



# Effingham Fire Department

2021 Annual Report

## Message from Assistant Fire Chief Matt Kulesza



On behalf of all the members of the Effingham Fire Department, I am honored to present our 2021 annual report.

It has been my privilege to serve as the Assistant Chief and work with the dedicated men and women of the Effingham Fire Department as well as the City of Effingham Council Members: Mayor Mike Schutzbach, City Administrator Steve Miller, Commissioners Merv Gillenwater, Hank Stephens, Libby Moeller, and Larry Micenheimer.

This 2021 annual report illustrates our department's commitment to the citizens of our community. The members of the Effingham Fire Department are proud to serve the citizens and visitors of Effingham.

The year 2021 offered some unpredictable challenges for the EFD and our staff. We were faced with staff shortages due to work related injuries which resulted in multiple hours of overtime for our duty crew. With these challenges, we accomplished our goals and provided a seamless service to our community.

While following the height of the Covid pandemic, Effingham Fire Department continued to adapt and maintain our exceptional services to our community while being mindful of the ongoing health crisis. Keeping our staff safe has always been our top priority. Our dedicated and committed personnel strived for excellence in service to our community every day, regardless of the pandemic. It is a commitment we will continue in 2022 and each year that follows.

With our continued partnership with MABAS 54, we saw many opportunities to provide mutual aid to our outlining communities as well as receiving much needed support during our own calls for services throughout the year. Because of the level of risk during calls for service, our mutual aid support systems with our neighboring communities remain vital to our emergency operations.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of this department and their families for their dedication to this organization and our community. We are fortunate to have an Administration and City Council that supports our mission to deliver the highest quality of emergency service possible to the City of Effingham.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Assistant Fire Chief of the Effingham Fire Department. It has been an honor to serve this amazing community.

Sincerely,

*Matthew Kulesza*

Matthew Kulesza  
Assistant Fire Chief

**Fire Department Highlights:**

2021 was a busy year for the Effingham Fire Department in terms of both call volume and overall operations. The Covid – 19 virus has changed the world and the operational schedule of the Effingham Fire Department.

With the many variants of COVID-19 that have surfaced, we continue to monitor best practices and preventative measures that include disinfecting both Fire Stations regularly.

Effingham City EMA also continues to monitor personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies for distribution to City Employees and to entities in need within the City.

During 2021, we were able to continue with in person meetings and training. Those activities were postponed or moved to remote sessions during some of 2020 when the COVID positivity rates in the County were at their highest. By continuing with in person activities, we were able to train and learn together as a department allowing us to keep our goals in the forefront of our continued focus.

Calls for Service in 2021 totaled 587, which was a decrease over the previous year. The call response summary for 2021 is as follows:

<u>Building Fires</u>	<u>Vehicle Crashes</u>	<u>Vehicle Fires</u>	<u>Brush Fires</u>
16	113	11	9

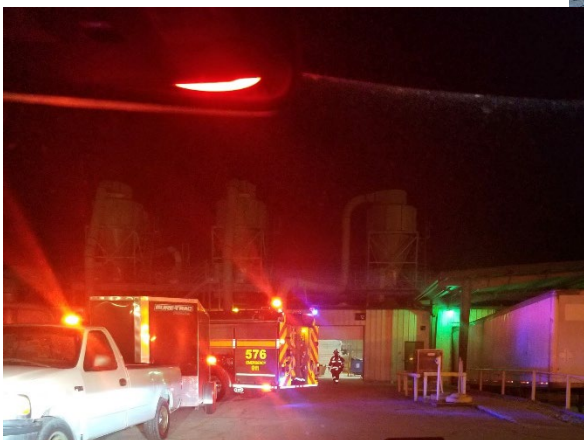
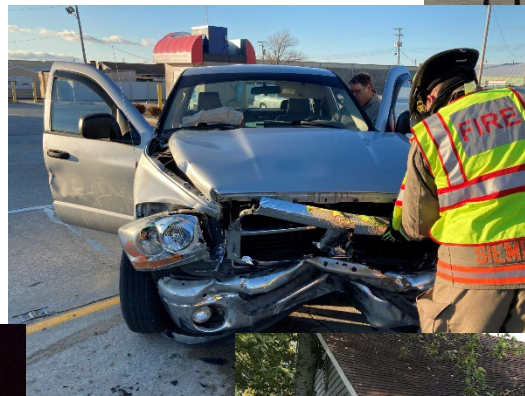
**Total Dollar Loss Estimate: \$694,951.00 – 16 Building Fires, 1 Mobile Home Fire, 11 Vehicle Fires, 9 Brush Fires, & 113 Vehicle Crashes.**

In our continued effort to maintain and improve the Fire Department Insurance Services Organization (ISO) Rating (ISO-2) and NFPA standards for equipment, we have designed a new engine which will be in service during the Spring of 2022.

This engine will bring updated and new technology to be more efficient in deploying personnel as well as equipment that includes lighter hoses, extrication equipment (Jaws of Life), and will make the handling of ground ladders easier to prevent injuries to our staff by outdated and extremely heavy equipment.









## Fire Prevention Bureau Summary - Assistant Chief Matt Kulesza:



Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) over saw many projects in 2021 throughout the City of Effingham. FPB was involved with numerous new constructions as well as remodeling of existing businesses. Assistant Chief Kulesza also over saw Fire Chief responsibilities after Fire Chief Tutko's retirement in July.

2021 was a successful year for FPB construction projects in Effingham. New construction and remodeling projects moved at a record pace even during the covid outbreak. FPB continued pre-plans with the department duty crew and site inspections on a timely manner.

FPB made changes to the department operations by assigning pre-plan inspections of commercial properties to the department duty crew. Each day, duty crew personnel were assigned business locations to visit and record the square footage of buildings, fire alarm locations, fire sprinkler locations, electrical and gas shut off, and building construction (wood-metal, etc.). Business owners and employees were able to recognize the importance of building pre-plans as a pro-active measure in the event of an emergency at their location.

There were over 26 projects reviewed/facilitated in 2021.

Some of the major projects were:

- MKU Day Care
- I-70: New Construction
- Fox Holler
- John Boos Wood Plant
- Effingham Veterinary Clinic
- Top Shelf Liquor: New Construction
- Hetzel Overland Trucking: New Construction
- North Side Ford Pre-Owned Center
- Dollar General
- Sarah Bush new office building
- Community Opportunities CEFS (old library)

The Prevention Bureau also completed the following:

- Fire Life /Safety Inspections – 345
- Fire Life /Safety Re-Inspections – 273
- Plan Reviews – 86
- Mobile Food Vendor Inspections – 28
- Occupancy Permits – 17
- Consulting – 22
- Legal Actions – 15
- Property Use Inspections – 1,297
- Pre-plans - 511



**Public Education Summary - Firefighter Kenneth Hayes-Public Education Coordinator:**



During 2021, our Public Education Division resumed station tours with visits being limited to the Engine Bay. Station tours are one of the department's favorite public education activities to host and they serve as an instrumental fire and life safety education opportunity for the children in our communities. Last year, we were able to educate over 100 visitors at Central Fire Station.

The Take a Break for Safety program resumed in 2021. During this event, 710 students at Effingham Unit 40, St. Anthony Grade School and Sacred Heart participated as Fire Safety Ambassadors. Students performed Fire and Life Safety Inspections in their homes, with the help of their parents, ensuring their homes had working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and other safety precautions.

Another fruitful event that the department participated in was Effingham Night out 2021 that was hosted by Effingham Police Department. This event was held at Evergreen Park; we were able to reach and educate over 500 individuals.

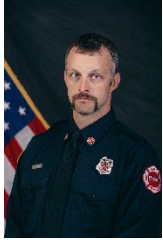
**Public Educations Division Highlights:**

- Annual School Fire Alarm and Evacuation Drills
- Homecoming Parade
- Halloween Parade
- Unit 40 Band Camp
- Santa Escort
- Sacred Heart State Baseball Team
- Salvation Army Bell Ringing





## Department Training Summary – Training Officer Firefighter Matt Carpenter:



The Training Division is responsible for the Training and Education of the Fire Department personnel. The Department follows the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal's certification and training requirements. Personnel complete many of their trainings at the University of Illinois Fire Service Institute in Champaign-Urbana with a variety of classes offered off-campus as well. After multiple interruptions due to the pandemic in 2020, we cautiously moved forward with regular training in 2021. Some of the highlights:

**Personnel completed:** 2,440.2 hours

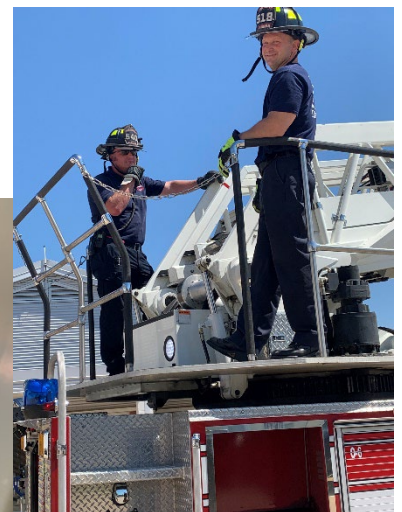
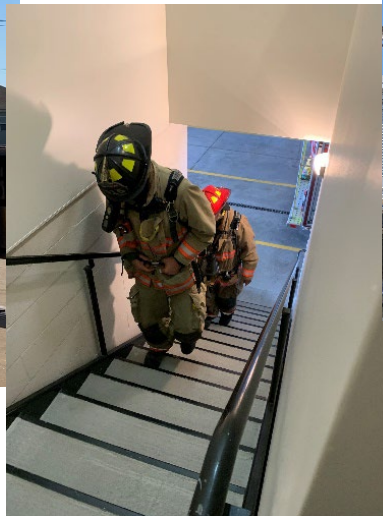
### **Certifications Obtained:**

Fire Investigator  
Hazardous Materials Technician  
NIMS 300/400  
Hazardous Materials Operations  
Basic Operations Firefighter

### **Notable Classes/Conferences Attended:**

Instructor II  
National Fire Academy Safety Program Operations  
Fire Department Instructor's Conference  
Illinois Fire Service Instructor's Conference  
Search Techniques  
Truck Company Operations  
Leadership Development & Decision-Making  
Fire College  
Basic Company Officer  
Incident Safety Officer  
Advanced Fire Officer

In 2022, we look forward to getting back to a full regular training schedule with multiple outside classes already being planned. This upcoming year brings new requirements for firefighter recertification in the State of Illinois, and we look forward to tackling these, while advancing the Effingham Fire Department forward through training and Education.



**Administrative Review- Executive Secretary Jenn Alwardt:**



The Fire Department Administration staff serves in a variety of day-to-day operations. Assisting with planning and maintaining the department’s yearly budget, completing and tracking payroll, and maintaining all department software along with assisting with most divisions within the department, are the primary responsibilities Executive Secretary Alwardt completes on a regular basis.

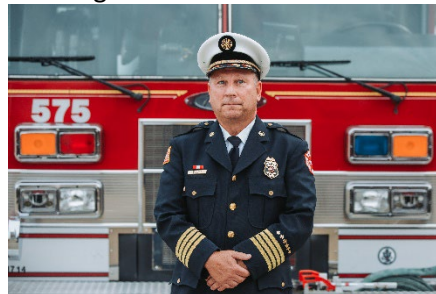
During 2021, there were three retirements in the Operations section of the Fire Department and one retirement in Administration.

Paid on Call Fire Fighter Rich Dust with 26 years of service, Josh Knaus with 17 years of service, and Jake Janis with 13 years of service all retired in May.



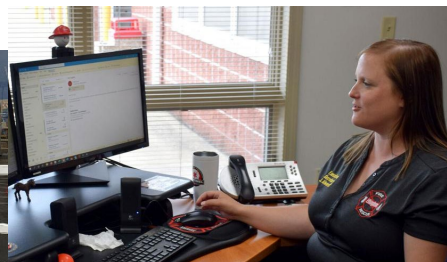
*Firefighter Jake Janis, Firefighter Rich Dust & Firefighter Josh Knaus.*

After three years of service, Fire Chief Bob Tutko retired as Fire Chief in July. He brought with him over 41 years of fire service to the City of Effingham.



Also, during 2021, the Fire Department installed the HAAS Alert system in two front line engines and in two command vehicles. These devices, when activated by emergency lights on our vehicles, deliver notifications to approaching drivers before they encounter response personnel in or near the scene of an emergency via navigation software.

The Administration Team continues to research new ideas to improve day to day operations and is very much looking forward to 2022.





## Emergency Management Overview - Coordinator David Budde:



The City Emergency Management Agency plays a pivotal role in preparing the City for emergencies and coordinating the responses of State and Federal resources in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

During 2021, EMA Coordinator Dave Budde began overseeing the movement of the Emergency Operations Center to a bigger, more secure location. EMA Budde was able to procure a previously utilized location within the City and will continue to work with City Staff to get the EOC fully operational during the first part of 2022. The primary goal is to make this space cohesive for all City Emergency Services and Departments to continue to operate for the betterment of our citizens when normal, everyday services may be interrupted due to an unplanned event. The overall design will also be built with a backup PSAP in case 911 Communications are affected.

Another major accomplishment EMA completed in 2021 was the change to their Standard Operating Procedures during a structure fire that reaches the Full Still level. EMA Budde will respond to the scene directly serving as the primary liaison with homeowners that may need assistance from The American Red Cross and/or The Salvation Army. His other responsibilities will be providing and overseeing firefighter personnel support with any assistance they may need during a physically demanding structure fire.

Below is an overview of City EMA's annual activities:

- Attended Effingham County Health Department meetings to plan for COVID guidelines for area schools.
- Oversaw and maintained inventory of PPE from IEMA for distribution.
- Met with American Red Cross Shelter Coordinators.
- Hosted quarterly EMA meetings with City and County Emergency Services.
- Coordinated smoke detector program with the American Red Cross and the Effingham Fire Department.
- Discussed Emergency Procedures and AED location and uses with Effingham Library.
- Provided CPR and AED training for City Police and Telecommunicators.
- Created ID badges for City employees.
- Updated and submitted 2021 Emergency Operating Procedure Plan for the City of Effingham to IEMA.
- Submitted quarterly reports to IEMA for EMA grant reimbursement.
- Participated in Ambulance Oversight Committee and 911 meetings.
- Attending County EMA Emergency Planning Committee meetings.
- Assisted with monthly tornado siren testing.
- Participated in Salvation Army Bell ringing with Effingham Fire Department.



## **Strategic Planning – 2021:**

Members of the Department attend an annual strategic planning session in order to identify critical goals and objectives for the year.

### **Training:**

- Building Familiarization Drill/walk thru
- Pursue CNRR grant for RTC
- Frequent use of the RTC
- Basic pump – aerial ops class/ driver training
- Cornerstone training programs

### **Equipment:**

- E-Draulic tools
- Struts/stabilization new engine
- Combat Hose
- Replace High pressure nozzles
- Class A uniforms

### **Apparatus:**

- Replacement of engine 575
- Interior cabinet of 561
- LED upgrade to tower 551
- Replace Haz-Mat trailer
- Replace outdated Knox Box units

### **Stations:**

- New addition station 1 (5yr. plan)
- Replace gear lockers (DOC)
- Parking lot lighting
- Security Cameras at station 2
- IDOT camera feed

### **Personnel:**

- Active POC recruitment
- Add Full-time staff
- Officer/Personnel Development
- Health-safety Program
- 1582 annual physical exams

### **Services:**

- Sound-off Program
- Apartment safety program
- Smoke alarm program
- Take A Break for safety program
- Community Safety Day

### **Goals Identified during Strategic Planning:**

1. Continue with overall community risk reduction efforts
2. Active shooter training
3. Officer training
4. Auto Extrication classes
5. CNRR cameras for spur line blockage
6. SCBA grant
7. Tower ladder grant



