



COLONIAL HEIGHTS FIRE, EMS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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Message from the Chief



‘Transition’ is defined as ‘the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another’. This describes what your fire department experienced this year. The top two leaders of the department simultaneously left. After many years of dedicated service, Chief Wayne Hoover ‘retired’ from the department. The City of Petersburg quickly took advantage of that by hiring Wayne as its new Fire Chief. Shortly thereafter, veteran Deputy Chief David Kissner left the department in September to take the helm in neighboring Dinwiddie County. The department has lost two great members and many years of experience, but we wish them both the very best, entering their new positions.

I was honored to receive a telephone call from the City Manager inquiring as to my interest and willingness to come to the city and assume the position of Chief in an interim role. As a chief officer in a neighboring jurisdiction, I only knew this organization from an ‘outsider looking in’ perspective. I believe it is human nature to resist change, and the unknown is unsettling to most. The men and women of the organization were concerned about who this ‘new kid on the block’ was and what changes would be made. There is an old saying, ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’. However, I

would hope that every organization, business, or group would agree there is always room for improvement. Though some tweaks were made, the department understood its core mission and was carrying it out with excellence each day.

I have come to learn how great this organization is. In my over fifty years of experience in the fire service, I’ve never seen an ambulance or fire truck drive itself out of the station (at least not intentionally but that’s another story for another day). I have always subscribed to the philosophy of it is the people who make an organization. The people can either make or break a leader and they decide how successful they want the group to be. The men and women of this department have made my coming here very easy. Though initially somewhat leery, they embraced me and made me feel like part of the family. The notable thing with this department is the ‘family’ environment. They truly care for one another and have each other’s backs. I have witnessed this through the loss of loved ones, the welcoming of little ones into this world, to recognition at awards ceremonies, and I could go on. I have developed friendships with many new people and have come to admire the exceptional work they perform daily. It will be hard to leave but as it’s said, ‘all good things must come to an end’.

In my short time here, some initiatives were implemented. Our department enjoys a great working relationship with our police department. Through partnerships, we have joined forces to expand our unmanned aerial system capabilities. We are also in the process of developing tactical medics to serve alongside the police department during low frequency, high risk situations. We are preparing for an annual officer’s school, preparing for an additional recruit school, receiving two new ambulances, and preparing for the 2025-26 budget.

Staffing shortages continue to be a challenge. The city leadership approved new positions last year that will be graduating at the end of January. However, the vacancies that those positions were to fill, have again been voided with the departure of more members to other departments due to pay. There is a need to build a replacement Fire/EMS station for our main station and relocate that to the Southpark Mall area. The replacement of fire and EMS apparatus will be a continual need due to mileage, years of service, and increased maintenance costs.

In closing, the men and women of your Fire/EMS department are proud to work here, and it is an honor for us to serve you. Thank you for the support you have provided us with in the past and we look forward to continuing to serve you in the future.



2024 Highlights



Volunteers



Donnie Woolard
President

**Do YOU Have
What it Takes?**

**Volunteer with
Colonial
Heights Fire
and EMS**

**Contact us at
(804)520-9377**



Drew Comstock
Treasurer

Do you have what it takes to be a Colonial Heights Fire and EMS volunteer? We are always looking for committed volunteers willing to serve the citizens of Colonial Heights. You will need to commit to a minimum of 32 hours of service per month as well as attend trainings on the first and third Thursday evenings of each month.

Our Department prides itself on the fact that when a team of firefighters or EMS providers arrive at a home, our citizens are not met by just a career member or a volunteer member, but rather a "professional" firefighter or EMS provider. As professionals we all strive to meet a high standard of expectations that our citizens deserve.

In order to become a firefighter, eligible volunteers must be certified by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Additionally, each interior firefighter must pass an annual physical ability test that simulates firefighting activities. Lastly, all eligible firefighters must complete a medical evaluation for interior fire suppression.

Volunteers unable to meet all of these criteria are still allowed to assist on the fireground but may only participate in exterior functions. In order to be a medical provider eligible to provide direct patient care, one must be certified by the Virginia Office of EMS as a certified provider. Additionally, each EMS provider must complete a challenging "precepting" (hands on training) program under the close guidance of one of the Department's Field Training Officers (FTO). When a provider is released as a medical attendant, our citizens can be assured they are being well cared for by qualified medical providers.

Each year our Volunteers contribute many hours of their time to serve our citizens. Some of those volunteers spend enormous amounts of time in our stations going well above and beyond the 32 hour commitment. During 2024, one of those Volunteers, Gretchen Hancock, sacrificed 1,237 hours of her time to our citizens.



Richard Hubbell
Vice President

**Total
Volunteer
hours for the
year 2024:**

4,682



Susan Crane
Secretary



John Lewis
Asst. Secretary

Active Membership (32 hours per month)

Interior Firefighters	1
EMT Provider	3
Cadets	3

Reduced Hour Membership (12 hours per month)

Interior Firefighter	1
EMT Provider	1
ALS Provider	1

Support membership

Photographers	1
Administrative Support	1
Asst. Fire Marshal	1

Logistics



Randy Gryder
Logistics

The Merriam-Webster defines Logistics: the aspect of military science dealing with the procurement, maintenance, and transportation of military material, facilities, and personnel. In the fire service, logistics serves a similar purpose, ensuring the seamless operation of firefighting and emergency response efforts. The Colonial Heights Fire Logistics Division plays a critical role in meeting these needs by providing essential resources and support.

The Logistics Division relies on the expertise of part-time staff, including Randy Gryder, Bubba Hoke, Timmy Fontaine, and Thomas Long. Each of these individuals brings a wealth of experience from their years of service, either as retired professionals or through extensive volunteer and career fire experience.

Supporting the regional recruit school (Crater regional Fire Academy) remains a vital responsibility. From repairing broken flashlights and testing equipment, to providing breathing air for training scenarios, the division ensures new recruits have the necessary tools to

succeed. This work is part of the broader effort to maintain operational readiness as new employees join the department.

This year, the division began implementing a new state-mandated medicine and inventory tracking system. This highly secure system includes advanced medicine vending machines designed to track and stock medicines used in the field. Collaboration with the DEA and other state agencies has been essential, and the system is expected to become fully operational soon.

State inspections, preventive maintenance and repair of 35 vehicles, including two new fleet additions, were completed. The division logged 273 work orders and over 18,000 hours of vehicle downtime.



The department received ten additional firefighting air packs, replaced its aging stabilization tools and started replacing older fire hose.

One hundred sixty six requests for supplies were handled, covering essentials and operational materials. Supplies include basic needs items like toilet paper and soaps, to

operational items like batteries, stationary supplies, and medical equipment. Efforts to enhance record-keeping and operational efficiency continue to be a priority. The Fire Logistics Division remains committed to overcoming challenges and maintaining the readiness and efficiency of the fire service.



A - Shift



Eric Albert
C Shift Battalion

The year was one of progress for A shift. In 2024 members of A shift had multiple educational accomplishments, performed well at various incidents, had several milestones in their personal lives, and increased their value to our department through training and being released for different roles and responsibilities.

During this same time, our Fire Chief and Deputy Chief both left Colonial Heights to work for different neighboring departments. Despite the atmosphere of uncertainty with the direction of our department, our members continued to show up, put in the work, and maintain our course. In late summer, we welcomed Chief Mauger, and kept moving forward while adjusting to slight changes in stride.

There were several staffing changes that occurred during the year. In the beginning of 2024, we welcomed the addition of FF Hunter Rae from the first ever Crater Regional Academy. FF Paul Budinger left the depart-

ment to pursue another career. FF Eli Harrison transferred to us from C shift, and FF Terry Schane transferred to B shift for a long term Acting Lieutenant role after the retirement of Lieutenant Troy Allen. As the year is drawing to an end, we are preparing to say goodbye to FF Matt Glascock as he starts in Henrico County's fire department in mid-January 2025.

A Shift responded to multiple notable incidents in 2024. In February units from station two responded to the 400 block of Ellerslie Ave where they extricated and provided care and transport to a male who was trapped in a heavily damaged vehicle. Almost 1 month later in March, station one and station two units responded to Charles H. Dimmock Parkway to rescue a victim pinned under and overturned vehicle. Units responded to multiple vehicle fires on Interstate 95. A shift fought a shed fire on June 20th on Peace Cliff Court and a kitchen fire on October 27th on Lakewood Drive. Engine 941 assisted the City of Petersburg with some structure fires throughout the year as well, to include two that were about a week apart in September. The new Brush 942 responded to its first brushfire on November 30th on Frederick Avenue. This was after Firefighters Harrison, Moss, and Sadler had worked on the unit for over a week to get it in service. Quint 942 ran a unique call on November 5th where they utilized the

apparatus to rescue 2 employees from a man lift that was stuck 50 feet in the air. Notable life changes and professional developments for the members of A Shift are as follows:

Firefighter/Paramedic Matt Glascock is trained as an advanced practice paramedic and serves as a field training officer on A shift. He is also an acting lieutenant. Sadly, he will be leaving A shift and Colonial Heights Fire and EMS in January of 2025.

Firefighter/Paramedic Evan Moss was selected for firefighter of the year, is an active member of the Crater Technical Rescue Team and is also a field training officer. In 2024 he completed the field training and was released as an Acting Lieutenant. In June he completed the challenging Surface Water Technician class.

Firefighter/Paramedic Eli Harrison completed Part-107 Drone Pilots License, which will be valuable with one of the department's new programs. He also attended Art Jackson's leadership workshop in Roanoke, Virginia. Mr. Jackson is an accomplished public speaker who is a regular participant in the Virginia Fire Officer's Academy.

Firefighter/EMT-A Mason Sadler completed and passed his Advanced EMT National Registry class and test. He finished training and was released as an operator for Rescue 942. In his personal life he was engaged to his girlfriend



Geoff Turner
Lieutenant Station 1



Chris Pond
Lieutenant Station 2

Mariana and purchased his first home. Firefighter/Paramedic Ryan Murphy is the senior firefighter at A shift station 1 and he assists with staff development as a field training officer. Firefighter Murphy is a Registered Nurse and is another advanced practice paramedic trained to perform Rapid Sequence Intubation. During 2024 he focused on living healthier and ran the Tacky Light 6k over the Holidays. Firefighter/Paramedic Luke Kissner Completed

A - Shift

and passed his National Registry Paramedic in November. He possesses a Commercial Driver's License and drives trucks and helps out at Keystone Tractor Museum in his spare time. He serves as a volunteer in neighboring Dinwiddie County Fire and EMS and is a Lieutenant in that department. Luke also purchased his first home in 2024.

Firefighter/Paramedic Kena Rakes is also an advanced practice paramedic. She completed VDFP Driver-Pump Operator this year. Kena maintains our Zoll monitors and serves on the department's EMS committee. She also completed training to be cleared as an Operator of Rescue 942. She works part-time at Powhatan as a firefighter/paramedic. Firefighter/Paramedic Luke McGrath also finished and passed his National Registry Paramedic in the fall of 2024. He has served as a mentor for A shift's newest member and is a great example for others to follow. His brother, Jacob is a firefighter on C shift.

Firefighter/Paramedic Hunter Rae was assigned to A shift station 1 upon graduating from the Crater Regional Academy #1. During his probationary year, he was released as a Paramedic Attendant-in-Charge and he's been training to operate Engine 941. He is the cousin of Lieutenant Rae on C shift



and his brother is currently in CRA #2.

Lieutenant Chris Pond has been with our organization since 2000 and leads the members of A shift station 2. He was an integral part of the design committee for the new Medic 934 that is due for delivery in early 2025. He assisted with the assessment center for our department's Lieutenant Eligibility List and he serves as a team lead for the Crater Regional Hazmat Team. Chris also welcomed the birth of his second grandchild, Raylin Grey Donahue, on December 8th.

Lieutenant Geoff Turner is a member of the Crater

Technical Rescue Team for the last 15 years and currently serves as one of the Board members. He attended the week-long Rescue Challenge in May of 2024 in northern Virginia and District of Columbia. In June, he completed the VDFP Surface water technician course. Water rescue is a focus important to him as he spends many hours of his personal time fishing and water-fowling on the Appomattox River around Colonial Heights and neighboring localities. Lieutenant Turner leads the members of A shift at station 1. Geoff has assisted with keeping the day to day operations of the Training Division running while Lieutenant Pawlick has

been teaching and shaping the recruits of the Crater Academy.

2024 was a year of growth for A shift's members with many taking on additional roles and responsibilities in Colonial Heights Fire and EMS. A multitude and wide variety of incidents were responded to and handled professionally and proficiently. A shift looks forward to more growth and progression in 2025 and stands ready for the challenge.



B - Shift



Steven Gillam
B Shift Battalion

This past year has been a dynamic and rewarding one for the men and women of B-Shift. This year has been marked by call volumes, extensive training, and significant personal and professional growth. Our team has shown exceptional commitment to serving the community, responding to diverse emergencies with skill and courage, and continuously honing their craft. B-Shift responded to a

wide range of incidents this year, including structure fires, car accidents, EMS calls, and public services. Each call presented its own set of unique challenges that tested our readiness, teamwork, and resourcefulness. Our swift response to incidents helped prevent significant property loss, and our EMS interventions contributed to saving lives in numerous situations.

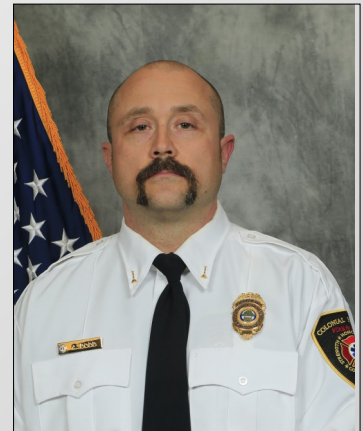
This year, the members of B-Shift fostered a supportive and collaborative team culture by recognizing the professional and personal growth of its members. B-Shift was led by Battalion Chief Steven Gillam, Station 1 Lieutenant Alan Dodd, and Station 2 Interim Lieutenant Terry Schane, who came to the shift late in the year after the retirement of Lieutenant Troy Allen. Each of these individuals provided leadership skills and helped to develop the other members of the

shift.

Lieutenant Dodd further assisted the department by developing and running the promotional process for Lieutenant. This process ensured a fair and comprehensive evaluation for candidates and by managing the process in-house, it resulted in considerable cost savings for the department.

In December, Lieutenant Troy Allen retired after 30 years of dedicated service. His contributions to the shift extend beyond the fireground. He provided mentorship, teamwork, and integrity to those he worked with and those that had the honor of working for him. The shift wishes him a happy and fulfilling retirement.

With the retirement of Lieutenant Allen, Firefighter Terry Schane came to the shift to serve as the interim Lieutenant. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the team and continues to be an asset to the shift



Alan Dodd
Lieutenant Station 1



Terry Schane
Act. Lieutenant Station 2



B-Shift



and department. He also continues to be an active member of the department's Honor Guard and a member of the Crater Technical Rescue Team. Firefighter Krystle Hester had an outstanding academic achievement in 2024, graduating from Columbia Southern University, earning her bachelor's degree in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) with a specialization in Construction Safety. With her being the senior firefighter on shift, she continues to mentor the newer members of the shift. Firefighter Joey Hammack helped develop the newer members to the department and region by teach-

ing Haz-Mat operations at the Crater Regional Fire Academy. He is currently assisting the department by managing our assets in the ESO reporting software.

Firefighter Bonovitch successfully passed his National Registry Paramedic and became a released ALS provider for the department. He along with firefighter Corey Murphy completed the department's Driver/Pump Operator program, and they were both released to operate their assigned fire apparatus. Firefighters Calvin Williams and Alex Holm both successfully passed their EMT-Advanced certifications and are currently

working on becoming released providers.

Firefighters Ian McCann and Anthony Runyon both completed their probationary period and are currently enrolled in an EMT-Advanced class through Brightpoint Community College.

Numerous Members on shift had significant personal events in their lives this year. Firefighter Andrew Lyles moved into a new house and welcomed his second son, Alec in October. Firefighter Jesse Bonovitch got married and he and his wife are expecting their first child due in January 2025.

As we reflect on a productive and impactful year, B-Shift remains committed to

continuous improvement.

Our goals for the upcoming year are to continue to train to maintain a state of readiness for the community and to stay current on emerging challenges. We will continue to strengthen community relationships through community involvement, and maintain our focus on safety, excellence, and service. B-Shift's accomplishments this year are a testament to the hard work, resilience, and dedication of each member. Together, we have made a positive impact on the community we serve and look forward to continuing this momentum in the coming year.

C-Shift



Stephen Hoke
C Shift Battalion

C Shift continued to change, grow, and succeed through 2024. We welcomed a new member and said farewell to a few others while we continued to adapt and learn the changes of today's fire service. Crews worked and trained intending to improve the level of service provided to our citizens and visitors and made strides to improve their own lives and careers.

C shift had one member,



Danielle Hannuksela, leave this year for James City County Fire & EMS. FF Eli Harrison continued with our department but was transferred to A Shift Station 2. In January, we welcomed Firefighter Jacob McGrath from the 1st Crater Regional Recruit Academy. In 2024, we continued to face staffing challenges across all 3 shifts. Our department as a whole worked diligently to help our brothers and sisters on other shifts to fill these va-

cancies despite having vacancies ourselves. Staff would frequently work 72 hours straight and some would take many days of overtime to help ensure other shifts were properly staffed. For their hard work and dedication, we are all grateful.

Firefighter Benjamin Barrett and his wife Sara welcomed their first son Jackson Lee Barrett on January 15th 2024. Firefighter Lee "David" Balderson and his wife Bailey are happily expecting their first child in February of 2025.

Education has become integral to the modern fire service and has been embraced by many. Firefighter Vernon Barnes and FF Willie Wright both became Hazardous Material Technicians through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. Firefighter Dejuan Dixon and Firefighter David Balderson received both their Driver Pump Operator certification and Advanced EMT certification. Firefighter Ben Barrett was awarded a Bachelor's Degree in History from Liberty University. Lieutenant Wayne Rae was released



Gerry Petet
Lieutenant Station 1



Wayne Rae
Lieutenant Station 2

to function as an Acting Battalion Chief and Firefighter Greg Martin was released as an Acting Lieutenant. We took opportunities to train together as a shift combining both stations and crews to improve our combined efforts on scenes.

Notable incidents for 2024 had crews responding to many different calls for service. These calls sometimes pushed us to manage a multitude of different incidents. Sometimes even managing multiple incidents occurring at the same time requiring



C-Shift

us to utilize outside resources to cooperatively manage scenes. No matter the case, we endeavored to provide the best service possible. We responded to multiple multi-family dwelling fires, commercial structure fires, and residential structure fires over the past year. Vehicle Fires, Cardiac Arrests, Vehicles into buildings with major and minor structural damage, and motor vehicle accidents helped fill the time between. Of course, the medic units were not omitted from the list as our department responds to some of the highest call volumes we have ever handled. The physical and mental toll of these 24 hours shifts, coupled with high stress calls means a renewed focus on our members health and well-being to ensure each our firefighters has a long and healthy career.

Despite how extensive the call load can seem, there is no way that we can accurately capture the hard work and dedication from our members. Between shifts and calls for service, they serve on many different committees like EMS, BLS, Turnout Gear, and Training to name a few. Even around the station, in non-formal projects, each and every one of our members have worked to better the department and each other throughout this past year.

To the members of C-Shift, know that while



many of the things done on the day to day basis may go unrecognized, our Department thanks you for everything you do. This includes even the smallest of things you may think nobody else notices. The smallest things can have the biggest impact to a patient, their family, or even a friend here at work. Thank you to the members of C-Shift for an outstanding year of training, friendship, and for your constant professionalism.



Colonial Heights Training and Safety Division



Kris Pawlick
Training Lieutenant

The Training and Safety Division has experienced a year full of learning and professional development. As the year unfolded, we set the stage for success, fostering opportunities for growth at all levels. The year began on a high note with the graduation of four new personnel from the Crater Regional Recruit Academy #001 in January. These recruits completed rigorous training, earning certifications in Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician, Firefighter I & II, Emergency Vehicle Operations, Hazardous Materials Operations and Awareness, and Traffic Incident Management. Immediately following their graduation, the recruits were assigned to their respective shifts as Probationary Firefighters, where they continued their development through in-house training. Three graduates also enrolled at Brightpoint Community College, beginning their education toward certification as Advanced Emer-

gency Medical Technicians.

Throughout the year, the division and various other agencies offered numerous learning opportunities for department personnel. These ranged from classes and conferences to team exercises and annual refresher courses, enabling staff to specialize and expand their expertise across multiple disciplines. Among the highlights, were Driver Pump Operator, Hazmat Technician, Fireground Command, Emergency Vehicle Operator, Mayday, Vehicle Extrication, Surface Water and Rescue Challenge in Northern Virginia. The Crater Regional Technical Rescue and Hazardous Materials team continue to work collectively on a monthly basis in order to develop their skills in the event that they must respond to a high risk/low frequency incident. These regional teams are well equipped to respond to complex technical rescue and hazardous material incidents. Additionally, all operational staff engaged in regular refresher courses and Virginia Office of EMS continuing education to maintain both national and state certifications to include Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), and Rapid Sequence Intubation (RSI). All fire suppression personnel under the guidance of Virginia Department of Fire programs completed mandated state training under House Bill 2451. This

training was developed to aid firefighters in understanding and extinguishing electric vehicle fires as these modes of transportation are increasing in popularity and are a part of the Clean Car law within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The educational opportunities provided throughout the year resulted in remarkable achievements for department personnel. Many earned advanced certifications, including Paramedic, National Registry EMT, AEMT, Virginia Office of EMS Educational Coordinator and various Virginia Department of Fire Program's certifications. In addition, staff members earned college degrees and state licensures, further strengthening the capabilities of the department. These accomplishments contributed to the department's overall growth, with the addition of Field Training Officers, Instructors, and Acting Officers who are now better equipped to mentor and lead the next generation of Fire & EMS personnel. In addition to technical and operational training, the division worked diligently to improve departmental policies and procedures. Annual training sessions focused on Infection Control, Line of Duty Death, and HIPAA Awareness. The division also completed critical tasks such as Fit Testing, Career Development Verification, and Physical Ability Testing, alongside conducting investigations into motor vehicle collisions, accidents and injuries involv-

ing department personnel and apparatus.

Furthermore, the Training and Safety Division is responsible for all preemployment of potential new hires. We were fortunate in hiring six new career recruits. In September, these recruits, joined a multijurisdictional recruit school involving Colonial Heights, Petersburg, Hopewell, Dinwiddie and Prince George County as part of the Crater Regional Fire Academy#002 with 33 students. This 23-week Academy was held at Namozone Fire Department in Dinwiddie County and successful recruits earn numerous certifications in various disciplines to prepare for assignments in their respective jurisdictions. The academy partnered with Columbia Gas, Richmond Fire, FDM Safety Services, Virginia Department of Forestry, Atlantic Iron and Metal, Virginia Department of Fire Programs and various other partners to deliver a robust educational experience that benefitted all the recruits.

As the year draws to a close, the Training and Safety Division reflects on the success of the past 12 months while looking forward to the future. The division continues to collaborate with external agencies, offering a variety of training opportunities and exploring new instructional strategies grounded in research. With a solid foundation in place, the division is already preparing for the next recruit school, excited for another year of training, growth, and achievement.

Train Hard, Stay Safe!

Fire Marshal's Office



Brett Jennings
Fire Marshal

Overview:

In 2024, the division completed 793 inspections, averaging 66 inspections per month. Additionally, there were 12 callouts for fire investigations. Throughout the year, the division collaborated with the Building Official's Office and the Planning Department on various construction projects in the city, including hotels, storage facilities, a church addition, carwashes, and a high school addition. Members of the division attended multiple training sessions to stay updated on evolving hazards. Currently, the office is staffed with one full-time position, Deputy Fire Marshal J.B. Jennings, one part-time position Assistant Fire Marshal K Bish Jr, along with four other members from operations Battalion Chief E. Albert, Lieutenant A. Dodd, FF T. Schane, and Volunteer Assistant Fire Marshal D. Woolard.

Inspections:

The office conducted inspections at all city schools and required daycare centers within the city limits. Many inspections were prompted by complaints or third-party reports received by the office in the first half of the year. Efforts were made to update the system with contact information for businesses that may have

entered the city in recent years and to conduct general fire inspections during these visits. The inspection focus was not limited to specific areas or types of businesses but encompassed various locations and industries throughout the city. With the addition of the part-time position, we were able to boost our efforts in inspections making Colonial Heights safer for our citizens and responding firefighters.

703 – General inspections were completed on site at businesses in the city (2023-201)

21 – Notices to have the kitchen hood fire suppression system inspected (2023-50)

6 – Notices sent out for fire alarm inspection reporting per NFPA 72 (2023-22)

29 – Notices to have fire sprinkler system inspected and tested per NFPA 25 (2023-41)

39 – Site and plans reviewed for new construction (2023-18)

22 – Alarm citations issued

30 – Holiday Safety Checks

The office has collaborated closely with Code Enforcement on several properties with overgrown vegetation issues across the city, aiming to address these concerns. Fire code violations have been issued for these locations in accordance with the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Resolving these issues is an ongoing process and will require sustained efforts over time.

Investigations:

The Fire Marshal's office had 12 cases assigned this year.

5 - Cases were determined to be accidental

5 – Cases were labeled as undetermined

2 – Cases were labeled as arson

Hazardous Materials:

The department responded to 118 hazardous materials incidents, including 66 involving natural gas, 30 with gasoline or other combustible liquids, 9 related to carbon monoxide and 13 concerning chemical spills or leaks.

Public Educations:

In 2024 the department conducted:

76 – Smoke detector installations or checks (2023 - 55)

8 – Knox Box installations or updating the key (2023 - 8)

2 – Carbon monoxide detector installations or checks (2023 - 2)

21 – Public educations (2023 - 11)

263 – Parking citations issued



Emergency Management



Kevin Kiddy
Emergency Manager

The City of Colonial Heights Office of Emergency Management's mission is to mitigate against, plan for, prepare for; coordinate and support responses to and recover from emergencies; educate the public on preparedness; collect and disseminate critical information; and seek and obtain funding and other aid

in support of overall preparedness, by coordinating all activities necessary from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters. The city operates under the "All Hazards" model of emergency management.

Emergency Management monitors weather threats (severe storms, tropical systems, flooding and winter weather) and, when necessary, participates in conference calls with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service. When needed, weather briefings are distributed among key staff throughout the city to keep them abreast of pending or current weather hazards.

Emergency Management monitored a total of 19 weather warnings and 5 tropical systems in 2024.

A breakdown of the warnings by type included the following: severe thunderstorm (7), flash flood warning (5), excessive heat (4), freeze warnings (1), flood (1) and red flag warning (1).

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated for 1 event for 2 operational periods. The event that called for an EOC activation was a severe thunderstorm with flooding, widespread power outage and damage.

Several projects were planned and started or completed in 2024 and planning was initiated for 2025 and beyond.

Emergency Management hosted training for a statewide Surface Water Operations (Water Rescue) put on by Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Underserved Populations Preparedness Planning for Rural Responders and Vol-

unteers put on by the Rural Disaster Preparedness Consortium, and conducted Stop the Bleed Training for all Departmental Operations staff and Administrative staff in conjunction with our Rescue Task Force training and grant.

Emergency Management staff attended training to include the Virginia Emergency Management Symposium and the Emergency Management Alliance of Central Virginia's Mass Care Symposium.

Emergency Management staff have worked on the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan which needed updated in the past year, spearheaded the project to locate a new weather emergency siren in the North End of the city at Tussing Elementary and became involved in and hold a seat on the Community Rating System group related to Floodplain Management.



Emergency Management



Another initiative that was completed and made operational was the flood and rain gauge (IFLOW) on the Swift Creek Watershed which is part of a statewide network that is critical for early detection of issues along the watershed and Lakeview Dam.

EM and Fire staff participated in several local, regional and state preparedness exercises during the past year. Staff participated in the state VESTEX 24, Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Health District FluEx24, Pipeline Emergency Response and tabletop and functional exercises involving Brasfield and Lakeview dams which were required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

EM staff continue to assist the volunteers of our fire department in seeking out new volunteers for Fire & EMS and the Community

Emergency Response Team (CERT). As planned, we started using a new hybrid training platform to train CERT candidates which will cut down on training costs and allow participants to move at their own pace through the classroom portion of the training. We hosted 2 classes during 2024 using this format and results and reviews were positive. We will continue to utilize this platform in the future for CERT Basic Training.

Your CERT had another productive year. Topics for training included damage assessments and Crisis Track, CPR/first aid, comms, triage, CERT/ARES joint radio ops. We continue to reach out and train with other jurisdictions more than ever both on our own and through the Emergency Management Alliance

training opportunities. CERT members also participated in a regional disaster response exercise, CHD/CH FluEx24 and the regional rodeo. 28 CERT members combined to volunteer 380.2 hours during the year including meetings, training, exercises, public outreach and activations.

Public outreach is a big part of our emergency management duties. We strive to inform and train citizens to be ready for all hazards and to not leave their safety and the safety of their families to chance. Along these lines, we participated in approximately 30 classes, fairs, festivals, events, visits, etc.

Grants are another area for EM staff to concentrate on to assist our community and department. Persistent work has paid off in the 610 Lakeview Project as the

city has purchased and demolished a repetitive flood loss property that is now a perpetual green space that is adjacent to Lakeview Park and the proposed rail trail. Funds were secured for EM salary money, personal protective equipment and police equipment.

Another milestone achieved in large part was the completion and placing in service of the new brush truck that also has boat towing capabilities as well as being a rescue platform for off-road and trails.



Communications



**ECC Manager
Ashley Rainey**

As we reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of 2024, I am incredibly proud of the dedication, resilience, and teamwork demonstrated by every member of our Emergency Communications Center. This year brought significant milestones, new faces, and innovative projects, all of which have further strengthened our commitment to providing exceptional service to the citizens of Colonial Heights and the first responders we support. Each shift has faced unique demands and made meaningful contributions to the overall success of our center. The following summaries highlight the efforts, achievements, and growth of our incredible team.

In September, Donald Lynch was selected as our Communications Officer of the Year, a well-deserved recognition for his tremendous growth both personally and professionally. Donald has excelled in his role, taken on the responsibility of assisting with training, and stepped up to lead during several major calls. As the Senior Communications Officer in the room, Donald has guided the team through critical incidents, including water rescues,

structure fires, major accidents, and many other significant events. Beyond his on-the-job excellence, Donald has shown a dedication to continuous improvement by completing several classes and striving to expand his knowledge for the betterment of himself and the center as a whole.

This year, Battalion Chief Eric Albert has continued to lead the P25 Radio Project as part of the Capital Region Radio System upgrade. This initiative, involving Henrico, Richmond, Hanover, the Capital Region Airport Commission, Chesterfield, and Colonial Heights, is moving forward to replace the 800 MHz system originally installed in 2001. This critical project will ensure that our region remains at the forefront of emergency communications technology, enhancing interoperability and reliability across jurisdictions.

In addition to managing emergency calls and dispatching first responders, our center plays a vital role in maintaining the integrity of legal records and systems. The Colonial Heights Emergency Communications Center continues to house all warrants and protective or-

ders issued in the city. Not only does our staff enter and validate these records, but we also maintain rigorous standards of accuracy required by the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) and National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Supervisor Tiarra Murdaugh leads our VCIN team, which is assisted by Communications Supervisor Elaine Bridgeman, Acting Communications Supervisor Denise Chandler, and Communications Officer Lisa Hartsell. Together, they ensure every entry is accurate and audit-ready, with regular cross-checks, validations, and purges to meet state and federal standards.

As we move into 2025, I look forward to continuing this journey with a team that consistently rises to the occasion, embraces challenges, and exemplifies professionalism in all aspects of their work. The dedication of this team to both operational excellence and administrative precision ensures that our center remains a trusted cornerstone of public safety in Colonial Heights.

A SHIFT

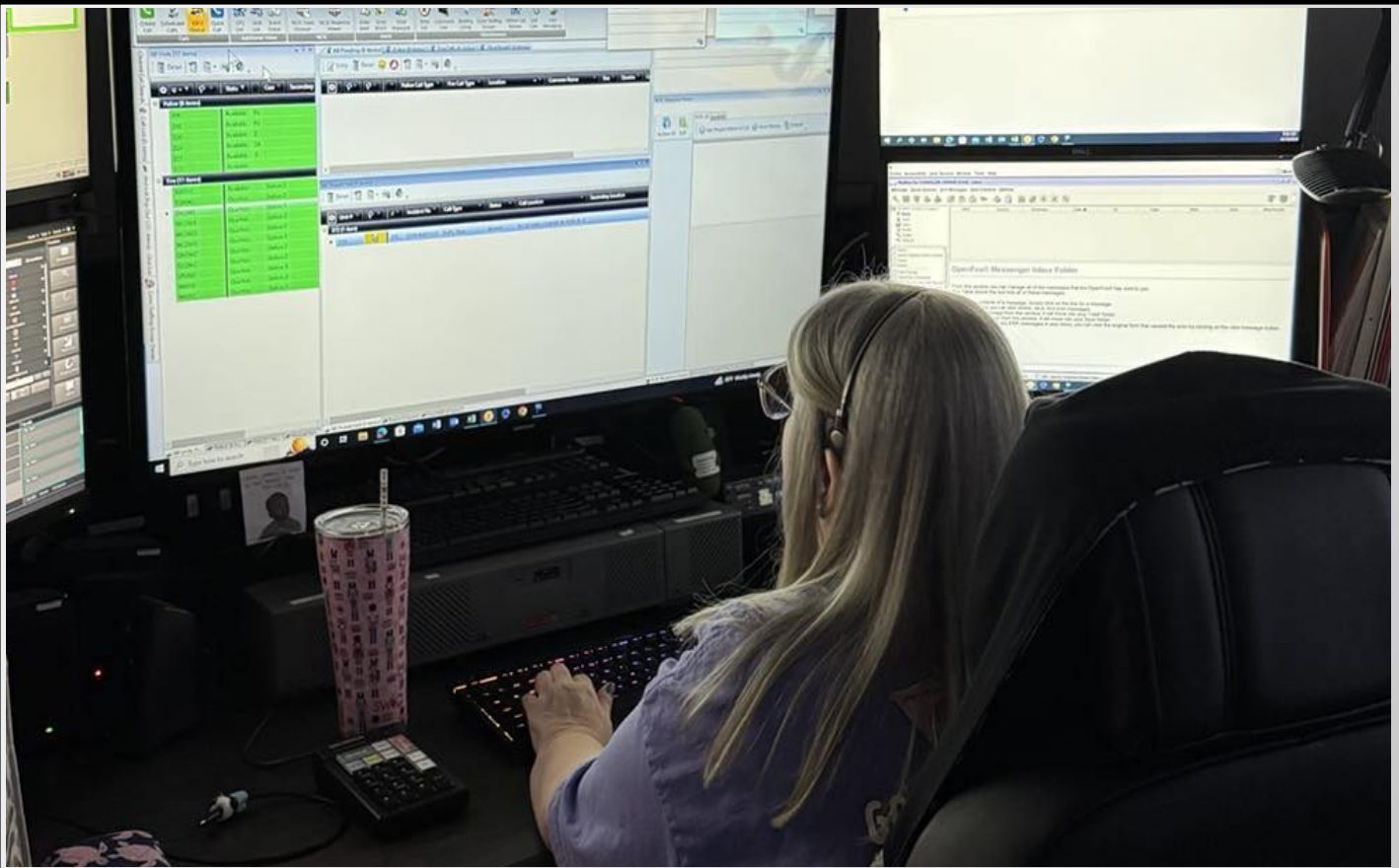
A-Shift is comprised of a great team of people. Communications Officer Kyle Rogers just started training

with the ECC and is very willing to learn. Communications Officer Hailey Baner joined A-Shift and has a lot of compassion and patience for callers. Communications Officer Lisa Hartsell is the A-Shift go-to for anything fire or EMS-related due to her volunteer position with a neighboring jurisdiction's fire department. Communications Officer Courtney Christel is the person we all turn to for help with any information technology or ECC maintenance problems. Acting Supervisor Denise Chandler, due to her length of service, has an abundance of knowledge about not only the ECC, but also the City in general. During 2024, A-Shift dealt with a large number of incidents. Some of the most notable include the following:

- An attempted bank robbery in which the suspect rode to and from the bank on a bicycle. This suspect had robbed several banks in the surrounding areas and was identified due to this attempt.
- Several vehicle fires, including a garbage truck on Temple Avenue near South Park Mall.
- Numerous structure fires, including a "big box" structure, a residential structure started by



Communications



a generator running during a power outage caused by a major weather incident, and a multi-family structure that resulted in a fatality.

- During a busy shopping Saturday in December, there was a shooting at Southpark Mall. A-Shift handled a large number of calls for over an hour regarding people sheltering in place in addition to the actual shooting.

- A-Shift also managed an overabundance of Flock Camera hits, resulting in one missing person located, six stolen vehicles recovered, and four wanted persons detained. Several search warrants were executed during A-Shift, the most remarkable being at a large nursing home facility, which resulted in the arrest of several staff members. A-Shift has noticed an uptick in calls and paperwork for

wanted persons. This appears to be the result of the City's aging population, the economy in general, heightened awareness of mental health, and other factors. A-Shift looks forward to and is prepared for what the new year may bring!

B SHIFT

As we wrap up this year, B Shift has navigated a series of challenges and triumphs, each contributing to the ongoing success of our team and the service we provide to the citizens of Colonial Heights. Despite staffing shortages, the integration of new trainees, and the unique challenges posed by maternity leaves, our team has demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to excellence. This year, B Shift faced several significant challenges. In response, our team

showed remarkable collaboration and flexibility. Notably, Communications Officers Hartsell and Wall stepped in to assist with staffing, ensuring consistent coverage throughout the year.

The team's ability to handle these challenges is a testament to their dedication and commitment to providing exceptional service to the citizens of Colonial Heights. Members of B Shift worked together seamlessly, often stepping in to work overtime and manage on-call shift rotations, ensuring that no service disruptions occurred. We saw significant achievements this year that contributed to the growth of our team and the continued development of our personnel:

- **Trainee Progress:** Trainee Beville successfully completed Basic Dispatch School and earned her Level

A certification in VCIN, marking a significant milestone in her development.

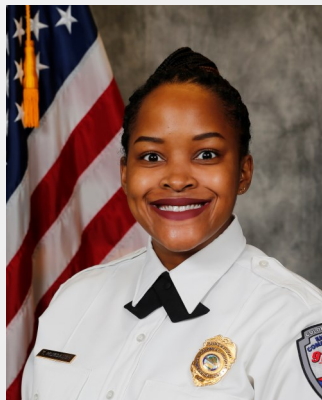
Recertifications: Supervisor Drewey and Communications Officer Nevetral both successfully recertified their VCIN Level A status, CPR, and Fire Service Communications, showcasing their ongoing professional growth and commitment to the high standards of the ECC.

As we look ahead to the coming year, B Shift has set clear goals to build upon our achievements and overcome past challenges. Our primary goal is to ensure that all trainees are successfully released from training and fully integrated into the team. Additionally, we are preparing for a successful VCIN audit, which will further demonstrate our adherence to the highest standards of practice. With the dedication, teamwork, and professionalism shown this year, we are confident that B

Communications



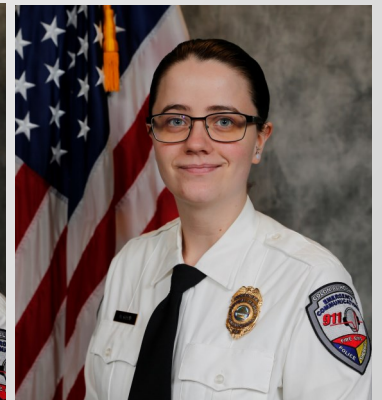
**A Shift Acct. Supervisor
Denise Chandler**



**B Shift Supervisor
Tierra Drewey**



**C Shift Supervisor
Elaine Bridgeman**



**D Shift Supervisor
Mariah Good**

Shift will continue to rise to any challenges and achieve new heights in the upcoming year.

C SHIFT

C Shift for the Emergency Communications Center remains committed to providing swift, efficient, and life-saving services to our community. In 2024, our team of highly trained dispatchers and supervisor worked tirelessly to handle a variety of emergency calls, ensuring that every situation received the prompt attention it needed. Our department remains focused on continually improving response times, integrating new technologies, and enhancing our team's training. This report provides an overview of our most significant calls, team updates, and accomplishments throughout the year.

Throughout 2024, the department responded to a significant number of high-priority emergency calls, each requiring quick action, coordination, and expertise.

The year saw several critical structure fires that required immediate deployment of fire services. Notably, in March, a large residential fire occurred off Lakeview Ave. In June, our shift handled two

structure fires. Dispatchers swiftly relayed the location, details of the fire, and potential hazards to fire crews, resulting in a fast response and preventing further loss of property.

Tragically, 2024 also saw a rise in violent incidents. Among the most alarming were multiple reports of shootings near the end of the year. Each incident required the dispatch of medical and law enforcement units, involving the coordination of resources and information. Dispatchers provided crucial updates on the victims' conditions and ensured that the proper response teams arrived quickly. As always, our priority remains the safety of both the victims and first responders.

Several major traffic accidents this year required immediate response from both medical and law enforcement teams. The coordination between dispatchers and emergency services was seamless, and the situations were managed with the urgency and attention they required. In total, over 35 calls related to traffic accidents were handled in 2024. 2024 has also been a year of growth for C Shift. We are pleased to welcome Tricia Graham, our newest shift

member, who joined the team in October. In addition, Hailey Baner joined the ECC in May, starting her training on C Shift before moving to A Shift in October. Hailey continues to progress in her training.

Looking back on 2024, the Emergency Communications Department has made significant strides in managing high-priority emergencies, improving training, and integrating new technologies. Our team's dedication to saving lives and supporting the first responders on the front lines has been evident every day. As we move into 2025, we remain focused on continuing to improve our services and further enhancing the safety and well-being of our community. Thank you to our dedicated team, our new hires, and the community we serve.

D SHIFT

In 2024, D Shift welcomed new hire Breonia Taylor. Breonia started with Colonial Heights ECC on January 4th and was released from all phases of training in August. During that time, Breonia attended the Chesterfield Basic Dispatch Academy and obtained her EMD, CPR, and VCIN certifications. Breonia had no previous experience in public safety, and we are very glad that she chose the CHECC as her home.

Mallory Blaha completed her VCIN and Fire Communications recertifications and applied for and was approved for her first step of career development. Joseph Wall also completed his CTO certification and attended this year's APCO conference.

Supervisor Mariah Good began working on the CHECC's portion of the BLS project alongside CO Lisa Hartsell and Manager Ashley Rainey. This is an extensive, ongoing project that includes a complete overhaul of the EMD guidecards, which have not been updated in over a decade. This is an essential part of the BLS project for the fire department, as it changes how call takers receive initial 911 calls, how they enter those calls, and how they are dispatched. By reviewing and updating these guidecards, the 911 center will be able to provide a higher quality of care while also adapting to our ever-changing EMS system. As of December, the guidecards are in the final editing stages and will be distributed to the rest of the BLS program team members for review.

RETIREMENTS



Wayne Hoover
Fire Chief

Happy
Retirement!



Troy Allen
Lieutenant

Operational Data

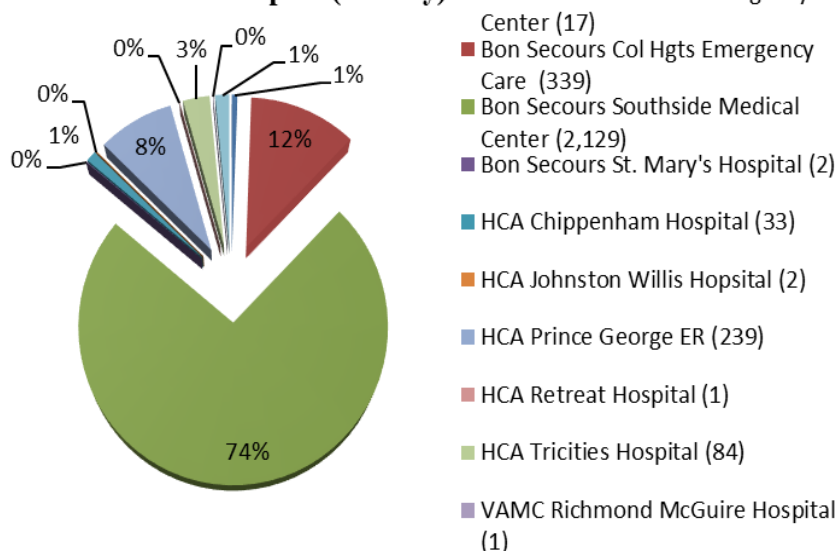
Apparatus

Ambulances	6
Pumper/Engine	2
Quint/Aerial	2
Heavy Rescue/Pumper	1
Brush Truck	1
Haz-Mat Response Trailer	1
Water Rescue	2
Utility Vehicle	2

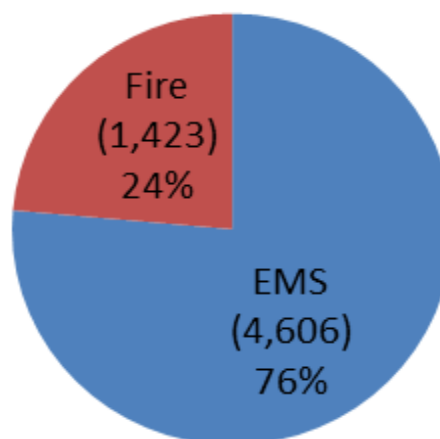
Response Data

Total fires	79
Building Fires/Fire in Building	33
Vehicle Fires	13
Brush Fires	19
Other Fires	14
EMS Incidents	4,606
Rescue Incidents	16
Haz-Mat/Hazardous Conditions	100
Spills/leaks/Haz-mat	34
Down or low hanging wire	26
Electrical Problems	39
Other	6
False Calls/Alarms	257
Good Intent	44
Service Calls	581
Other	346
Total	6,029

Patient Transport (Facility)



Total Incidents: 6,029



Mutual Aid

	<u>PROV.</u>	<u>REC.</u>
Chesterfield EMS	3	14
Chesterfield Fire	28	62
Dinwiddie EMS	4	0
Dinwiddie Fire	1	0
Fort GA EMS	0	3
Fort GA FD	0	2
Hopewell EMS	1	1
Hopewell Fire	1	0
Petersburg EMS	16	36
Petersburg Fire	2	2
Prince George EMS	2	2
Prince George Fire	2	0

Response Times

Fire units arrived on scene in less than 9 minutes 95.9% of emergency incidents

Average Response time 5:49 minutes

EMS units arrived on scene in less than 9 minutes 97.2% of emergency incidents

Average Response time 5:21 minutes

“Our Mission is to promote fire safety, fire prevention, and health safety in the community, as well as to perform fire suppression, rescue, emergency medical services, and emergency services to the citizens, workers, and visitors in Colonial Heights and surrounding communities who shall summon our assistance.”

