

OZAUKEE CENTRAL FIRE DEPARTMENT



2025
ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION

The Ozaukee Central Fire Department (OCFD) is a consolidated organization of the former Grafton Fire Department and Saukville Fire Department. Operations began in January of 2025 following a successful referendum in 2024 and hiring of additional full-time positions in early 2025.

OCFD proudly serves as the primary Firefighting and Paramedic-level Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agency for the Villages of Grafton and Saukville, as well as the Towns of Grafton and Saukville, with a primary jurisdiction of just under 60 square miles. Operations are based out of two stations; one in the Village of Grafton (headquarters) and one in the Village of Saukville.

The OCFD also regularly partners with other Fire/EMS agencies in Ozaukee County to provide and receive mutual aid assistance for major incidents. OCFD is a member of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS).

Coverage is provided by full-time, part-time and on-call members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and every day of the year.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Ozaukee Central fire Department is to protect lives, property, and the environment through prompt, professional, and compassionate emergency response, fire prevention, and public education.

OUR VISION

The Ozaukee Central Fire Department will continue to be a trusted leader in emergency services, recognized for excellence, innovation, and community partnership. We strive to ensure a safer and more resilient future for all.

OUR VALUES

Integrity

We are honest, ethical, and accountable in all that we do.

Courage

We face danger and adversity with strength and resolve.

Service

We are dedicated to selfless service and the well-being of our community.

Excellence

We pursue the highest standards in training, operations, and customer service.

Teamwork

We rely on each other, collaborate with partners, and value every member.

Respect

We treat everyone with dignity, compassion, and fairness.

Innovation

We embrace continuous improvement and adapt to meet evolving challenges.



ADMINISTRATION & FIRE BOARD

The administrative staff consists of a full-time Fire Chief, Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention & Community Education, Deputy Chief of Personnel & Operations, non-sworn Business Manager and two part-time Division Chiefs.



WILLIAM RICE
FIRE CHIEF



MATTHEW KARPINSKI
ASSISTANT CHIEF



ROBERT KASLICK
DEPUTY CHIEF



TOM BICHANICH
DIVISION CHIEF



JASON LAABS
DIVISION CHIEF



DIANA DEGNITZ
BUSINESS MANAGER

2025 FIRE BOARD

Oversight of the OCFD is provided by a Board of citizen appointees from all member communities. The Board meets at least monthly on the third Wednesday of each month, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Special meetings are held as necessary.

Barbara Dickmann – President

Topher Adams

Jim Nowlen

Marcia Nosko

Andrew Schwartz

Dan Galginaitis - Treasurer

Barry Jondahl – Vice President

Zachary Kranz

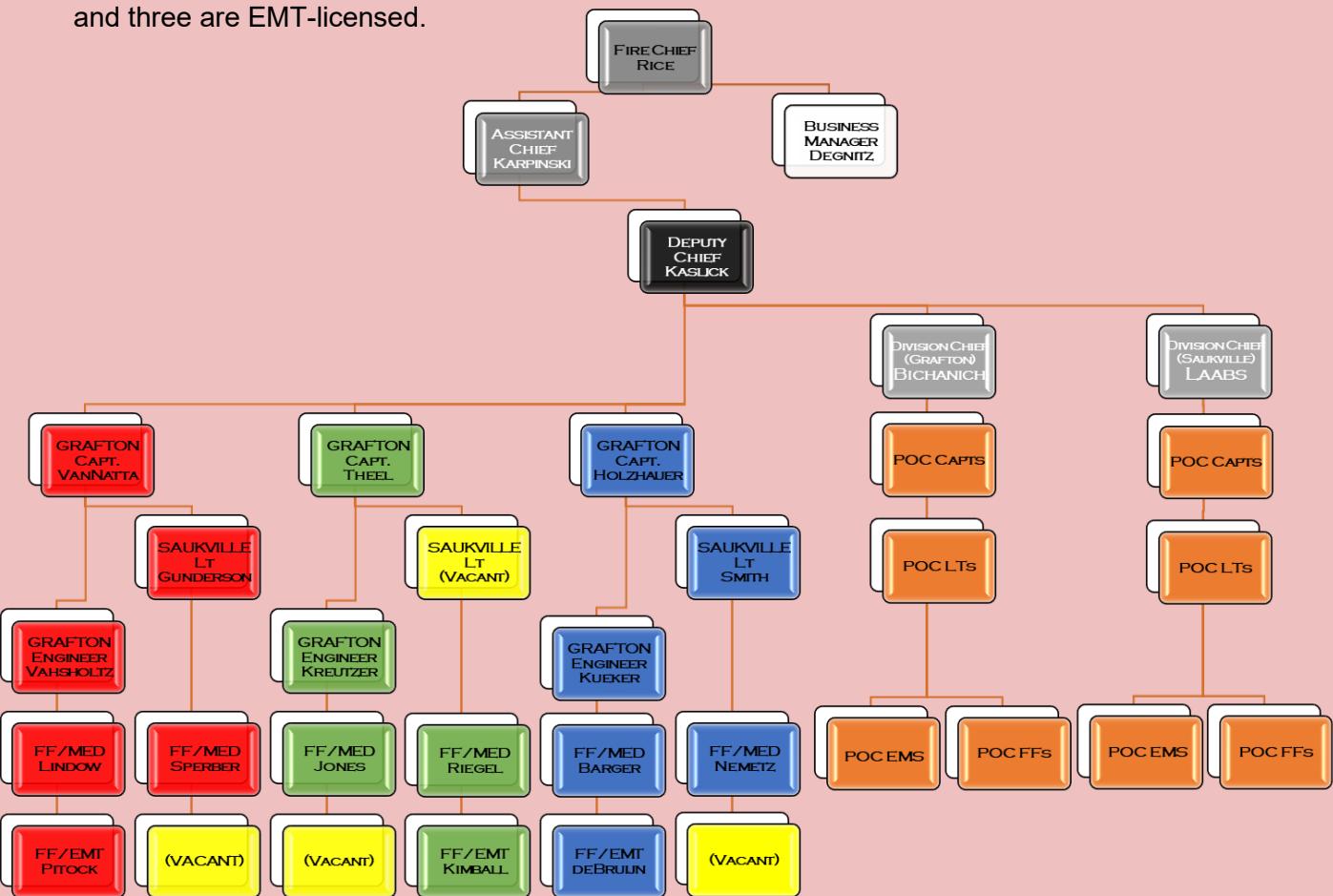
Steve Solomossy

PERSONNEL

In addition to the administrative staff, the Fire Department employed eighteen full-time personnel that work rotating 24-hour shifts; split between three shifts. This results in an average of a 56-hour workweek for each person.

The majority of OCFD members are part-time. There are approximately 60 part-time members that provide regular coverage, fill-in for full-time personnel that are on leave and respond from home for major incidents. Part-time personnel covered a significant 21,580 hours on the schedule. This total does not include responses from home while off duty for multiple/major incidents.

Minimum daily in-station staffing for 2025 was four personnel at the Grafton Station and two personnel at the Saukville Station. Of the six-person minimum, at least three are Paramedics and three are EMT-licensed.



Most of our part-time members are employed elsewhere full-time, have families and other obligations limiting their availability for call response. In addition, nearly one-quarter of our members serve on more than one fire department or emergency services organization, which further strains regular availability and the ability to muster personnel for larger incidents.

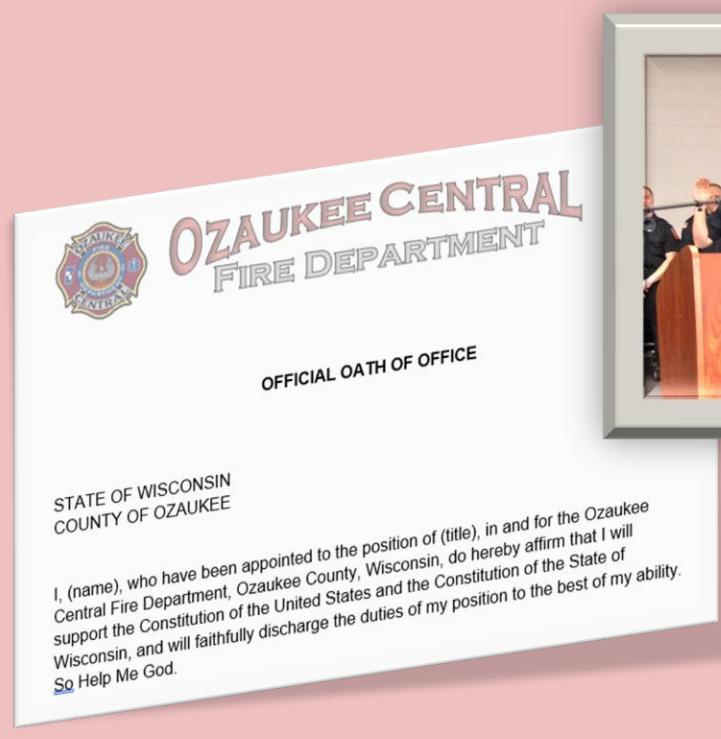
Nationally, the fire service has struggled to hire and retain employees. Availability of volunteer/part-time personnel is a challenge and the OCFD is no different. Recruitment and retention are year-round efforts as availability continues to decline.

OCFD welcomed 2 new full-time and 12 new part-time members. Two members were also promoted from part-time to full-time. Through the end of 2025, 18 resignations were received.

2025 PROMOTIONAL CHANGES

Several promotional changes occurred in 2025 following the consolidation. The Chief, Assistant Chief, Division Chief of EMS and other promoted Captains and Lieutenants of the former Departments maintained their respective ranks. The chart below lists promotional changes:

EMPLOYEE	RANK/TITLE
Robert Kaslick	Deputy Chief
Tom Bichanich	Division Chief
Jason Laabs	Division Chief
Luke Van Natta	Captain (Red Shift)
Eric Theel	Captain (Green Shift)
Tim Holzhauer	Captain (Blue Shift)
Preston Smith	Lieutenant (Blue Shift)
Travis Gunderson	Lieutenant (Red Shift)
Olivia Riegel	Lieutenant (Green Shift)
Brian Vahsholtz	Engineer
Chris Kueker	Engineer
Jordan Kreutzer	Engineer
Diana Degnitz	Business Manager



OPERATIONS

Following consolidation, OCFD streamlined operations to ensure efficiency and consistency across both stations. Key improvements included:

- **Unified Response Protocols:** Implemented automatic incident response from both stations when appropriate, improving coverage and reducing response times.
- **Integrated Training:** Conducted near-daily joint training sessions to maintain operational consistency and enhance team readiness.
- **Equipment Standardization:**
 - Reconfigured apparatus for uniformity.
 - Updated hose and minimized equipment variances to simplify deployment and maintenance.
- **Fleet Management:** After a thorough review of response needs, Engine 361 was retired and sold to a department in western Wisconsin.

OCFD continues to focus on operational excellence through ongoing evaluation, training, and resource optimization within our Operational subcategories of:

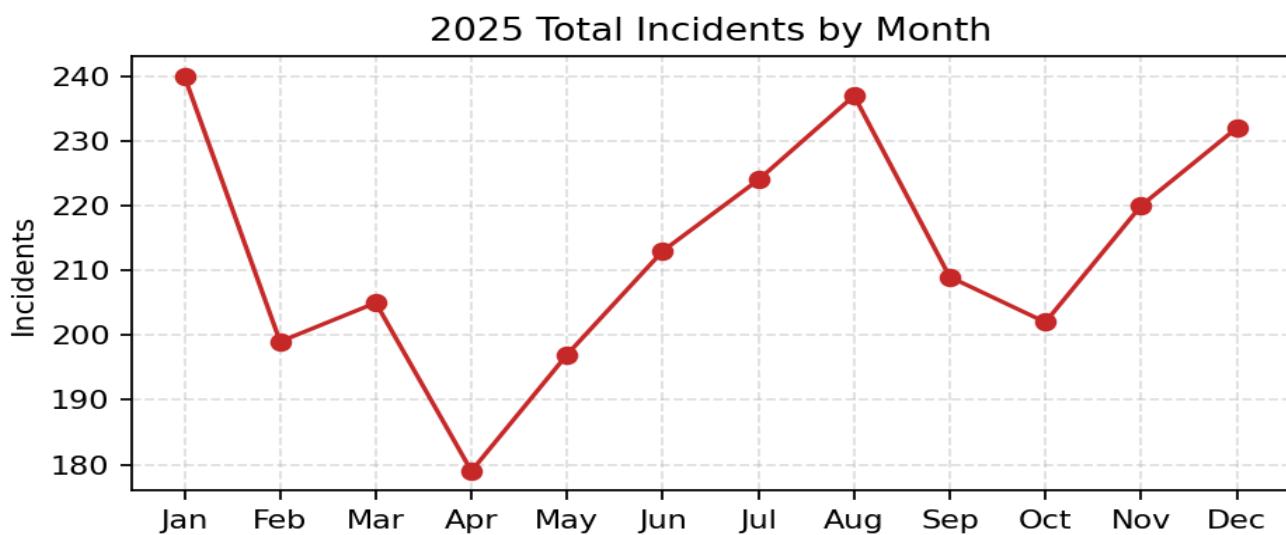
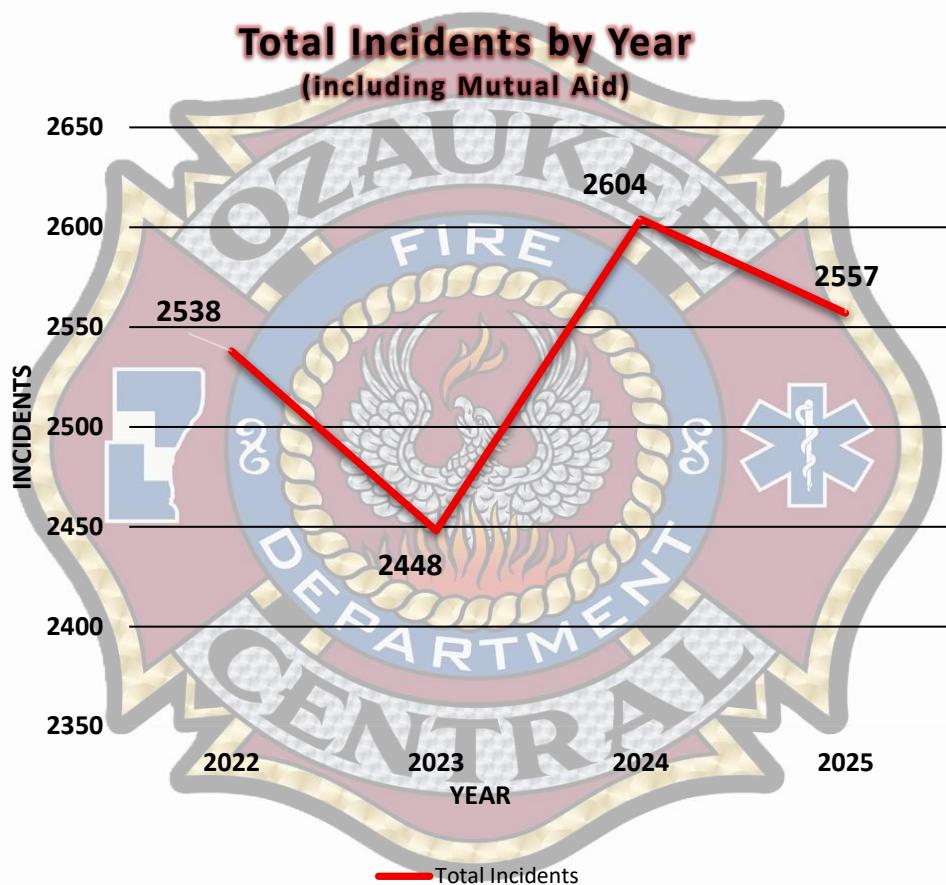
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Suppression
- Special Operations
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Rope Rescue
 - Swiftwater Rescue
 - Ice Rescue
 - Extrication
 - Rescue Task Force



INCIDENT STATISTICS

Although this year was the birth of our new agency, historical data from both previous agencies was combined to show that 2025 was the second busiest year on record (2,557). Total calls were only 47 less than the record year of 2024 (2,604).

Total Incidents – 2,557 (7 incidents/day)



ADDITIONAL INCIDENT STATISTICS

EMS DISPATCH PRIORITY (EMD)*	# OF RESPONSES
Rescue 1 (Most Critical)	68
Rescue 2	518
Rescue 3	497
Rescue 4	387
Rescue 5	562

* Not all EMS calls were EMD coded

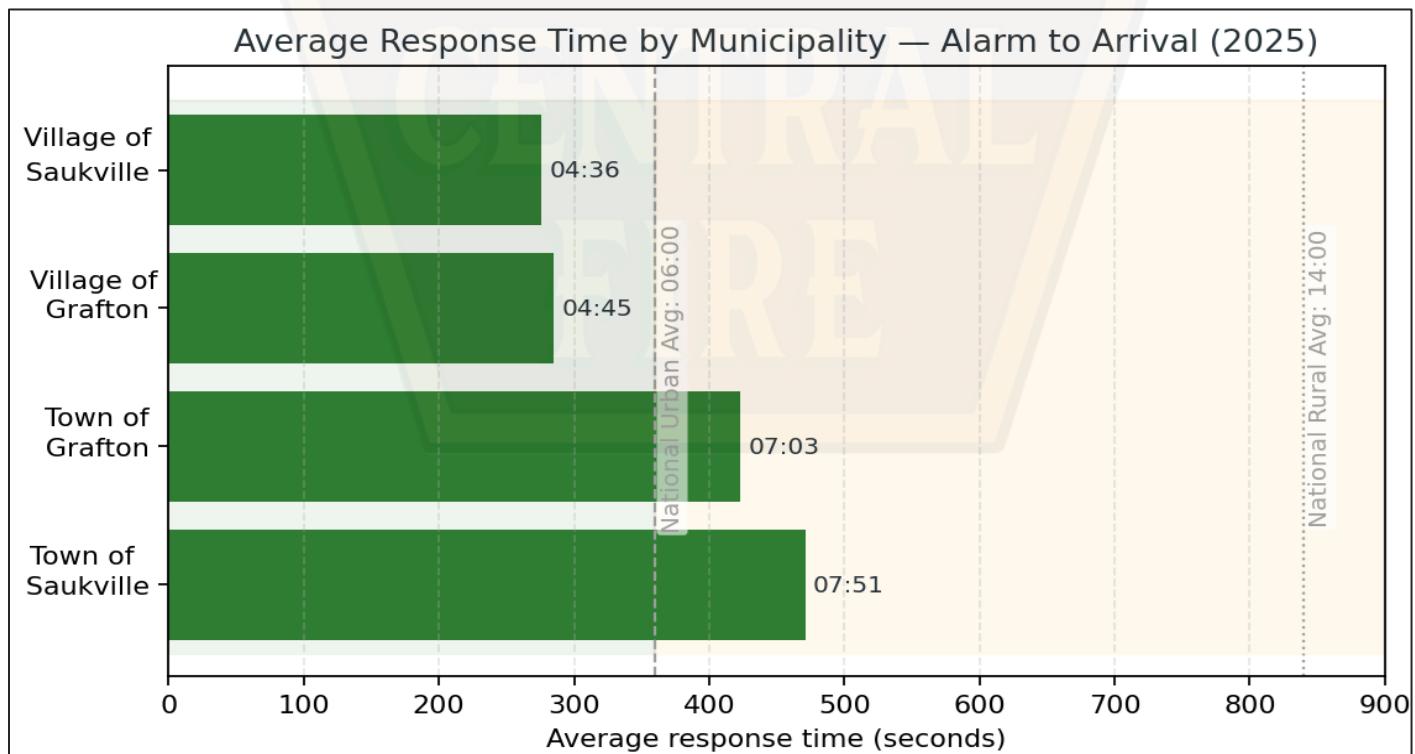
COMMON RESPONSE ADDRESSES	
VILLAGE POINTE COMMONS	226
AURORA MEDICAL CLINIC	111
THE BERKSHIRE	46
PROVIDENCE PLACE	38
MILAN ESTATES	38
ST MARY'S CLINIC	33
1929/1931 1 ST AVE APARTMENTS	26
ANITA'S GARDENS (GRAFTON)	26
HARVEST HOME	25
CHADWICK VILLAGE	24
INTERSTATE 43	23
AURORA MEDICAL CENTER (HOSPITAL)	22
MANCHESTER APARTMENTS	22
WOODSIDE PRAIRIE	22
ROSEWOOD MANOR	18
WALMART	17

MOST ACTIVE UNITS	
UNIT	RESPONSES
851	924
352	605
852	601
855	578
355	348
863	288
362	261
864	100
860	95
351	47
363	35
866	21
865	20
857	15
357	8

ADDITIONAL INCIDENT STATISTICS

Time Range 7AM-9PM	Slowest Time Range 11PM-6AM	HOSPITAL DESTINATION	# OF TRANSPORTS
Mutual Aid Given 133	Mutual Aid Received 17	Aurora Grafton	1216
Avg EMS Response (Alarm to Arrival) 5 min 30 sec		Ascension Ozaukee	227
Avg Response for All Incidents (Alarm to Arrival) 5 min 38 sec (National Avg = 6 min)		Children's	41
Average EMS Call Duration 1 hour 1 min		Froedtert (Main)	16
Most common EMS call type Fall (21%)		Froedtert West Bend	11
Percentage of Overlapping Incidents 49%		Other	18

CALLS BY STATION AREA	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
SAUKVILLE	44	39	46	48	50	52	52	59	67	46	58	52	613
GRAFTON	182	153	148	128	130	150	159	161	131	148	150	171	1,811
MUT. AID	14	7	11	3	17	11	13	17	11	8	12	9	133



NOTABLE INCIDENTS

Notable incidents generally involve long duration, mutual aid, fatalities and/or require many responders. The list below contains notable incidents within our jurisdiction or required significant OCFD resources to assist other agencies.

OZAUKEE CENTRAL INCIDENTS

- **Structure Fire- 11th Ave 12/20**
- **Industrial Fire- Progress Drive 12/15**
- **Fatal Crash I-43 & Hwy 33 11/26**
- **Building Collapse- Port Rd 11/14**
- **Fatal Crash- Walmart 10/26**
- **Shooting- Lake Shore Rd (Flight) 10/24**
- **Motorcycle Crash- Falls & Port Rd (Flight) 8/17**
- **Industrial Fire- Cheyenne & Washington 7/12**
- **Major Crash- Hwy 32/I-43 6/22**
- **Structure Fire- Dellwood Ct 6/22**
- **Industrial Fire- Badger Cir 3/25**
- **Major Grass Fire- Arrowhead Rd 2/11**
- **Major Grass Fire- Arrowhead Ln 1/19**



MUTUAL AID INCIDENTS

- **Structure Fire (Cedarburg) 11/14**
- **Fatal Crash (Mequon) 10/1**
- **Major Flooding (Germantown) 8/12**
- **Major Flooding (Milwaukee) 8/10**
- **Structure Fire (Cedarburg) 7/31**
- **Structure Fire (Fredonia) 7/15**
- **Structure Fire (Fredonia) 7/13**
- **Structure Fire/HazMat (Port Washington) 6/22**
- **Major crash (Port Washington) 5/26**
- **Structure Fire (Mequon) 5/7**
- **Smoke/Fire (Port Washington) 3/27**
- **Structure Fire (Mequon) 3/21**
- **Structure Fire (Mequon) 3/2**
- **Structure Fire (Mequon) 1/27**
- **Structure Fire (Fredonia) 1/20**
- **Structure Fire (Port Washington) 1/12**



TRAINING

In 2025, the men and women of the OCFD continued to show up and enhance their skills through training. Beyond the typical fire and EMS training subjects, we continue to focus on and enhance our special operations capabilities.

The OCFD met or surpassed many of its training goals for the year. Thanks to donated structures on Pleasant Valley Road, Wisconsin Avenue, and Hwy W; many realistic training sessions were conducted. Acquiring structures before they are demolished provides invaluable training to our members.

In 2025, the OCFD members achieved:

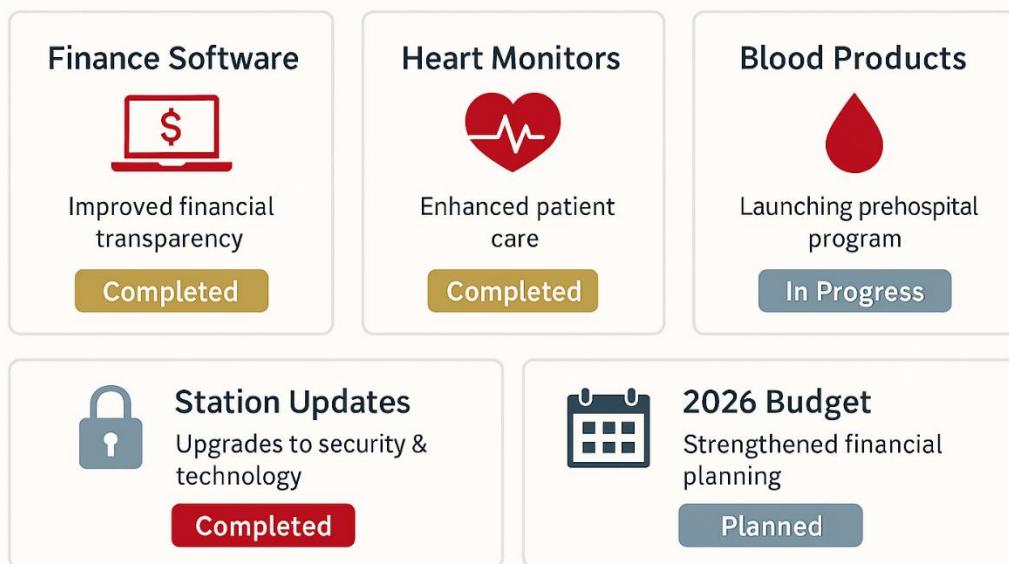
- Over **6,000 combined hours of training**
- 25 new Fire, Rescue and EMS certification classes attended including 2 new Paramedic certifications
- Flashover awareness training at Saukville Station (pictured)

The Training Division looks to continue building on the accomplishments of the past several years and to take on new challenges to better serve the Department and the community in the future.



MAJOR PROJECTS

As a new organization, the OCFD was forced to complete many large projects in addition to the other planned and unplanned projects related to normal fire service operation and growth. Listed below are just some of those projects.



FINANCE SOFTWARE- Support from the Village of Grafton was a temporary endeavor which led to the need for the OCFD to explore finance software solutions. Spearheaded by the OCFD Business Manager, several options were painstakingly researched. The Business Manager, with support from the Fire Board, Command Staff and the OCFD Treasurer, were able to implement the software at a tremendously accelerated timeline. The “Go Live” was completed in December for the January of 2026 deadline.

HEART MONITORS- Heart monitors are one of the most vital pieces of equipment for an EMS provider. These monitors can identify abnormalities in a patient’s heart rhythm, measuring blood pressure, defibrillating, reading oxygen/carbon monoxide levels in the blood and much more. Six state-of-the-art monitors, known as LifePak 35s, were purchased and placed into service this year. All EMS providers were given extensive training on the new equipment and capabilities.

BLOOD PRODUCTS- Also related to EMS capabilities, the groundwork was laid in 2025 for Paramedics to provide prehospital blood administration to trauma patients and certain medical conditions. OCFD will be one of very few services in Wisconsin to have this ability.

STATION UPDATES- Fire department staff continued work on several station update projects. Architectural designs and costs were presented to the Fire Board regarding significant remodels to both fire stations. Due to the uncertainty of remodel timelines, other upgrades were required in the meantime. This included upgrades to:

- Fire alarms at the Grafton Station
- Station security/access, internet and phone upgrades to both stations
- Saukville Station roof replacement

2026 BUDGET- An inordinate amount of time was devoted to creating the 2026 budget. The 2025 budget was not created by fire department staff and required significant corrections to false assumptions, mathematical errors and many other issues.

FIRE PREVENTION

One of the most proactive tasks for the OCFD is the prevention of fire and other emergency situations. This involves several measures: plan review, field inspections and community education.

PLAN REVIEW-

Prior to construction or remodeling of most commercial and multifamily buildings, a review of the life safety components takes place. This includes sprinkler design, alarm systems, emergency access, egress pathways and much more. The OCFD works closely with building inspectors, contractors, architects, building owners and others to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and standards.

Notable projects:

- The Seasons
- Gateway Sports
- Dave's Hot Chicken
- Aurora Hospital expansion
- The Daniels
- Ereztech Labs



FIELD INSPECTIONS-

Following the planning phase, new/remodeled construction is spot checked for compliance. This typically involves multiple inspections at various phases of a project. Additionally, regular inspections are required for all commercial buildings and most multifamily residential properties within our jurisdictional boundaries.

The OCFD completed over 800 field inspections.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION-

Community education is a regular occurrence that covers multiple subject areas; such as cardiac arrest recognition and intervention through community CPR classes, fire extinguisher training, home fire prevention/safety, first aid training, school visits/fire drills and much more. Fire Prevention Month in October also includes an open house for community members to learn more about the fire department and fire safety.



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) account for the bulk of 9-1-1 responses. OCFD operates three Paramedic-level ambulances 24/7 through a cross-staffing model. A fourth ambulance is available when needed and staffing allows. Cross staffing is when on-duty personnel are assigned to multiple pieces of response equipment. Example 1- If four people are on-duty at the Grafton station when a fire call comes in, they would respond to the call in an engine. This leaves the ambulances unstaffed until they return. Example 2- If four people are on-duty at the Grafton station when an EMS call comes in, a minimum of 2 people would respond in an ambulance with additional people also responding based on the severity of the call or Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) code. With only four people on duty, an ambulance call places the engine out of service until on-call personnel respond from home or the EMS crew returns. **Nearly half of all calls (1253 out of 2557) overlap.**



Three of the four ambulances are past due for replacement or refurbishment. Delays in manufacturer availability have extended our ambulances beyond their normal lifespan. They are beginning to show signs of age with extended downtime and needed repairs. We are optimistic that two of the ambulances will be addressed in 2026 and the third in 2027.

Many hours were spent transitioning medical licenses, creating a state-approved operational plan, billing accounts and other EMS-related changes to our operations as we moved from Grafton/Saukville Fire Departments to Ozaukee Central.

The partnership with Aurora Medical Center continued to grow with additional training and staff availability from the Office of the Medical Director.

At the end of 2025, OCFD employed:

- 31 licensed Paramedics
- 6 licensed Advanced EMTs
- 22 licensed EMTs

2025 Avg EMS Response
(Alarm to Arrival)
5 min 30 sec

SUMMARY & LOOK AHEAD

The Ozaukee Central Fire Department remains committed to progress and innovation, with much to anticipate in 2026 and beyond. The year 2025 brought significant changes, challenges, and growth, all met with resilience and dedication. Our team continues to advance their knowledge and skills, ensuring that we stand ready to serve and protect our community when it matters most.

2025 Highlights

- **Successful Consolidation:** Unified operations between Grafton and Saukville stations, streamlining response protocols and training.
- **Operational Achievements:** Maintained high service levels with 2,557 total calls and outstanding response times.
- **Personnel Development:** Welcomed new full-time and part-time members, promoted key leaders, and participated in over 6,000 hours of training.
- **Major Projects Completed:** Implemented finance software, upgraded heart monitors, and laid groundwork for prehospital blood product administration.
- **Community Engagement:** Conducted over 800 inspections, multiple plan reviews, and expanded public education initiatives.

Challenges

- Managing staffing shortages and retention issues common in the fire service.
- Addressing aging apparatus, stations and equipment through strategic planning and procurement.
- Balanced operational demands with major organizational transitions.

Looking Ahead to 2026 and Beyond

- **Prehospital Blood Program:** Launching advanced EMS capabilities to provide blood products in the field.
- **Staffing Expansion:** Hiring additional full-time personnel to meet growing service demands. Adding more opportunities for part-time staff.
- **Fleet Modernization:** Replacing or refurbishing ambulances to ensure reliability and safety.
- **Station Upgrades:** Continuing architectural planning and implementing infrastructure improvements.
- **Training Excellence:** Increasing specialized training in rescue operations, fire suppression, and advanced medical care.
- **Fire Department Leadership Changes:** Fire Chief William Rice has announced his retirement after serving as Chief since 2013. He has been involved in the area fire service for over 45 years.