and Administrative Divisions.

The Riceville Community continues to progress, which allows us to seek new opportunities and leads us to strengthen our relationships with our new partner agencies. Our dedicated personnel are highly trained professionals who proudly serve this community with conviction and honor, which is why I am so proud of each member of this great organization.

We hope you enjoy the 2024-2025 Riceville Volunteer Fire Department Annual Report as it highlights our accomplishments over the past year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fire Chief Thomas J. Kelly, Paramedic

The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual. - Vince Lombardi

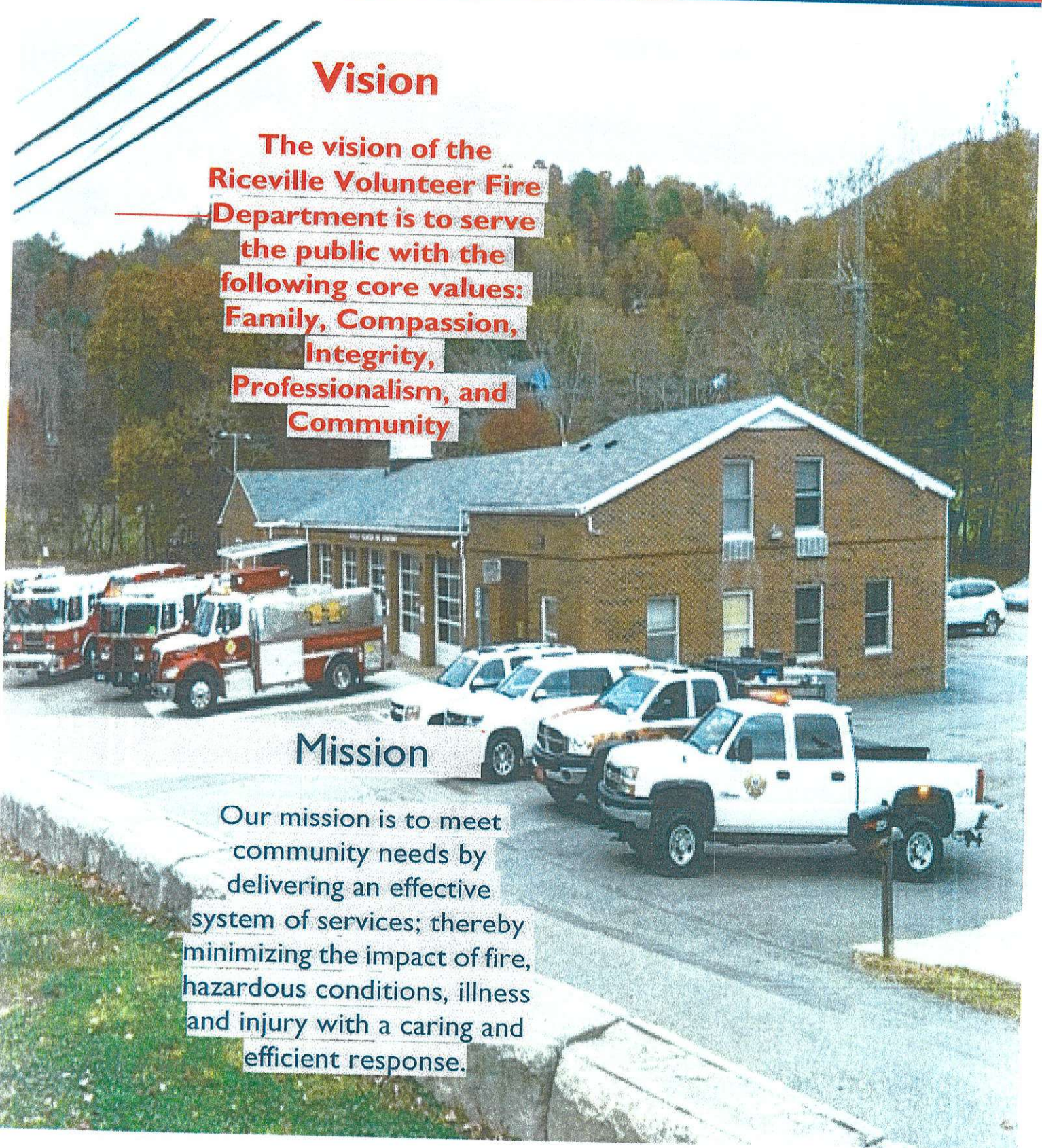
Riceville Volunteer Fire Department

Vision

The vision of the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department is to serve the public with the following core values:
Family, Compassion, Integrity, Professionalism, and Community

Mission

Our mission is to meet community needs by delivering an effective system of services; thereby minimizing the impact of fire, hazardous conditions, illness and injury with a caring and efficient response.



Riceville Volunteer Fire Department

Hurricane Helene

Riceville Volunteer Fire Department

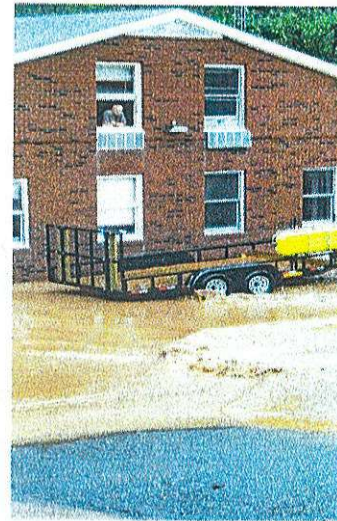
Hurricane Helene was an epic storm that no matter how well we planned, we were not prepared for the outcome.

Each year we review our emergency response plan for snow, wildfires, and other common occurring events. On September 25, 2024, Riceville Volunteer Fire Department activated an emergency station coverage with three to five inches of rain expected along with high winds. Crews were embedded ready to go. The rain came as predicted and then the Fire Station took a lightening strike and lost the amplifier for communications beyond pagers and handheld radios. Shortly after trees began falling, taking out internet access leaving us without the ability to obtain data on Hurricane Helene.

September 27, 2024

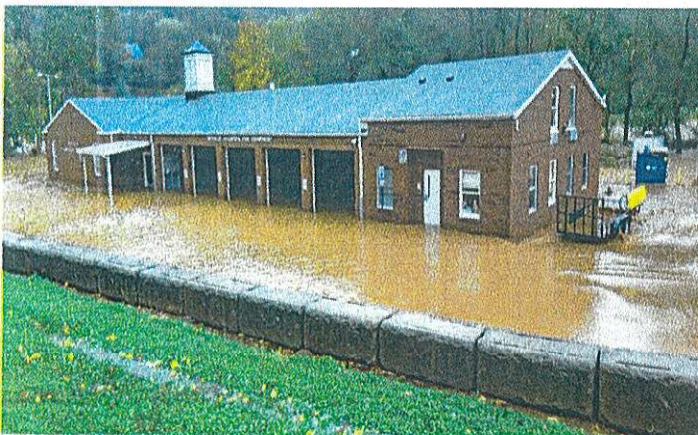
Crews were mobilized at 3 am to begin warning residents along the Swannanoa River to evacuate to higher ground. ***"Engine 11-3 to Command, Go ahead E11-3, we are on Moffit Road with water coming into the cab of the truck, Command to E11-3 abort the mission and return to the Station."***

Water in the cab was at least 3 feet high. Radio traffic across the county began to pick up and Emergency Management advised they were going to hand deliver the updated flood maps since we had no way to connect with them.



The flood maps were never delivered, Chief 11 met Illinois Swift Water Team on Tunnel Rd to bring them to Station 11 for assignment. RVFD crews were evacuating and rescuing families in low lying areas off Willow Creek Rd. Then came the most horrifying command came from ES2 "All units cease operations and seek higher ground immediately due to dangerous conditions".

The next 10 days crews from RVFD worked to locate missing people reported by Emergency Management. Support from across North Carolina came once the access corridors were cleared. First South Stokes Volunteer Fire Department arrived and were welcomed by the RVFD crew. Then more were assigned to help over the next 3 months. Ambulance Strike Teams were assigned, UTV Rescue Teams were assigned, Law Enforcement teams were assigned, the 101st Airborne was assigned, the Department of Interior was assigned, and most importantly Hearts with Hands volunteered feeding our crews daily 3 meals. Helicopters began to land next to the station delivering supplies for both RVFD and private citizens in distress. We began tracking the location of our Board of Directors to make sure they were safe and secure as they too were members of the Riceville Community. After 5 days the 1st Starlink was flown in and delivered to us by an anonymous member of the community. We were devastated but not defeated!



Shope Creek taking over Station 11

Riceville volunteer Fire Department

Hurricane Helene

Partners in Recovery

**Hearts with Hands
World Kitchen
Trinity Baptist Church
Illinois Swift Water Rescue and Task Force I
Town of Riceville Iowa
Rusk Volunteer Fire Department
NC OSFM
VFIS
FEMA
Fire House Coffee
NC State Representative Eric Ager
Buncombe County Commissioner Terry Wells
NC Senator Warren Daniel
Greg Biffel
South Carolina Air National Guard
NC DOT
Cajun Navy
South Stokes Fire Department
Cabarrus County UTV Team
Winston Salem Fire Department
Lexington Fire Department
Clemmons Fire Department
Number 7 Township Fire Department
Shelby Fire Department
Pittsboro Fire Department
U.S. Department of Interior
U.S. Army 101st Airborne Division
Leicester Volunteer Fire Department
Buncombe County EM Logistics Staff
Atlantic Apparatus repair
FEMA EMS Strike Team Members
Alabama Hurricane Recovery Team
Ingels Grocery Swannanoa NC
FDNY and Texas IMT
Jewel Acres Families
Botany Woods Families
Riceville Forest Families
Shope Creek Families
Buffalo Mountain Families**

There are so many others, if we forgot please accept our apologies







Organizational Chart

The Riceville Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. is responsible for maintaining the necessary membership to deliver fire and emergency medical services to the residents of the Riceville Community. RVFD provide training and equipment for the volunteers and paid staff members of the department to meet and exceed the requirements.

The Organizational Structure Operations (AKA Chain of Command)

Chief Tom Kelly	Administrative Assistant Katie Payne
Div Chief Jason McEntire	

Riceville VFD Officers and Duty Crew

Jason McEntire	Allen Blount	Chris Redden	Steve Wickham
Veronica Hanks	Mary Brown	Heath Abee	Dan Little
Justin Ruff	Paul Gilliam	Tim Zibelin	

The Riceville Volunteer Fire District

Governed by the Board of Directors (9) – Responsible for the finances of the RVFD
Chairman of the Board with 8 additional BoD

Administrative Assistant

- **Officers include**
- **Chair (aka President)**
- **Vice Chair (aka Vice President)**
- **Treasurer**
- **Secretary**

Line Officers - responsible for day-to-day operations

- Chief - 1101
- Division Chief-1131 Training Officer / Additional Staff Scheduling
- Captain -1102 C Shift Supervisor / Additional Vehicle and small equipment maintenance
- Captain -1112 Volunteer Line Officer / Safety Officer
- Captain -1122 B Shift Supervisor / Additional Fire Life Safety Education and Pre-plans
- Captain -1132 A Shift Supervisor (vacant)
- Safety Officer – 1149 Safety Officer

***“What lies behind us and what lies before us
are tiny matters compared to what lies within
us.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson***



Department Overview

2024-2025: 60 years & counting

In 1964 the Riceville Men's Club, which consisted of members from the surrounding churches within the Riceville Community, realized a need for fire protection in the small area of eastern Buncombe County. The only way to afford such a service was to ask for volunteers from the community, the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department was born. We have come a long way through the years. A single engine station has developed into a department with 3 engines, 1 tanker, 1 wildland truck, 2 ambulances, 1 QRV, and 3 support vehicles. With our 50 members, we are proud of the women & men who serve protecting property & safeguarding the lives of residents & visitors.

Over the years RVFD has maintained & expanded its commitment to family tradition. Not long ago a young man could not wait until he reached the age to join the Cadet Program & start training to one day join their fathers & mother in the ranks of firefighting. In recent years we have grown to include sons, daughters, husbands, wives, brothers, & sisters. When you look at the big picture, the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department is one big family with all the traditions.

Each year RVFD provides service beyond 911 needs by going out to the areas we serve for smoke detector installation, Halloween Safety, Project Santa and so much more.

The Riceville Volunteer Fire Department is 1 of 5 Paramedic agencies that transport via 911. Many of our members hold specialized credentials that include Hazardous Materials, specialize rescue, child passenger safety, wildland fire mitigation, incident command, as well as many other national certifications. We serve a population of more than 6,000 as well visitors to the Blue Ridge Parkway covering 10 square miles. We give and receive mutual aid from Asheville, Swannanoa, Reynolds, Fairview, Garren Creek, and Black Mountain Fire Departments for structure fires, wildland fires, searches, and so much more.

Our doors are always open as we are 100% committed to your safety and well-being.





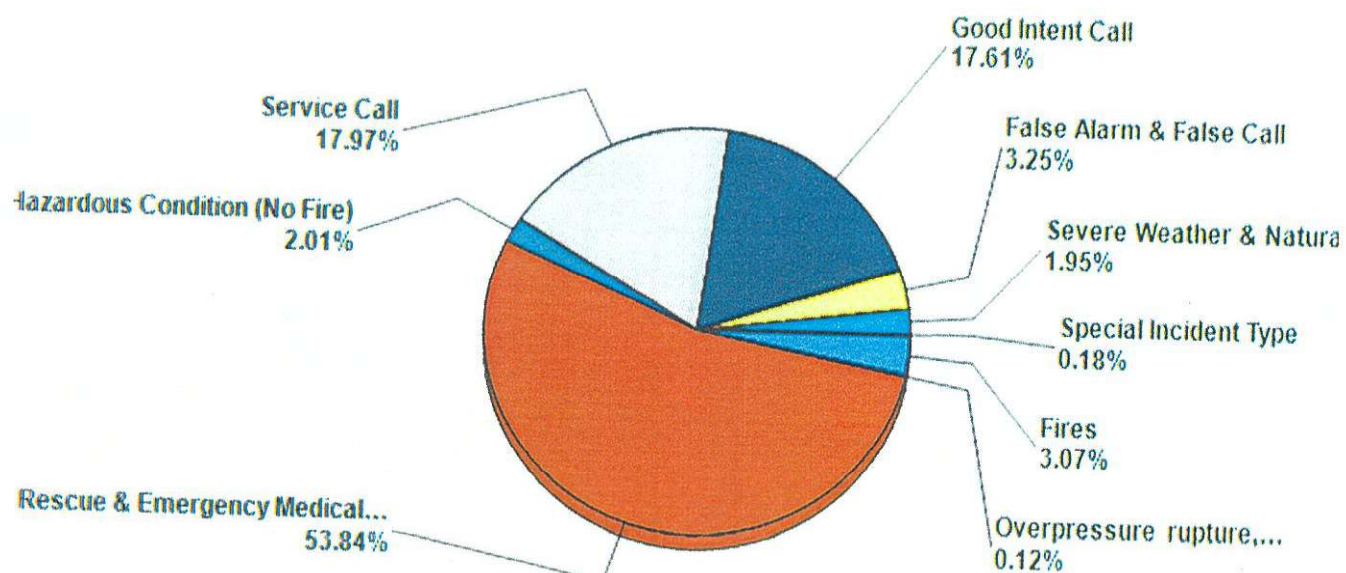
Incident Data

For 60 years, the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department has continually assessed the risks in our community. Today, RVFD still strives to shape our emergency response model to meet the community's needs in the most efficient and fiscally responsible manner possible. All the men and women of Riceville Volunteer Fire Department are dedicated to this community and proud to serve the people who make Riceville home. For more information about the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department, please visit us on our website at ricevillefire.org





	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	52	3.1%
Overpressure rupture, explosion, overhear - no fire	2	0.1%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	911	53.8%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	34	2.0%
Service Call	304	18.0%
Good Intent Call	298	17.6%
False Alarm & False Call	55	3.3%
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	33	2.0%
Special Incident Type	3	0.2%
	1692	





Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) encompasses nearly 80 percent of the annual incidents that are handled by the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department (RVFD) responded to 911 medical emergencies. Our Paramedics, Advanced EMT's, and EMT's handled each of these calls with pride, professionalism, and compassion.

To ensure that our community receives excellent emergency medical services and outstanding patient care, our Paramedics, AEMT's, and EMT's actively engaged for 8 hours of quarterly EMS training. These comprehensive trainings were designed to enhance patient survivability through rapid assessment and treatment in the areas of cardiac events, stroke emergencies, trauma assessment, pediatric care, and geriatric emergencies. These dynamic training courses were provided through a partnership with AB Tech and other local community colleges as well as Mission Memorial Hospital and MAHEC.

In order to ensure high quality medical care, the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department RVFD attends monthly EMS Peer Review with the local Medical Director to learn from data presented from countywide EMS calls.

RVFD also has 2 Paramedics performing in-house QA and to ensure our community receives optimal EMS delivery. RVFD utilizes the QA findings to develop additional training opportunities to continue to improve our EMS operations. The QA program is a vital component to ensure our members are delivering EMS to the customers we proudly serve.

RVFD continues to provide emergency medical support for Buncombe County as an Eastend backup when ALS ambulances are in demand. In August of 2024 RVFD added our newest 911 Paramedic transport vehicles to our fleet as the current ambulance was approaching 150,000 plus miles. The newest addition has many new required safety features as well enhanced patient care components. .

The Riceville Volunteer Fire Department has continued to shape the future of Emergency Medical Services for our community and Buncombe County when called upon.

RVFD actively participates with the area community colleges as well as Western North Carolina University for clinical opportunities for both 2- and 4-year Paramedic program for valuable experience under the watchful eyes of the professional Riceville Volunteer Fire Department Paramedic preceptors.

EMS Call / Intervention	Totals
Cardiac arrest	7
CPAP	12
Advanced Airway insertion	22
IV	1034
IO / IV access	26
Cardiac Heart Pacing	1
Overdose / Narcan	70
Breathing Treatments Albuterol	36
Pain Management	65
Sepsis / Antibiotics	7
Nausea / Vomiting Medication	86
Nitroglycerin / Chest Pain	32
Aspirin / Chest Pain	18
EMS Mutual Aid to Buncombe County	408
Total EMS Transports	645

Training Division

The Riceville Volunteer Fire Department Training Division revolved around new people, new apparatus, and new techniques as well as our seasoned veteran members. RVFD participates with certified and non-certified offerings from our local community college. Our membership trains together for Monday night drills when there are no scheduled business meetings. RVFD also trains with our mutual aid partners to

gain knowledge from other instructors. While certifications are a small part of the tracking of the efficiency of the organization, it is a critical measuring tool. As members advance with education it also prepares them for leadership roles and certainly additional responsibilities.

Officer Develop – Risk Assessment



re 2 B shift training proper hose rolling after annual hose testing



2025 ANNUAL MEETING TRAINING REPORT

Report prepared by Division Chief Jason McEntire

- Riceville VFD has had :
 - 2798 total training hours October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025
 - 5743 total training hours October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024
 - 6938 total training hours from October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023

Riceville VFD currently holds 363 NC State and national accredited certifications.
14 new certifications have been acquired since October 1, 2024.

Out of those certifications, Riceville has the following;

- 8 - EMT-Basic
- 18- EMT-Intermediate
- 16 - EMT-Paramedic
- 27- NC Certified Firefighters

Riceville currently host multiple Continuing Education hours per year for EMS.

- This has been expanded to 96 opportunity hours annually to help members meet their CE requirements.
- The State of NC OEMS has also been in the process of adjusting requirements for EMS providers. We have been working hard to make sure Riceville is ahead and ready for any and all of the changes to EMS

Fire Training projects

- Working on scheduling required training topics that gain maximum points for the NC OSFM/DOI Rating system to assist to maximize training points for our next rating. Below is a breakdown of training hour per category per member annually to achieve maximum points. These hours are needed per member;
 - Facility Training – 18 hrs ▪ Company Training – 192 hrs ▪ Haz Mat Training – 6 hrs ▪ Officer – 12 hrs ▪ Drivers Training – 12 hrs

Closing statement

Continue to work with local community colleges to make sure all Riceville members are able to obtain the training and certifications that asset the Riceville community and the department members.



Training Type	Hours
Automatic Aid	47
Company	2350
Driver	310
Facility	85
Haz Mat	50
New Driver	6
Officer	144
Recruit	128
TOTAL	3118



Apparatus and small Equipment Report

Prepared by Captain Allen Blount

Apparatus purpose

1120 EMS Calls transport

Tac 11 1st responder and Public Assistance calls

E11 Structure Fires and MVA's

E11- Structure Fires and Mutual RIT

E11-3 Brush fires and other hazards

Brush 11 Wildland fires and road hazard

Tanker 11 Water Haul Operations

UTV 11-2 Wildland Interface, personnel carrier/search

and rescue

Truck 11 haul trailers and back up Brush truck with skid

unit

Car 11 Training and Fire Department back up to QRV

Vehicle Mileage

1120 1300 -15830

E11 51639-53083

E11-2 21104-24367

E11-3 32724-33077

Tanker 11 20657-21458

Tac 11 103693-109855

All Vehicles are Inspected by Federal Standards



2024-2025 FLSE Report by Captain Chris Redden

Pre-incident planning remains vital to the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department's mission of protecting life and property. Accurate and up-to-date pre-plans enhance firefighter safety, improve response efficiency, and support effective decision-making during emergencies. Sharing these Pre-plans with our mutual aid departments builds Strong mutual aid partnerships with neighboring departments that are essential, ensuring shared resources and coordinated responses to complex incidents.

Challenges as the FLSE Officer

As the Fire and Life Safety Education Officer, meeting today's expanding requirements presents ongoing challenges, including limited staffing, and increasing community education demands. Despite these obstacles, continued focus on prevention, preparedness, and collaboration strengthens both our department and the community we serve.



Public Education Events	2022 Totals
Special Events	5
Car Seat Installed	20
Smoke detectors installed	45
Total community outreach	110



RVFD Member of the Year

The Member of the Year is awarded to the Member that exemplifies the true meaning of commitment and pride in the organization for the current year. This award process begins in November and nominations for the award may be submitted from any rank within the organization. Members vote and during the annual Christmas Dinner the recipient is honored with all the peers present.



Firefighter/AEMT Justin Ruff is married with 3 daughters. Justin has been associated with both Volunteer and Career fire departments for more than 20 years. Justin came to Riceville Volunteer Fire as a part time Firefighter / AEMT. Justin works towards perfection with every task he takes on.

**2024 RVFD Member of the Year
Justin Ruff**

President's Award

The President's Award is presented to an outstanding Member of the RVFD Board of Directors who, in the opinion of the President has performed in a way the President feels is beyond that which is normally expected of them. Board Members do not receive any compensation for their service to the Riceville Community and often do research to help the department in the areas of which they are very knowledgeable.

Lisa McCallister was selected by Board of Directors, President Dan Little, to receive the 2024 President's Award for the outstanding performance of her duties as Treasurer of the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department during the recovery phase of Hurricane Helene.



**2024 RVFD President's Award
Lisa McCallister**



Chief's Award

The 2024 Riceville Volunteer Fire Department Chief's Award is presented to all the members of the RVFD organization. To the Firefighters, Fulltime, Part-time, Volunteer, the Auxiliary, the entire Board of Directors, and the families at home who waited patiently for their loved ones to return after hours and in many cases, days of service. What we do is our calling of service embedded with pride.

"As the Fire Chief of the Riceville Volunteer Fire Department during Hurricane Helene we saw devastation like nothing that we would have expected during our careers. To see the drive and compassion after multiple exhausting days of service, carrying water and MRE's up a steep slopes where the road had been washed away or checking on the wellbeing of our senior residents, affirmed a commitment of excellence." Chief Thomas J. Kelly

Matthew 25:40 , "Truly I tell you, anyone who does these things for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, does it for me





"Because there's no greater good than to serve others."

