

Columbia-Richland Fire Department 2020 Annual Report



MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



Greetings,

It is my pleasure to share the Columbia-Richland Fire Department's calendar year 2020 Annual Report with you. The accomplishments in this report have been made possible thanks to the INCREDIBLE work over the course of the past year by our firefighters and staff. I want to first take the opportunity to thank each and every one of them for the jobs they did. I couldn't be more proud of our department and its dedicated workforce.

During 2020 the COVID-19 Pandemic truly caused a great deal of stress and anxiety for CRFD and our community at large. Retail stores closed, organized sports stopped and people were confined to their homes. The pandemic impacted our department's responses to emergencies, fire inspections and the way we conduct business. But I will tell you that I was greatly impressed with how our firefighters responded. Their underlying strengths and resilience became even more evident during this great crisis. They did an unbelievable job taking care of themselves and their families and that is acknowledged and valued.

Each day here at CRFD the health and safety of our staff and their family members remains a priority in our daily discussions. I'm proud of how our department responded because we led with our values. We focused first on the health and

safety of our staff, our consumers and the communities in which we operate. We provided personal protective equipment to all of our employees. We also issued more than 1,000 protective masks to the public as well as 300 bottles of hand sanitizer and over 1,000 pieces of educational literature on mask information.

Looking forward, the Columbia-Richland Fire Department sees even greater opportunity. COVID-19 truly offered a stress-test of our fire department. However, as we reflect on the accomplishments of our firefighters and staff we are also focused on what is yet to come for our agency and the incredible community we serve.

In sum, I feel confident that we will emerge from this very difficult period in our history even stronger and even better positioned for our citizens.

Be safe and be well,

Aubrey D. Jenkins, Columbia-Richland Fire Chief

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

SOCIAL MEDIA

<i>Twitter</i>	648 posts
<i>Facebook</i>	534 posts
<i>Instagram</i>	322 posts
<i>Nextdoor Neighbor</i>	34 posts

TOTAL **1,538 posts**

Highlights

- Twitter followers have climbed past 9,500.
- Facebook likes surpassed 15,000 in 2020. Facebook follows for our page surpassed 17,000 over the course of the year.
- The department brought a new account online for YouTube during 2020. This not only allowed us to share videos of our activities with the public but also created a new avenue for releasing training videos to our staff. CRFD was also able to use YouTube and our YouTube account to stream graduation exercises for Firefighter Recruit Class 20-01 as outside guests were not allowed to attend the event due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- CRFD's *Nextdoor Neighbor* account has continued to play an important new role in getting timely information out to the public. Over the course of 2020 the department used *Nextdoor Neighbor* to spread valuable information concerning the threat of COVID-19 and ways to reduce the spread of the virus. As the City of Columbia and Richland County enacted emergency ordinances and plans of action

due to COVID, CRFD would use *Nextdoor* to spread word of the developments.

CRFD WEBSITE

48 stories posted in 2020

DEPARTMENT INTERVIEWS

	ON CAMERA INT.	INT. BY PHONE	RADIO INT.
JANUARY	2	22	0
FEBRUARY	10	12	0
MARCH	5	5	0
APRIL	15	8	0
MAY	2	19	0
JUNE	4	18	0
JULY	4	16	0
AUGUST	4	19	0
SEPTEMBER	15	25	0
OCTOBER	12	12	0
NOVEMBER	19	25	0
DECEMBER	10	10	0
2020 TOTALS	102	191	0

DEPARTMENT PRESS RELEASES

30 press releases put out over the course of 2020

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

191 FOIA's received and answered

CITIZEN INQUIRIES

389 inquires answered through the department website & social media platforms

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS TO CRFD

The City of Columbia – Recognized by the Salvation Army with their ‘Doing the Most Good’ award. The award was accepted by CRFD Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins. (May)

Assistant Chief Jamie Helms – Elected to the position of 4th Vice President of the South Carolina State Firefighters Association. (June)

Battalion Chief Thomas Niles – Recognized as Firefighter of the Year by Richland Post 6 of the American Legion and the American Legion Department of South Carolina. (August)



CRFD 1st Shift Firefighters – 20 firefighters were honored with a Company Citation for the roles they played in rescuing a 12-year-old boy who became entrapped on the low head dam on the Broad River. (September)

CRFD Firefighters – 58 members of the department were recognized for promotions they earned. Each honoree was badged by Fire Chief Jenkins during a series of pinning ceremonies. (November)

Assistant Fire Marshal Bengie Leverett, Fire Investigator Kenneth Willis, Deputy Fire Marshal Courtney Clowney, Deputy Fire Marshal Joshua Ballard – Recognized for promotions earned within the CRFD Fire Prevention Division. **(December)**

Fire Investigator Kenneth Willis – Recognized by the Knights of Columbus with their 2020 ‘Firefighter of the Year Award.’ **(December)**

CRFD COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2020

‘Famously Hot New Year’ – The department once again committed apparatus and manpower in support of the city’s New Year’s celebration on New Year’s Eve and into New Year’s Day. **(January)**

‘Benefit for Brandon Zinn’ – Department headquarters was the site of a community open house on Saturday January 18, 2020 to raise funds in support of former CRFD recruit firefighter Brandon Zinn. More than \$3,500 was raised to help Zinn acquire prosthetic equipment and resources to pursue his goal to become a firefighter. **(January)**



Recruit Class 2019-02 Graduation – Graduation exercises for Recruit Class 2019-02 were held inside the Denny Auditorium at the South Carolina Fire Academy on January 23, 2020. Twenty new firefighters were sworn into service by CRFD Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins. **(January)**



'Black History Month Parade' –Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins took part in the 2020 Black History Month Parade, which ran through parts of the city's downtown. **(February)**



‘Engine 30 Community Push In’ – County leaders joined members of the department for a Push In Ceremony to usher in service of the new Engine 30 on February 10, 2020. The new engine will serve out of the department’s Capital View Station and provide fire protection for communities along Garners Ferry Road and Leesburg Road. The new apparatus was paid for by Richland County with the help of a Community Development Block Grant. **(February)**





‘Real Men Read Program’ – Staff from all branches of the department took part in ‘Real Men Read’ programs at several area schools. One program was held at Carver-Lyon Elementary School and it was attended by Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins as well as several members of the department’s command staff and fire prevention staff. **(February)**



‘High Rise Training’ – Department crews would conduct training for high-rise fires using a dorm building at the University of South Carolina that was scheduled for demolition. Firefighters trained inside the building and conducted ventilation research over the course of several days. **(February)**



‘Engine 8 Community Push In’ – City and county leaders joined members of the department for a Push In Ceremony to usher in service of the new Engine 8 on February 21, 2020. The new engine will serve out of Station 8 on Atlas Road.

Among the features of the new engine are state-of-the-art traffic notification lights to better protect our firefighters while they are working on the scene of roadway emergencies. **(February)**



‘Project with Lexington-Richland School District 5’ – Two of our newest probationary firefighters would take part in shooting a story to highlight their work with the Center for Advanced Technical Studies at Lexington-Richland School District 5.

PFF Alex Richards and PFF Jackson Day both took 'Fire & Rescue' courses at the center which helped prepare them ahead of their career firefighter training with our department. **(February)**



'Phoenix Dawn Exercise at SCFA' – Several members of our staff took part in mock disaster exercises organized by SLED at the South Carolina Fire Academy. 'Phoenix Dawn' took place at the academy from March 9, 2020 through March 13, 2020 and fire-service agencies from across the state took part.

Crews with CRFD were tasked with and completed multiple training scenarios that required multiple patient rescues. **(March)**



Humvee Training Course – 22 members of the department successfully completed a new course focused on driving Humvees in June. The department recent acquired several Humvees over the course of 2020 which will help our firefighters provide citizen rescues during major flooding situations.

The driving course was facilitated by members of the South Carolina Army National Guard. **(June)**



'Juneteenth' – Several CRFD firetrucks participated in the annual Juneteenth parade to celebrate the end of slavery in America. The parade made its way from Columbia City Hall to the South Carolina State House. **(June)**



Recruit Class 2020-01 Graduation - On the morning of Friday July 24, 2020 commencement exercises were held for the members of CRFD Firefighter Recruit Class 2020-01. The graduation was hosted by Benedict College at Charlie Johnson Stadium.



Outside guests were not able to attend the graduation due to the threat of COVID-19 but the ceremony was livestreamed online using the department's YouTube account.

All 27 recruits wore masks during the graduation and adhered to strict social distancing guidelines. They began work with the department as probationary firefighters from Saturday July 25 through Monday July 27. **(July)**

National Guard Project – On August 14, 2020 members of the South Carolina Army National Guard assisted our training division with moving several large storage containers on the department's training grounds. The guard provided a forklift and a crew to help run it, which allowed the containers to be moved in a period of minutes.

The items were being moved to help the training division prepare new drill exercises for our firefighters. **(August)**



9/11 Remembrance Ceremony – CRFD members were once again involved in the annual 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony on September 11, 2020. This year our 1st Shift crew on Ladder 9 was instrumental in plans to unveil the newly-updated 9/11 Memorial outside of the convention center. Members of our honor guard also took part in the event. **(September)**



Fire Prevention Month – In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic this year's Fire Prevention Parade and several other activities for National Fire Prevention Month had to be cancelled. However, this did not stop the members of our department from promoting the important message of fire safety with the general public.

Throughout the month of October members of our staff were featured on our social media channels to remind citizens to take steps to prepare in case they

experience a fire in their home or business. These lessons included encouraging people to form and practice their own fire escape plans as well as invest in fire extinguishers for their homes and offices.

Members of our Fire Prevention Division also conducted interviews with our local TV stations to get fire safety messages out to the community. **(October)**



Firefighter Cancer Bill Signing – On October 14, 2020 Fire Chief Jenkins and other members of our department joined firefighters from across the state at a ceremonial signing of the Firefighter Cancer Healthcare Benefit Plan.

South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster would sign the plan alongside other state lawmakers at the South Carolina Fire Academy. Once it goes into effect the new law will make new benefits available to firefighters across the state of South Carolina who may face a cancer diagnosis. **(October)**



New Ladder 9 – Several leaders with both the City of Columbia as well as Richland County joined our staff for a community ‘Push-In’ ceremony for the new Ladder 9 truck. The ceremony was held at CRFD Station 9 on Devine Street.

The new Ladder 9 is a Pierce-model firetruck equipped with integrated stabilizer ground pads that allow for rapid setup. The truck also has side roll and frontal air bag protection. Station 9 primarily serves citizens living and working in the Five Points area as well as the Shandon and Old Shandon neighborhoods.

(October)



Thanking Benedict College – Fire Chief Jenkins and members of our command staff visited Benedict College on Friday October 23, 2020 to give leaders there a well-deserved ‘Thank You’ for the assistance the college provided with our recent recruit firefighter graduation ceremony.



In July 2020 Benedict College allowed us to use their football stadium for the graduation and also assisted us with our equipment and media needs for the event. In appreciation CRFD presented Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis - the president of Benedict College - as well as Athletic Director Willie Washington with framed certificates as well as honorary challenge coins from Fire Chief Jenkins. **(October)**

Reading in Our Schools – During the last week of October members of CRFD would bring story time to Burton-Pack Elementary School! Staff members read to several classes at the school virtually using Microsoft Teams. **(October)**



New Fire Engines Arrive – The new Engine 2 and Engine 11 arrived at CRFD and went into service for the department over the course of the fall. Both engines are Pierce-model firetrucks. **(November)**



Training Opportunities on Gordon Street – Several of our firefighters were able to practice their ventilation techniques using several dilapidated homes on Gordon Street. These homes were purchased by ‘The Progressive Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ’ in Columbia and donated to the department for training purposes. **(November)**



Fire Safety for Thanksgiving – In the weeks leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday, staff in CRFD’s Fire Prevention Division did several interviews to promote cooking safety. This tied in well with continuing the message of this year’s Fire Prevention Month, which was also fire safety in the kitchen.

In addition to doing media interviews the department also pushed out a lot of information on cooking safety through our social media channels. **(November)**



CRFD Promotional Ceremonies – From November 11 through November 13, 2020 department heads recognized 58 members of CRFD who earned promotions over the course of the past year.



These recognitions took place through a series of small pinning ceremonies at department headquarters. Each honoree was allowed to invite a limited number of guests to witness them being badged by Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins. All participants in the promotional ceremonies were required to wear a mask and follow COVID-19 preventative guidelines. **(November)**

Holiday Parade – On Friday December 4, 2020 Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins as well as our 2nd Shift crews at Station 1 took part in a holiday parade to honor

veterans at C.M. Tucker Nursing Facility. The parade made its way around parts of the hospital's campus beginning at 10 a.m. The Richland County Sheriff's Department and the Columbia Police Department also took part in the event. **(December)**



Good Night Lights – Several of our CRFD firetrucks once again took part in the annual 'Good Night Lights' on Sunday December 6, 2020 to bring holiday cheer to kids at Prisma Children's Hospital. Ladder 9 and Ladder 7 supplied their aerials for the event to give Santa Claus a lift so he could greet children who were currently in care at the hospital. **(December)**



Fire Prevention Promotions – On December 15, 2020 CRFD would recognize four members of our staff who recently earned promotions within the department’s Fire Prevention Division. Fire Chief Aburey D. Jenkins presented each honoree with their new badge and a certificate of recognition during a small pinning ceremony in the department’s fire museum.

All honorees were allowed to bring a few guests for the event and all in attendnace followed COVID-19 safety guidelines. **(December)**



‘Firefighters Feeding Families Holiday Food Drive’ - On Friday December 18, 2020 the department hosted its largest community food drive in recent years. From 9:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. canned goods and non-perishable food items were collected during the ‘Firefighters Feeding Families Holiday Food Drive.’ All items collected were organized into bags and distributed to area families in need.

By the time the campaign ended on Tuesday December 22, CRFD had distributed more than 200 bags of food. Area supermarkets also supported the event by donating money to CRFD so we could purchase food items for distribution. **(December)**



FIRE OPERATIONS DIVISION

Over the course of 2020 CRFD responded to 31,788 calls for service. Of these service calls 15,385 were fire and rescue related and 16,403 calls were for medical assistance.

52% of our total call volume was for medical-related incidents.

CALL TYPE	CALL TOTAL FOR 2020
STRUCTURE FIRES	566
VEHICLE FIRES	353
OTHER FIRES	836
PRESSURE RUPTURES/ EXPLOSIONS	63
HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS	1,180
RESCUES	460
FALSE CALLS	5,981
CALLS FOR SERVICE/ GOOD INTENT CALLS	5,627
MALICIOUS CALLS	231
SEVERE WEATHER	31
SPECIAL EVENTS	57
MEDICAL CALLS	16,403

Comparable Run Statistics

Engine Company Calls for 2020

Engine 1	2,068		Engine 20	783
Engine 2	1,198		Engine 21	21
Engine 3	857		Engine 22	835
Engine 6	2,269		Engine 23	291
Engine 8	1,424		Engine 24	1,345
Engine 9	1,569		Engine 25	372
Engine 11	1,589		Engine 26	697
Engine 12	1,580		Engine 27	1,189
Engine 13	2,070		Engine 28	354
Engine 14	1,691		Engine 29	353
Engine 15	7		Engine 30	947
Engine 16	1,737		Engine 31	201
Engine 17	201		Engine 32	1,291
Engine 18	690		Engine 33	1,112
Engine 19	241		Engine 34	1,541

Ladder Company Calls for 2020

Ladder 4	1,918
Ladder 7	2,567
Ladder 8	1,350
Ladder 9	1,868
Ladder 14	2,094
Ladder 175 (Irmo Unit)	743

Rescue Company Calls for 2020

Rescue 1	1,828
Rescue 2	1,167
Rescue 3	2,167
Rescue 4	768
Rescue 5	547

Officers Calls for 2020

Battalion 1	1,068
Battalion 2	891
Battalion 3	692
Battalion 4	555
Battalion 5	1,252
Fire 6	196

Brush Truck Calls for 2020

Brush Truck 15	11
Brush Truck 17	44
Brush Truck 18	47
Brush Truck 19	15
Brush Truck 20	31
Brush Truck 21	12
Brush Truck 22	38
Brush Truck 23	34
Brush Truck 24	26
Brush Truck 25	21
Brush Truck 26	18
Brush Truck 27	36
Brush Truck 28	51
Brush Truck 29	60
Brush Truck 30	92
Brush Truck 31	14

Tanker Calls for 2020

Tanker 15	12
Tanker 17	49
Tanker 18	66
Tanker 19	61
Tanker 20	40
Tanker 21	19
Tanker 22	24
Tanker 23	7
Tanker 25	73
Tanker 26	103
Tanker 27	48
Tanker 28	76
Tanker 29	39
Tanker 30	22
Tanker 31	20

Significant Incidents

Whaley Street Church Fire – On March 19, 2020 a 2-Alarm Fire broke out in a room at Whaley Street United Methodist Church. Firefighters were able to contain the fire quickly. No one was injured.



Cardinal Chemical Fire – On April 9, 2020 a fire broke out at the site of the former Cardinal Chemical Company off of South Beltline Boulevard. Our crews arrived on scene to find building with heavy fire. Several other areas of the property also began catching fire due to the dry conditions. No one was injured.



Fountain Lake Road – On April 11, 2020 three homes were left damaged by a 2-Alarm fire on Fountain Lake Road. Two of the homes were left uninhabitable and that displaced 5 people. There were no injuries reported. The fire was

determined to have started in the garage area of one of the homes near the gas water heater.



I-126 Vehicle Fire – Shortly after 1:30 p.m. on Sunday May 17 our crews responded to a vehicle fire on the westbound side of I-126 near Greystone Boulevard.

A child who was inside the car suffered severe burns all over his body. Four bystanders assisted by calling 9-1-1 and trying to render aid to the child before our firefighters arrived on scene. The child was later taken to the Augusta Burn Center for treatment.

The mother of the child was eventually charged with attempted murder, counts of arson and other charges for allegedly setting the car on fire on purpose.

Fatal Fire in Eastover – On the early morning of Wednesday May 20 our crews stationed in Lower Richland responded to a house fire on the 1600 block of Chain Gang Road in Eastover.

Upon arrival first responders found the home engulfed in flames. Two people died in connection with the incident. The Richland County Fire Marshal's Office investigated the fire and the cause went undetermined.

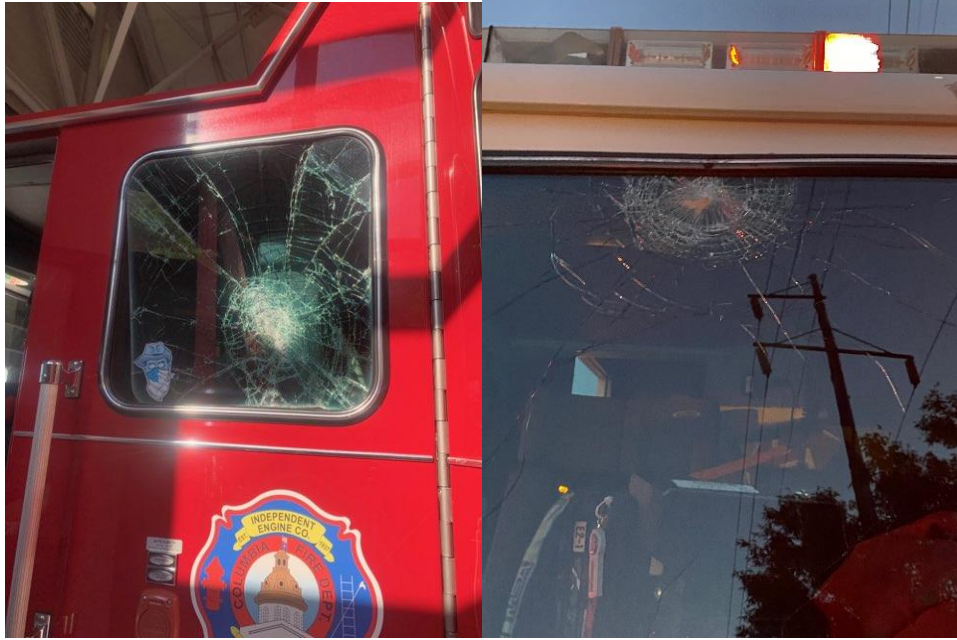


George Floyd Demonstrations – During the last weekend in May CRFD supported the Columbia Police Department and other agencies with operations during the ‘George Floyd Demonstrations.’ Protests were held in the area of the State House and Columbia’s Vista on Saturday May 30 and Sunday May 31. The department went into these events committing fire suppression vehicles, our HAZMAT trucks and manpower.

During the first day of public protest on Saturday May 30 rioting broke out. Several vehicles were set on fire in and around the Columbia Police Department. Fires were also set in nearby buildings.

By the end of the day on Saturday the fires caused about \$90,000 in property damages. While responding to emergencies two firefighters were injured due to items being thrown at them. These staff members were treated by EMS and able to return to service.

Projected items also caused a combined \$4,600 in damages to Engine 1, Engine 2 and Reserve Ladder 57.



Epworth Children’s Home Fire – A fire at Epworth Children’s home on Tuesday June 2 caused significant damages to a building that was used for storage. No one was injured in the fire but Epworth did lose several supplies that are critical in running the home.



The cause of the fire was later determined to be an air handler that malfunctioned.

Hillandale Apartments Fire – In the late morning hours on July 27 a fire went 2-Alarm at the Hillandale Apartments off of Alcott Drive.

The first crews that arrived on scene found heavy fire coming out of one of the units in an apartment building. Heavy smoke was also present and firefighters quickly called for a 2nd Alarm. Roughly 50 CRFD personnel would become involved in the operation. There were no injuries but four units of the building would suffer damages and six people were left displaced.



Swiftwater Rescue on Low Head Dam – Close to 20 CRFD personnel were involved in a water rescue on August 14 that saved the life of a 12-year-old boy.

The teen got his leg caught in the crevice of several rocks on the low head dam in the area of the Columbia Canal on the Broad River. Responding crews spent close to 2 hours working to free him and were successful in the face of rising water levels and dangerous weather conditions.

The male patient was transported by EMS and escaped the incident with no major injuries.



Massive River Rescue During Tubing Event – On August 22 CRFD crews would work with the West Columbia Fire Department to safely help about 80 tubers off of the Broad River.

The tubers were taking part in an event involving about 300 people on the river when water levels began to rise greatly north of the Gervais Street bridge. Many people had to be rescued from the tree lines alongside the river. No tubers suffered any major injuries.

Palmetto Compress Pool-Party Incident– Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins responded to The Apartments at Palmetto Compress on Devine Street after complaints were made to dispatch about a large pool party event on August 29.

Upon arrival Chief Jenkins noted that there were a number of people around the pool of the apartment complex and on top of the pool house roof. No one was wearing a mask or practicing social distancing.

The crowd was dispersed with the help of security at the complex. No attendees were issued a citation and followup appointments were made with managers of the property to ensure the incident would not be repeated.



3-Alarm Fire at Historic Babcock Building – In what was the largest fire CRFD has seen in years, our firefighters responded to the historic Babcock Building on the Bull Street Development on the morning of Saturday September 12, 2020. The fire would go to three alarms as flames quickly spread from floor to floor of the building and brought down its iconic dome.

More than 60 members of our staff would become involved in the operation and crews were cycled in and out of the scene over the course of the day to put the fire out. After 10 hours of work by our firefighters the fire was finally extinguished. While the interior damage to the building was substantial its outer shell was saved. The cause of the fire is currently being investigated by CRFD and the Columbia Police Department with the assistance of SLED and the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.





Deadly Vehicle Accident – On October 14 Rescue 1 and other crews responded to a reported vehicle accident with entrapment at Vulcan Materials on Georgia Street. Our firefighters arrived on scene to find that a quarry dumptruck had rolled over a Ford pickup truck causing significant damages. One individual was found dead inside the pickup truck and the Richland County Coroner’s Office was notified.

Rescue 1 and Ladder 7 extricated the victim from the truck and turned the body over to the coroner's office.

Fatal Structure Fire – On October 16, Engine 11 and other crews responded to a house fire at 1940 Burton Street. While en route firefighters received word that there might be people trapped inside the home.

When crews arrived on scene they found a mobile home that had heavy fire coming from one of its sides. Firefighters made entry at the front of the home and discovered one male victim in a chair to the left of the front door.

The victim was pulled out of the home and a search of the remainder of the property yielded no other occupants. The fire was extinguished and an investigation by the Richland County Fire Marshal's Office later determined that the incident was caused by unattended cooking.

The male victim found inside the home did not survive and was later identified by the Richland County Coroner's Office.

Gathering at Orchard Apartments -During the USC-Auburn football game on October 17, 2020 several members of our staff had to become involved with dispersing a large gathering of people at the Orchard Apartments in Richland County.

Fire Chief Jenkins responded to the complex during the game after getting reports that one of our crews had been at the complex for a medical call and firefighters were having objects thrown at them. When Chief Jenkins arrived he noted that there had to be at least a few thousand people on the grounds of the apartment complex and many of them were not wearing facemasks.



The fire chief deemed the gathering to be an ‘imminent danger’ and then began working with our staff to disperse the crowd. CRFD was assisted with this by members of the Richland County Sheriff’s Department as well as the University of South Carolina Police Department.

No citations were issued to individuals who were at the gathering. Chief Jenkins did hold a followup meeting with owners of the Orchard Apartments on Monday, October 19. During that meeting owners were told that they would not be fined for the incident but they could face significant penalties going forward if such a gathering happens again. Officials with the University of South Carolina as well as the sheriff’s department were also present at the followup meeting.

District of Columbia Nightclub Incident - On Tuesday, October 20 Fire Chief Jenkins went to the **District of Columbia** nightclub at 1301 Assembly Street after noticing that several vehicles were parked on the street.

A visual assessment by Chief Jenkins showed that the bar was packed wall to wall with people. The fire chief then took action with members of the Columbia Police Department to shut the club down. Eventually it was determined that the club had close to 300 patrons inside, which was well past their legal occupancy limit.

Chief Jenkins confiscated the club’s occupancy permit and owners are now facing fines totaling about \$550. These fines to the club were for being well over their legal occupancy and also having workers at the bar who were seen not wearing masks.

Chief Jenkins and Fire Marshal Adams met with owners of the club on Wednesday October 21 to review the incident and go over what needs to be done to prevent repeat violations.

Mutual Aid Structure Fire in Sumter – Beginning on October 27, 2020 CRFD began sending support to fight a massive fire at Howell’s Recyclable Materials near South Lafayette Drive in Sumter. Shift leaders would send multiple engines, a ladder truck and one of our battalion chiefs to lend support to the Sumter Fire Department.

Bars on Halloween Weekend - In the afternoon hours CRFD began receiving reports that long lines were forming outside of bars in Five Points as many patrons were trying to go out to party during the Halloween weekend. Fire Chief Jenkins, Fire Marshal George Adams and other members of our staff responded to the area to find long lines outside of ‘Group Therapy’ as well as ‘Five Points Saloon.’ The longest line observed was at ‘Five Points Saloon’ where hundreds of people were seen standing very close together in line and many potential patrons were seen not wearing masks.



Citizens standing in the lines were warned multiple times that they needed to wear protective masks. Those who refused to comply were issued citations.

Eventually other bars in the area opened up and the lines outside establishments began to go down.

Over the course of the Halloween weekend our deputy fire marshals would issue a total of 32 citations to citizens who refused to properly wear face masks. This amounted to roughly \$800 in fines issued.

Fatal Structure Fire – On the evening of Tuesday November 3 our crews in Battalion 2 responded to 418 Misty Glen Circle for a house fire. The fire broke out on the back side of the home and spread through its interior.

During a search of the home firefighters found an elderly female near the kitchen area. She was deceased and the coroner's office was contacted.

Salvage Yard Fire - Our 3rd Shift crews were called out to North Columbia Auto Salvage on November 17 at 7716 Fairfield Road after getting reports that several vehicles there were on fire. Crews arrived to find a plume of black smoke coming from the facility and an area of debris on fire that was at least 40 feet long and 40 feet high.



It took our firefighters a period of 4 hours to completely extinguish the fire. Several of our ladder trucks were used to get water on the fire from overhead. Crews also mixed the water with Dawn dish detergent to give more viscosity to the suppressant and save us from using foam. No injuries were reported

Furniture Warehouse Fire – On November 24 CRFD crews responded to 1423 Ellerbe Street for a commercial structure fire. A fire broke out inside a building being used to store sleeper sofas and other furniture for ‘Furniture Barn.’ The fire appeared to start in the rear of the building and then spread throughout the interior and into the roof.



It took our firefighters several hours to bring the fire under control. There were no injuries but the building did suffer extensive damages.

Thunder Tower Harley Davidson Incident - On Saturday, November 14, 2020 Chief Jenkins and Chief Adams responded to ‘Thunder Tower Harley-Davidson’ at 190 Pontiac Business Center Drive in Elgin.

The business was hosting a partial car and bike show and roughly 1,000 people were in attendance. Many guests were seen not wearing masks and this prompted Chief Jenkins to shut the show down. No citations were issued.



2-Alarm Structure Fire - On December 12 our crews in Battalion 3 responded to 213 Fox Grove Drive for a house fire. While en route command requested a 2nd Alarm as the fire was spreading to other homes. Upon their arrival crews found heavy fire coming from the home at 213 Fox Grove Drive with exposure damage to the homes to the left and right of it. An aerial was used to knock down the fire in the main structure and hand lines were used to protect the exposures. Occupants of all 3 homes made it out safely and there were no injuries.



Fatal Structure Fire - On December 19 our 1st Shift crews responded to 38 Lansing Circle for a structure fire. Engine 12 was the first to arrive on scene and found a single family home 50% to 75% involved with fire. Flames and smoke were showing from the front and left side of the home but the bulk of the fire was found on the rear side.

Firefighters mounted a defensive attack until they were able to make entry through the front of the home. While searching the home and attacking the fire two victims were found deceased inside. These victims were removed from the home and later identified by the Richland County Coroner's Office.

Mutual Aid Structure Fire - During the afternoon on December 23 our crews provided mutual aid assistance to the Irmo Fire District during a massive apartment fire that tore through a building at River Oak Apartments. Several people were transported by EMS after having to jump out of the building. About 30 people were left displaced by the fire.



WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

Beginning in March 2020 the department began steps to modify all operations in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Not only did the threat of the virus change daily activities within CRFD it also prompted us to pursue new ways to engage with the citizens we serve. Later on in the year - as more businesses in the City of Columbia and Richland County began to open back up – more of our efforts at CRFD were shifted to mitigation efforts to control the spread of the virus in our communities. This included increasing education and enforcement of the city’s protective mask ordinance.

Below is a timeline of department activities related to the pandemic:

March

In response to the threat of COVID-19, the department began to implement actions and procedures to keep our staff protected from the spread of the virus.

Actions taken by the CRFD included the following:

- Non-essential staff began to work from home
- All department-related travel out of the state of South Carolina was cancelled
- All firefighter and firetruck appearances at schools and public events were cancelled
- Training classes were modified or cancelled to allow for social distancing
- CRFD adjusted response protocols for responding to calls for service involving ‘cold & flu’ like symptoms
- CRFD started equipping firefighters with protective gear (N95 masks, eyewear, gowns for responding to calls for service)
- All fire stations were placed in lockdown with limited visitor accessibility
- Department leaders established a COVID-19 exposure matrix and quarantine protocol for staff that may have been exposed to the virus
- Department leaders established a COVID-19 Task Force and IAP protocol to manage and coordinate all department activity related to the virus
- CRFD began pushing information out to the public through our media partners and on social media on (1) how to prevent infection from the virus, (2) local & state response efforts to COVID-19 and (3) fire safety

messages to combat the risk for property fires that comes with more people staying at home.



April

CRFD took the following actions in April as the pandemic continued:

- New occupancy limit signs were installed by department staff in area businesses.
- Two Quick Response Vehicles (QRVs) were mobilized to assist with handling medical calls. This helped reserve our larger vehicles for fire-suppression and rescue operations and reduced the risk of exposing entire crews to COVID-19.
- All department stations were issued non-contact infrared thermometers with instructions to check temperatures of all staff daily. Above normal temperatures were recorded and sent to the department's safety officer.
- Working with staff at the University of South Carolina and several other community partners, CRFD commissioned the design of a decontamination system for our protective masks. This system uses ultraviolet light to decontaminate the masks and neutralize any viral threat that may develop on them.

Three of the devices were installed in a modified trailer at Station 3 and guidelines were created for staff to turn their masks in for decontamination. The machine is capable of decontaminating hundreds of masks over a period of hours.

City Manager Teresa Wilson and several local media outlets attended a demonstration of the equipment on Thursday, April 30.



- The department's Fire Prevention Office began conducting virtual fire safety inspections for area businesses. The Fire Education Office also began doing virtual home safety surveys.
- Fire Education Officer Bengie Leverett hosted a virtual tour of department headquarters on Sunday April 26, 2020. Several members of Cub Scout Pack 287 joined him for the tour via Zoom.



The department also took part in a number of community outreach events in April to bolster spirits during the pandemic.



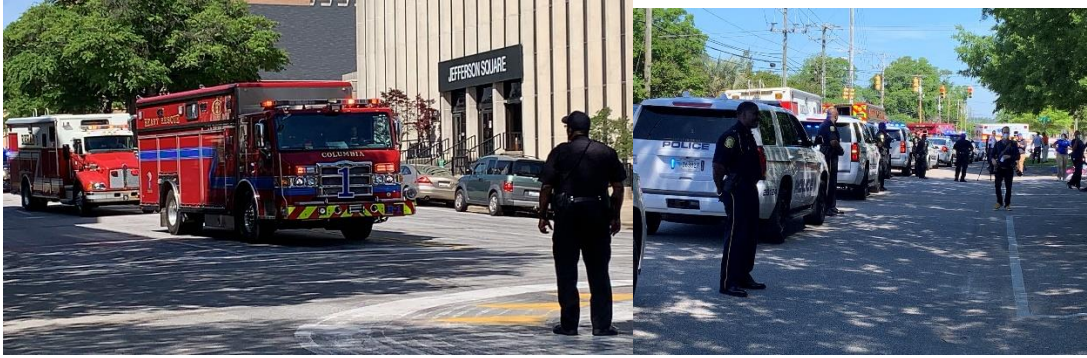
Sirens for Solidarity – Stations across the Columbia-Richland Fire Department took part in ‘Sirens for Solidarity’ on the evening of Friday, April 3, 2020. As a sign to show area communities that first responders are still here to help them, all fire crews that were not on calls at 7:00 p.m. sounded the sirens on their firetrucks for a period of 30 seconds.

CRFD was joined in the campaign by the Irmo Fire District, the Lexington County Fire Service and other public safety agencies in Lexington County.

Thank Your Neighbors – On the evening of Friday April 10, 2020 all CRFD crews that were not on calls once again sounded their sirens for a period of 30 seconds. This was done to show support for area healthcare workers through the ‘Thank Your Neighbors’ initiative. The campaign was organized by Columbia City Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine.

9-1-1 Parade – The second week of April was National Public Safety Telecommunications Week. As a show of gratitude to staff working in the 9-1-1 Office a first responders parade took place on Friday April 17, 2020.

CRFD crews joined the Columbia Police Department, the Richland County Sheriff’s Department, the Richland County Coroner’s Office and Richland County EMS in a procession that went from Columbia City Hall to the 9-1-1 Office on Laurel Street.



Cruise Calls & Birthday Parade – At the request of citizens CRFD crews began taking part in a number of small parades to celebrate birthdays for area residents. All of these parades had short routes and several were done in partnership with other agencies.

The department also drafted and implemented ‘Cruise Calls for Support’ guidelines. This created instructions for crews to follow when answering drive-by requests.



Prisma Health Parade – On Friday April 24, 2020 CRFD took part in another initiative to honor area healthcare workers serving on the front lines of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Several of our firetrucks and other vehicles took part in a procession that made its way from department headquarters to Prisma Health Richland Hospital and later to Prisma Health Baptist Hospital.

The procession stopped in two area of the Prisma Health Richland campus to show staff at the hospital gratitude and appreciation. CRFD was joined in the parade by our partners at the Columbia Police Department, the Richland County Sheriff's Department, the Richland County Coroner's Office and Richland County EMS.



May

Video Recruitment Sessions –The department started looking at new virtual ways to recruit new firefighters. During the month of May one resource our staff began using was virtual ‘Q&A’ sessions through Zoom.

Our Recruiting Officer Captain James Bostic organized these sessions with the help of Volunteer Coordinator William Broschious. Multiple sessions were promoted on our social media platforms and all meetings were well attended.

Back to Business – In late May CRFD assisted the city with getting information out to area businesses as more were allowed to reopen. Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins shot a public service announcement (PSA) with the city’s public relations department.

Specifically, the PSA focused on guidelines for area restaurants and other businesses to follow on new occupancy limits in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It also encouraged consumers to practice social distancing when they ventured out to support their favorite businesses. The video would debut online in June.



June

Emergency Mask Ordinance – A new ordinance requiring the use of protective masks in the City of Columbia went into effect on Friday June 26, 2020. The following week members of our command staff visited area businesses to notify them of the new guidelines and enforce consequences for those who chose not to comply.



July



New Applicant Testing – From Thursday July 16 through Saturday July 18 the department began assessing applicants to fill our next firefighter recruit class. Staff in training and professional services did an outstanding job facilitating written and physical agility testing while at the same time enforcing COVID-19 preventative guidelines.

Written testing for applicants was conducted at Bible Way Church on Atlas Road while agility tests were done at the department’s training grounds.

Recruit Class 2020-01 Graduation - On the morning of Friday July 24 commencement exercises were held for the members of CRFD Firefighter Recruit Class 2020-01. The graduation was hosted by Benedict College at Charlie Johnson Stadium.



Outside guests were not able to attend the graduation due to the threat of COVID-19 but the ceremony was livestreamed online using the department's YouTube account.

All 27 recruits wore masks during the graduation and adhered to strict social distancing guidelines. They began work with the department as probationary firefighters from Saturday July 25 through Monday July 27.

September

Home Safety Surveys – In an interview with WACH FOX News the department successfully promoted our current ability to offer Home Safety Surveys virtually through phone video conferencing.

Our Fire Education Officer Bengie Leverett had been offering this service to our citizens for some time in the wake of COVID-19.



USC Football – The University of South Carolina would commence its 2020 football season on Saturday, September 26. Our Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins and members of our staff were out at Williams-Brice Stadium to promote the city’s mask ordinance.



October

Free Mask Giveaway – On the evening of Friday October 2 CRFD Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins joined Richland County Councilwoman Allison Terracio, County Administrator Leonardo Brown and Assistant County Administrator Dr. John Thompson in handing out free protective face masks in Five Points.



The group hit several bars and nightclubs in the Five Points area and handed out roughly 1,250 masks to our citizens. This was all done in support of county and city ordinances that remained in effect requiring the use of protective masks in public areas.

November

Election Day 2020 – In light of the COVID Pandemic, CRFD personnel helped support and protect area citizens as they headed to area polling stations to vote on Election Day. Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins and Fire Marshal George Adams distributed free protective facemasks to any person who needed one while waiting in line to cast a ballot.



Stepping Up on Mask Enforcement - Department heads joined leaders in the City of Columbia as well as officials from the University of South Carolina in announcing expanded changes to the city's protective mask ordinance on November 5, 2020.



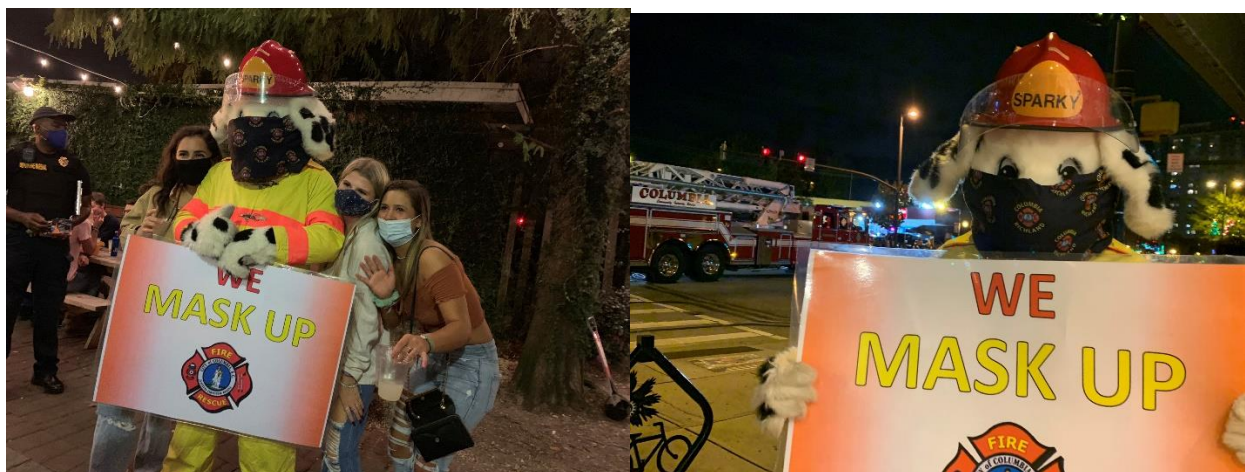
Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins took part in a press conference in Five Points announcing the changes. Under the revisions CRFD deputy marshals could now issue steeper fines to private citizens who refused to wear a protective mask while in public areas. The ordinance also now requires mask use on crowded sidewalks that do not allow for social distancing.

Columbia City Manager Teresa Wilson, City Councilman Will Brennan, City Councilman Edward McDowell and City Councilman Sam Davis also took part in the press conference. The changes to the mask ordinance kicked off a heightened period of enforcement as CRFD deputy marshals issued more citations for individuals who refused to wear a mask in public. In total more than 150 of these citations were handed out over the course of the month.

Sparky the Fire Dog Masks Up – As part of CRFD’s efforts to promote changes to the city’s mask ordinance, the department joined the City of Columbia in unveiling a new mascot to encourage mask use in public areas. A mask-wearing ‘Sparky the Fire Dog’ made his debut at the press conference on November 5.

In the days that followed Sparky joined members of our staff as they handed out free masks in Five Points and other areas of the city. These masks were provided by officials at the University of South Carolina as a way to encourage mask-use with members of their student body.

Several citizens liked seeing Sparky and asked to get their photo with him during his ‘patrols’ on the street!



FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION



Greetings,

It is my pleasure to share the CRFD's Fire Prevention Division calendar year 2020 Annual Report with you. This past year has been the most difficult and challenging time of my more than 27-year career in the fire service. It is a year that introduced us to an unprecedented pandemic that none of us has seen in our lifetime.

While this report captures data and several accomplishments, it also reflects a significant decrease in productivity due to COVID-19. However, I am extremely proud of the dedicated men and women working in our fire prevention division. I know that this year has been a challenge for everyone but there is no doubt that we will continue to remain focused on serving this great region.

Again, thank you for your support and I hope the information provided in this report is beneficial and informative.

George Adams

CRFD Assistant Chief & Fire Marshal

FIRE ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

Logistics Division

Fire Hydrant Inspections for 2020

7,323 Total Fire Hydrant Inspections

3,123 Fire Hydrants Flow Tested

2,683 Fire Hydrants Painted

In addition, there was 993 cases of fire hydrants receiving some other form of maintenance (i.e. fire hydrants that had numbers added, had debris removed were investigated in light of citizen concerns, etc.).