

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



CITY OF RIO RANCHO, NEW MEXICO

FROM THE FIRE CHIEF'S DESK BY MICHAEL MEEK

This past year has seen much discussion and negotiation to solidify health initiatives for our members. It seems one cannot read a professional fire/EMS trade magazine or blog without seeing two topics: physical fitness standards and mental health/peer support. We are fortunate to be at the forefront of these topics.

Most citizens expect that our job requires some type of annual physical fitness requirement. They know of the strenuous workloads and assume we have a way of identifying unfit firefighters.

They are probably not aware of the high percentage of obesity in our profession. Multiple studies of our profession over the past ten years revealed that while two thirds of the general population are overweight or obese, the percentage of overweight or obese firefighters is higher, at 73-88 percent.

The fire service has a perfect storm for gaining weight—there's a lot of sleep deprivation, and a culture around food that is attracted to processed foods and sugary snacks. Although there is also a culture of fitness, the fire service seems to have completely shunned any testing or requirements for that. Other than the application process to get hired, there is no test for most departments to ensure fitness.

This past year, administration and Local 4877 worked to find a physical fitness testing procedure that would provide an evaluation tool to be used during our annual health physical. The testing was evaluated and recommended by our peer fitness trainers. Each year we send these firefighters to classes with the expectation that they will return with ideas to help our firefighters be healthier. I am proud to say we are one of only a

few departments nationwide that tests for fitness, pays for those who are in the top ten percent of testing, provides an annual medical physical evaluation by a doctor, and has hired a nutritionist to help teach healthier eating.



“PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY”

mental baggage or receive help with stress producing situations. While other departments are discussing the viability of providing this support, we have it in place thanks to the movement headed by Deputy Chief Bearce.

The administration of our department, in conjunction with RRFA IAFF L4877 and City management, has committed to providing all of us with the tools to make it through our careers and exit in good mental and physical health. This past year's accomplishments in this area should make all of you proud to have champions of your health. I know I am proud. Best health, both mental and physical, to all of you.

Thank you for all you do for the City, our department, and each other to keep the positive momentum going. You truly are the best at what you do!

In addition to our physical health, our mental health has been identified as an area needing support and improvement. Instead of going to an EAP who has no idea of our work, we now have a first-responder based mental health professional on contract and are part of a peer support group that provides a resource for firefighters who need to unload

STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT

BY DEPUTY CHIEF PAUL BEARCE

The men and women of Rio Rancho Fire Rescue (RRFR) had another busy and very successful year. During 2015, we continued to help those in need, learned to help each other, were recognized for our abilities, updated some of our facilities and equipment, trained hard, reached out to our community, and said goodbye to a hero.

Calls for service in Rio Rancho continued to increase. We responded to 9,789 incidents related to fire, Emergency Medical Service response, technical rescues, service calls, or hazardous materials response. The EMS calls constituted 72% of our total call volume. We put a new "peak-hour" rescue/ambulance, R10, in service to help with our growing call volume. R10 being staffed has proven to assist the busy Station 1 district.

One of our challenges, due to the vastness of our community and the pockets of developments spread across the City, is our response time to emergencies. Because we cannot control the time it takes to drive these distances, we focused our efforts on the time it takes us to get out of the station, moving toward the call. In 2015, we averaged 1:38 in our turn-out time. This was a reduction from 2014 of 2 minutes. Our efforts to monitor and report data back to the crews has proven to be successful.

First responders are no different than the men and women we serve in our community. RRFR firefighters have the daily stresses of life, such as finances, relationships, and the stressors from home and family. We are also burdened with the stress of seeing victims and patients during the worst day of their life. This cumulative stress can lead to behavioral health issues, such as PTSD. We are working toward breaking through the cultural barrier of firefighters knowing that it is OK to ask for help. In 2015, we began our "We Got Your Back" program that provides firefighters a multi-tiered approach to behavioral health support. This program

consists of the ability to share and de-stress through a peer-to-peer process. The Peer Support Team has become popular and is moving towards a regional approach where peer firefighters and EMS personnel from neighboring agencies can help their brothers and sisters from the Albuquerque metro area. Additionally, a first-responder centered Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was formed by contracting with a new provider. The goal is to be on the cutting edge of firefighter support and assure that all RRFR personnel retire from a long career with their health in tact.

RRFR was not only on the cutting edge for firefighter support, but we were also recognized for our continued efforts to be the best we can be through a new ISO (Insurance Service Office) rating. Our previous rating of 3 (on a 1-10 scale), was changed to a 2 (which is better). This rating is based on our abilities to mitigate structure fires. Of the approximately 48,000 communities who have been evaluated, only 917 have a 2 rating. The new ISO rating may help home and business owners with their insurance rates and may help us get more funding.

State funding helped us provide for better living conditions at Station 1. Being the oldest facility in the department, the station lacked separate bedroom and bathroom facilities. An appropriation from the State Legislature helped us move into beautiful and functional living quarters. While the west side of the station is still in need of updating, the crews have been more comfortable with their new digs!

New equipment and apparatus was put into service in 2015 as well. We began a new program of assuring temperature control of our medications, and ordered three new rescue/ambulances. One of the rigs was purchased out of the City general fund, while the two others were from state appropriations funding. In addition, a new (used) bulldozer and transport truck was acquired through a Federal Government surplus program at no cost. A flatbed trailer was purchased with

wildland fire funds to transport the dozer. Crews are now in training for the potential of deploying to large wild fires in 2016.

Last year we provided extensive training both on and off duty. Two of our resident hot air balloon experts taught our crews about emergencies during the Balloon Fiesta. We provided training and drills to Rio Rancho Public School nurses, hosted a large wilderness search and rescue course for RRFR and other members of the Regional Technical Rescue Team, taught our crews how to recognize suspicious activities relating to criminal activities and terrorism, as well as worked closely with our partners at Intel on garage fire drills, and our medical directors on fire ground operations.

Community outreach continued to be a part of our focus during 2015. In June we taught over 300 residents how to perform CPR during Project Heart Start. We hosted our annual Open House and Fire Camp where we spread the fire prevention message and helped a retired/disabled firefighter by building a wheelchair ramp at his home. We raised money for MDA, Cowboys for Cancer, and the St. Baldrick's Foundation, as well as honored two brave children who fought and won their battle against cancer. We also joined forces with our law enforcement colleagues to raise funds for a fallen police officer.

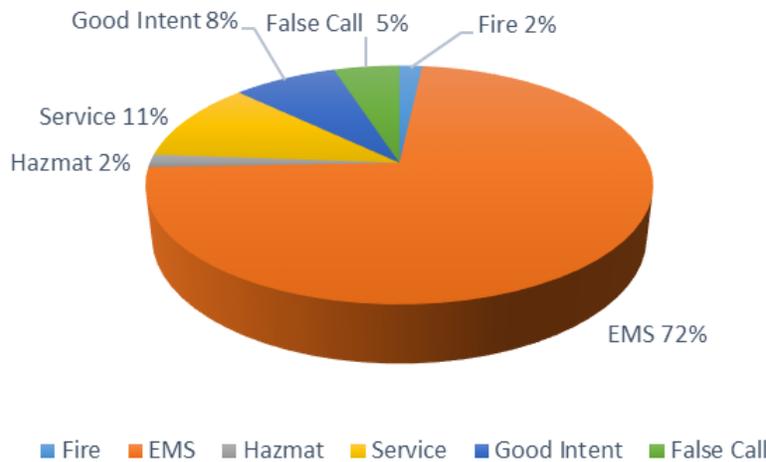
Tragedy struck our City when one of our finest, Officer Gregg "Nigel" Benner was gunned down. Gregg had close family and friendship ties to RRFR and will be greatly missed.

2015 was eventful and sad. The men and women of RRFR shared many great moments together, sweated together, saved lives together, lifted each other up in times of need, and cried on each other's shoulders. We grew stronger as a department and look forward to another great year.

As always, be safe.

INCIDENT SUMMARY FOR 2015 PROVIDED BY BATTALION CHIEF RICHARD DOTY

Incident Call Type



Incident Details

Calls Per Station:

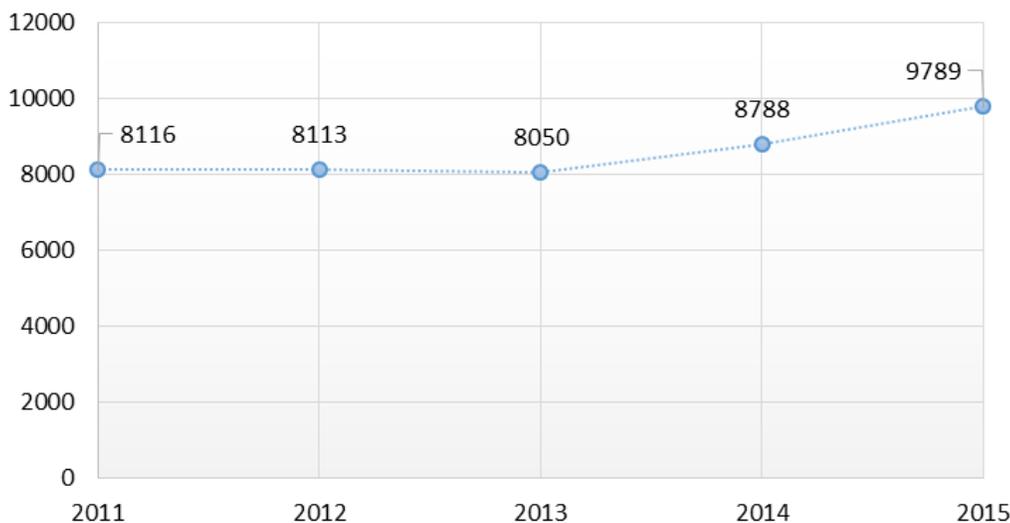
Station 1 calls: 4,167
 Station 2 calls: 1,941
 Station 3 calls: 739
 Station 5 calls: 919
 Station 6: 89
 Station 7: 1,933

Apparatus-Total Hours on

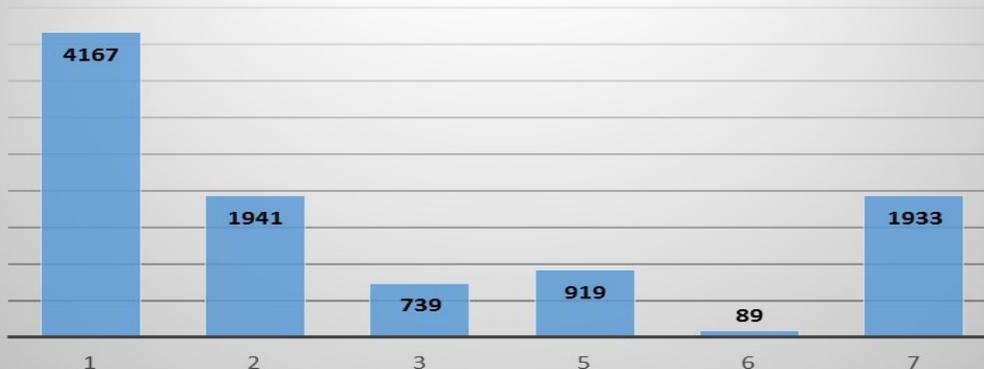
Emergency Calls:

Engine 1: 1,686
 Engine 10: 1,455
 Rescue 1: 2,048
 Rescue 10: 487
 Brush 1: 26
 Battalion Chief: 403
 Engine 2: 1,253
 Rescue 2: 1,332
 Brush 2: 58
 Rescue 20: 9
 Engine 3: 693
 Rescue 3: 828
 Engine 5: 701
 Rescue 5: 710
 Brush 5: 8
 Engine 6: 67
 Rescue 6: 27
 Tender 6: 18
 Engine 7: 1,449
 Rescue 7: 1,639

5 Year Comparison of Total Runs



Busiest Station



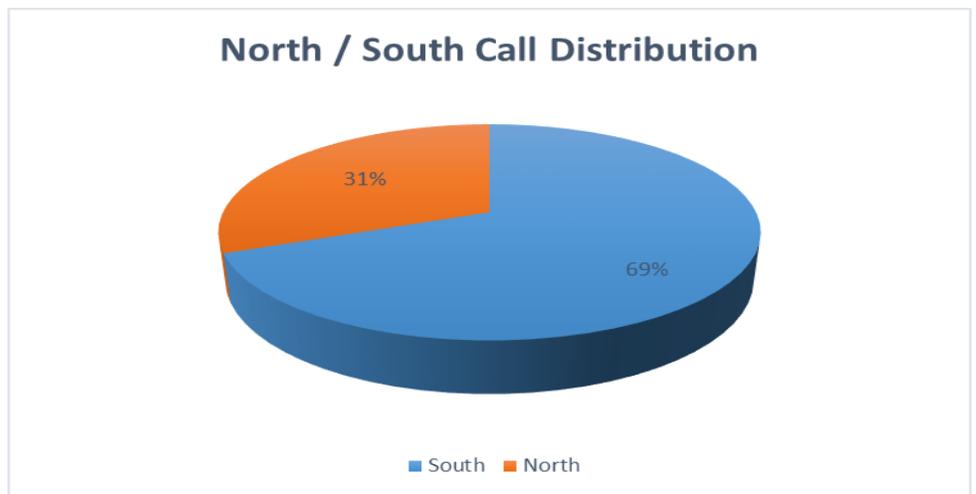
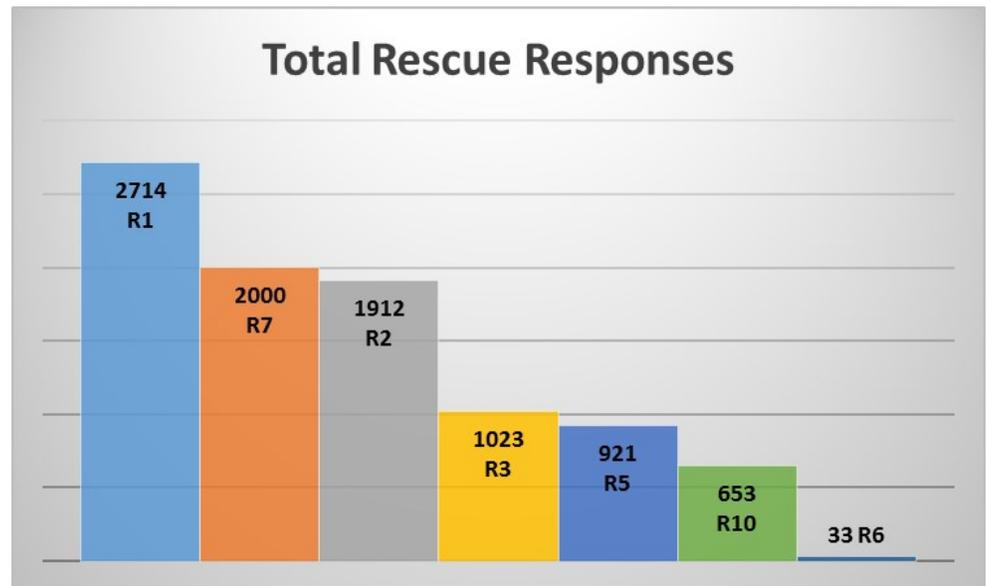
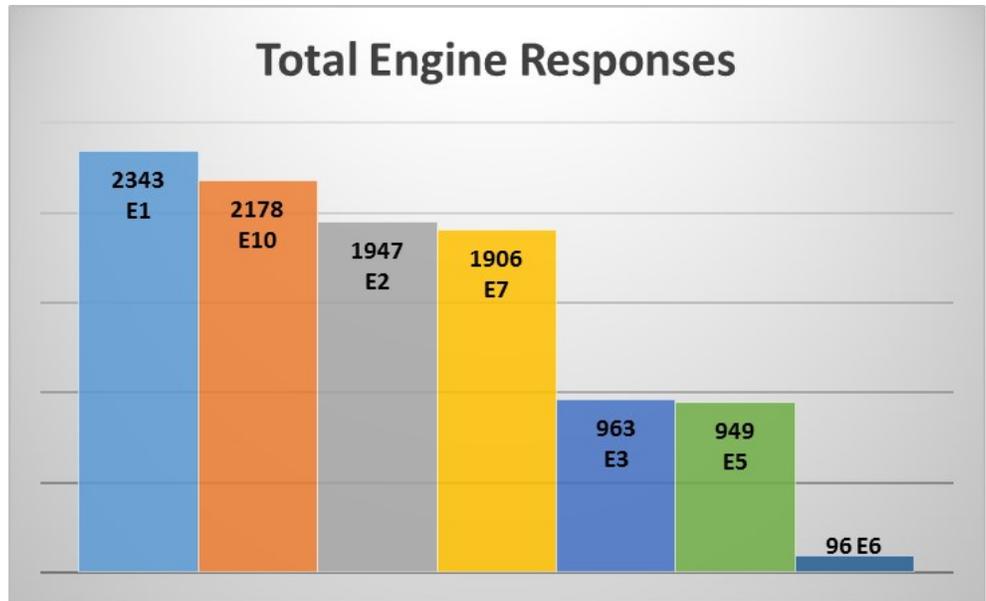
2015 Response Statistics (cont'd)

Notable Calls for Service

- Station 1 on C-Shift responded to “officer down” call and found that the officer was their friend and colleague, Gregg “Nigel” Benner
- Crews responded to collapse of construction scaffolding at Rust Medical Center



- HTRT members successfully rescued injured-hiker from Cabezon Peak
- Cardiac arrest victim Donald Ellsworth successfully revived after collapsing near the Aquatics Center
- Off-duty FF Dennis Lovell helped victims of an overturned ambulance, which was in a crash in Albuquerque
- HTRT members helped search for lost hiker in Sandias
- RRRFR brush truck and personnel assisted with California wildfire
- Captain assisted Alaska fire crews with management of wildfire in remote area
- Large structure fire on Vieja Baja necessitated call for second-alarm



INVOLVED IN OUR COMMUNITY BY DEPUTY CHIEF PAUL BEARCE

RRFR firefighters are trained to meet the emergent needs of the citizens, visitors, and businesses in our community, as well as those in our neighboring towns and villages. Our personnel respond to a variety of emergency incidents, such as fires, medical incidents, motor vehicle crashes, rescues in the wilderness, swift water rescues, and a variety of other calls for service.

However, responding to emergencies is not all we do—the men and women of RRFR are involved in our community.

When a firefighter joins the department, he/she makes a commitment to help others. This

dedication to those who have entrusted RRFR with the task of helping others is why we give back to our community. Firefighters reach out and make personal connections to many; sometimes these connections turn into lifetime friendships.

Our FDCares program focuses our efforts to check in on some of our medical and trauma patients. These home visits help them develop trust in our firefighters and allow us to assure that these patients are on the road to recovery.

We also do a number of charitable events throughout the year to help organizations

raise much-needed funding to combat cancers and other diseases through research.

Firefighters also developed friendships with two young heroes living within our community. Kamari Lucero and Sophia Martinez showed RRFR firefighters what



FF Aaron McDevitt has his head shaved by cancer survivor Kamari Lucero.

the true meaning of bravery meant. Both of these kids were honored guests at our annual St. Baldrick's Event as cancer patients. Now they have a new identity—Cancer Survivors! Both of these beautiful kids have finished their treatments and are in remission. We were also honored to have Brian Gonzales, our first honored Baldrick's kid, back at our event. All of these children have become part of our fire family and we are so happy that they are healthy and happy.

The following is a partial list of community events:

- Project Heart Start Day—Mass public CPR education program
- FDCares Program provides outreach and follow up visits on our patients and victims of trauma
- Fire Camp—Three-day hands-on summer camp for pre-teens
- Annual Open House—Station 1 Open House and Halloween Costume Contest for kids

- Providing fire and injury prevention messages to attendees of the Metro Public Safety Day
- Fire Prevention Month—All young elementary students receive annual fire prevention message
- State Fair—Firefighter Day
- Fall-Prevention program—For Senior Citizens
- 9/11 Ceremony—To honor those lost in the terrorist attacks
- Helping to build a wheelchair ramp for a disabled resident
- Providing man-power to construct a playground for a local Make-A-Wish child
- Reading to kids at various schools
- Serving Holiday Meals to kids at Children's Hospital
- Apparatus display and information at RRPD-sponsored car-seat safety clinics
- Honored first responders in the area during the first annual First Responder Appreciation Day



Charitable Activities

- St. Baldrick's Foundation
- Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) Fill the Boot
- Cowboys for Cancer—Tough Enough to Wear Pink

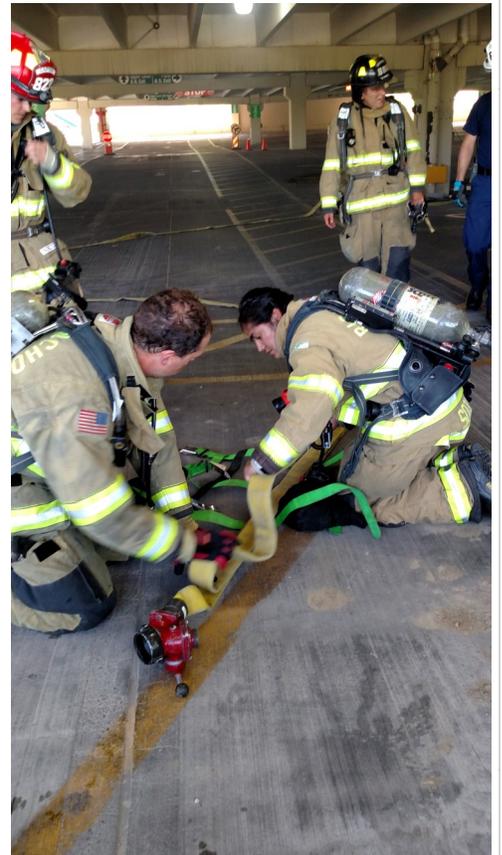


Cancer survivor Sophia Martinez

TRAINING DIVISION REPORT

BY BATTALION CHIEF CHRIS KARRIKER

- Fire Officer Certification course was taught to 12 MOS in January
- Blood Bourne Pathogens For all department MOS
- Three MOS to EMI and NFA for advanced training
- Department wide Harassment training in February
- Fire Officer I
- Testing for Fire Inspector
- Peer Support CISM with Bernalillo County Fire Department in January
- Department Night Drills at Sandoval County Training Facility conducted in March
- Rope Refresher for Department conducted in April
- Department Urban Interface training in April
- Department Swift Water training conducted in May
- BC promotional test in June
- Intel garage Fire Exercise conducted in July
- Department Trench, Confined Space and Collapse refresher
- Captain promotional testing held July into August
- 40 hour Engineer Academy in August graduated 4 personnel
- Five Personnel attended Modern Fire Attack training with Los Alamos Fire Department in August
- Rio Rancho Public Schools conducted Fire Drills with FMO and Operations personnel at all schools in
- Bike Team training with new members and new members for Los Alamos Fire Department's Bike Team
- Back-to-Basics training for all operations personnel conducted in September.
- ICS 300 and 400 for department members and outside agencies taught in October
- CDL class "A" was taught in October for Wildland Heavy Equipment Team and outside agencies
- Dietitian and Nutrition services came into to speak and cook for on duty crews.
- Leadership and Management training for all department officers held at City Hall
- Annual EVOC refresher in November



FF Eric Kaufman and Capt. Valerie Soto roll a hose after a training evolution.



HTRT members work to extricate a simulated victim from a confined space during a training exercise.

- Two Personnel attended the Cooper's Institute for



2015 Training Highlights

- 30,717 total hours of training
- 2,953 hours of leadership training
- 1,510 hours of driver training

Officer Development Program by Battalion Chief Richard Doty

In 2015, the department continued to focus on the development of personnel for command/leadership positions. The Fire Officer Certification course was conducted with nine department personnel completing 40 hours of a revised curriculum. The revision of the curriculum included the addition of four new educational blocks: writing employee evaluations, leadership activity exercises, pre-incident planning, and completion of all 15 job performance requirements. Department personnel are evaluated throughout the week and are required to take a certification skill assessment at the end of the course.

There was a total of 140 hours of direct taskbook training for the position of Battalion Chief for three personnel. This training involved: database management, new hire testing, promotional testing, command & control, and many other activities. Ultimately, promotional testing was successfully completed with the addition of new skills assessments.

Eleven Captain taskbooks were completed in 2015 and each applicant was successfully signed-off. The majority of those applicants participated in the Captains promotional testing. The results of the testing process created a two year captains list.



Top: New Officers—Captains J. Wenzel and E. Petz, Batt. Chief M. Sandoval, Captains D. Hoeksema and A. Arrossa.



Right: Batt. Chief C. Karriker and Capt. A. Arrossa conduct training.

RRBAFF LENDS A HAND

The Rio Rancho Benevolent Association of Firefighters (RRBAFF) is comprised of the personnel from RRFR who have banded together to help those in need, to recognize major life events, and to say 'thanks' to the men and women of our organization.

In 2015, the RRBAFF donated to numerous charities, sent flowers and food to our families during tragic events, supplied much-needed diapers and other baby items to the newest members of our fire family, and funded our wonderful social events.

The following is a list of the RRBAFF's activities in 2015:

- \$860—for flowers sent to 7 of our members or their families for illness or funerals
- \$310—for 4 marriages of our personnel
- \$382—for 9 births of babies into our members' families
- \$9,385 in member recognition and social events
- \$1,250 in contributions to charities outside of RRFR



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BY EM THERESA GREENO, EMERGENCY MGR.

Rio Rancho Emergency Management has had an exciting year of changes as we continue to improve and grow as a division.

- Emergency Management received \$268,286.47 in grant money from State Homeland Security funds for the Regional Heavy Technical Rescue Team (HTRT) vehicle upgrades, Law Enforcement equipment and Emergency Management operations. These grants also continued funding the Rio Rancho Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) program.
- The City Emergency Operations Center (EOC) continued improving connectivity by having data and phone lines installed. The Rio Rancho traffic division has set the EOC up with access to all of the City and DOT traffic cameras within Rio Rancho and GIS division has installed software on the EOC computer for them to access during an EOC activation.
- The Emergency Management division supported the City of Albuquerque during the Department of Health full scale exercise during 2015 by being part of the Albuquerque EOC situational analysis team for a metro area coordinated response.
- Conducted an EOC tabletop exercise to test winter storm response plans. As a result of the exercise, a limited activation and situational analysis team has been integrated into our activation procedures.
- Annex A of the Emergency Operations Plan was updated in October 2015 to reflect the new limited activation procedures for the EOC and the situational analysis team. This plan was tested during the December 26, 2015 winter storm that hit Rio Rancho.
- Conducted a pipe line drill with the Regional HTRT.
- During 2015 there were 4 EOC call down drills to test systems and procedures.
- Incident Action Plans were developed for each day of Pork & Brew and July 4th events to continue improving communication with all departments involved with both events.
- Administrative Policy 10-1 Emergency Successors Listing was updated once this last year to reflect the current City Staffing.
- Completed all of the open Points of Dispensing and close Points of Dispensing plans with the Department of Health to be better prepared for a Healthcare Emergency.
- Rio Rancho Emergency Management partnered with the NM Department of Health to teach two tactical Points of Dispensing course for City employees, one at City Hall and the other at the Public Works Yard to get all employees better aware of City plans for Healthcare emergencies.
- Emergency Management training continued to push toward NIMS compliance with 66 City employees completing over

251 FEMA courses online or attending FEMA classes taught here in New Mexico. Emergency Management and Fire Rescue Department hosted and taught an Incident Command System 300 and 400 class for metro area responders.



CERT Highlights

- Two CERT classes were conducted in 2015 with 25 graduates and 36 CERT graduates completed CPR/AED training during the three classes offered throughout the year.



- During 2015, 120 CERT volunteers supported Rio Rancho Emergency Management and the Fire Rescue department with a total of 1,188 volunteer hours this year. These volunteers delivered support at multiple events from St. Baldrick's to Project Heartstart to Pork 'n Brew by providing cooling stations, first aid support, and other key services.

- Conducted 2nd CERT Fire Rehab training with 12 volunteers. These volunteers have come out to support the fire department during Swift Water Training and during the live burn nights. The Fire Rehab volunteers supported the Rio Rancho Police Department at the extended scene operations during the Officer Benner shooting investigation as well as during the funeral.



EMS DIVISION BY BATTALION CHIEF MARC SANDOVAL

The EMS division has been an exciting place this past year. During 2015, we accomplished the following:

- Completed 99% of annual medical physicals
- Ordered and received three new rescue/ambulances
- Changed airway management devices, provided training
- All EMS report laptops reconfigured and repaired
- Hands only CPR Training for the public
- Assisted with EMS day at Fire Camp
- Participated in Central Regional Trauma Meetings
- Participated in the Regional STEMI Meetings
- Participated in the Sandoval County Behavioral Health

Coalition

- Implemented the Regional Peer Support Team
- Participated in the national meeting of FD Cares program

Things to look for on the upcoming year include: the new Elite ePCR reports are being finished and our reports will have a new look; the pilot program for a shift-paramedic supervisor is being formulated; we have applied for the Community EMS program with the state EMS bureau and should be getting our certification soon; we are currently reviewing our protocols and cleaning up some of the outdated procedures and medications.

Thank you all for a great year.



MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR BY DARREN BRAUDE, M.D. EMT-P

As I say every year, EMS is the cornerstone of this Department and I am very proud of the excellent care each and every one of you provides to our citizens and visitors. I am particularly impressed with everyone's openness to new ideas, such as the FDCares program.

This past year saw the transition from Chief Moulton to Chief Sandoval at the helm of the EMS Division. I am glad that I still get to work with Martin in his new role at the EMS Bureau and excited about all the great ideas Chief Sandoval has brought to his new position.

The healers need to be healed too and we continue to invest in our Occupational Medicine Program. 2015 was a very stable year, operationally, thanks in large part to Karl Doering's organization and diligence. Needless to say he will be sorely missed after his upcoming retirement. At the same time, there was a lot of behind-the-scenes work by the many individuals,

including the Union and command staff, to embed a cutting edge occupational medicine program into the contract. I am sure we are the envy of many Departments as the result of all this work and compromise.

A particularly important part of occupational medicine is provider mental health. The jobs you do and the schedules under which you do them are very stressful and you deserve the best possible support. I am very appreciative of the work that Chief Bearce has done in creating a peer support team and bringing Dr. Rodgers and the Public Safety Psychology Group on board. This has opened up tremendous options for employee assistance.

I am very proud to be part of this fine Department. I know that 2016 will be an even bigger and better year than 2015.

Thank you for what you do and how you do it.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS TEAM BY BATTALION CHIEF DAVE PATTERSON



2015 was an exciting year for Special Operations in the department. RRRF's Heavy Technical Rescue Team (HTRT) has joined forces with Sandoval County and Corrales Fire Departments to develop a regional approach to technical rescue response throughout the region. The Rio Grande Basin Heavy Technical Rescue Team began cooperative training and response over the past year and it has been a very successful model.

The idea behind this cooperative team effort that each department participates in the team efforts with

their trained personnel. The team also allows for more efficient coverage for technical rescue incidents through a cost-effective approach.

In 2015, the regional team participated in a joint exercise with Western States Refinery, trained together on confined space rescue with the 64th Civil Support Team, learned how to perform as a team in wilderness search and



rescue incidents, and began to develop a training schedule and standard operating guidelines.

In addition, RRRF sent two members to a train-the-trainer course for confined space rescue in Colorado. The pair brought back the curriculum to teach their new skills to the department.

In the upcoming year, the Rio Grande Basin HTRT is planning on increasing combined training opportunities and continuing the teamwork for the citizens of Sandoval County.



HTRT Deployments 2015

- April—High angle rescue, Cabezon Peak
- May—"Code Raft" swift water rescue, Rio Grande
- August—Search and rescue mission for missing hiker, Sandia Mountains
- September—High angle recovery effort for car in arroyo, Sandoval County
- October—Search and rescue mission for stranded hikers, San Gregorio Lake



RRFR Crews Provide Special Events Staffing By BC Scott Kelley

Firefighters from RRRF provided fire and EMS staffing for a large number of special events and sporting venues throughout the year. From motorcycle racing to monster trucks; from bull riding to horse competitions; from concerts to wrestling; from the Jehovah's Witness conventions to graduation ceremonies; muck runs, fire camps, and Pork & Brew, we did it all. Here is a general idea of how much time and how many personnel it took to provide this coverage:

- **112 total events**
- **728.5 total hours worked on events**
- **255 total individual assignments**



FF Colin Rice provides CPR training to a citizen.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT BY FM J.J. GARCIA

2015 was very productive year. This is an overview of what was accomplished:

The Plaza @ Enchanted Hills was completed with 3 commercial business moved in along with 4 other name brand stores, which are currently conducting business. This plaza is not finished as there will be 4 new large box companies to begin construction in the very near future.

Rust Medical center began and completed a six story structure. All levels will be completed and occupied this year.

Unser Blvd. has exploded with development. Five new commercial buildings have been completed and are occupied including a new Chick-Fil-A. There are also three new complexes under construction and Taco Cabana is one of them.

The Neighborhood Adult Retirement Facility is currently still under construction. They plan completion by March or April 2016.

The Fire Marshal's Office completed over 100 commercial plan review permits with

87 finals and tests completed.

Fire Inspector Robert Brady completed his first required course, Fire Cause and Determination from the National Fire Academy (NFA). Robert has also completed and is Certified Fire Inspector 1 (IFSAC).

F.I. Jessica Duron-Martinez has been certified and has taken over a great deal of the Public Information Officer (PIO) responsibilities and has done a great job.

All three inspectors completed a course Post Blast Investigations, which was sponsored by the ATF.

Our office will continue to move forward proactively. We are currently: continuing to obtain more training through ATF; working on an appliance fire determination course; making progress with the New Mexico Fire Marshal's Association to have a better working relationship throughout the state; offering certified courses at the New Mexico EMS/Fire Expo; expanding more training this year; developing a Fire

FMO Stats

- Annual Fire Inspections - **1,519**
- Plan reviews – **80**
- Special events coverage – **84 total events**
- Number of children attended fire prevention month classes – **5,000**
- Elementary Schools visited during Fire Prevention Month—**12**
- Total Incident Call Outs/ Investigations – **46**
- Commercial plan review—**100**
- Development plan review—**75**
- Fire loss:
 - Contents—**\$435, 136**
 - Property—**\$1,624,562**

Investigation Task force; and aiming to get all inspectors ICC certified fire inspectors.

This office will continue to provide great customer service and will always keep working hard to have a successful fire prevention division

EMS Bike Team By Team Coordinator FF Jeremy Martinez

The Rio Rancho Bike Team had an exciting year in 2015. The year started out with the International Police Mtn. Bike Assoc. Instructor course in Chandler, AZ. Through this class Rio Rancho now has the only certified EMS Cyclist Instructor in the state of New Mexico. A 32 hour basic EMS Cyclist course was taught by our new instructor in Rio Rancho. This class certified 6 new team members in Rio Rancho and 4 Los Alamos Fire Dept. personnel.

The Bike Team was present throughout the weekend at the annual Pork and Brew, proving the maneuverability of a bicycle is a valuable tool for us to utilize. The team was also present at local

running events and the Patriot Triathlon.

The past year, a large number of personnel purchased bicycles on their own. Anyone with a mountain bike is encouraged and invited to come to the quarterly Bike Team training already posted on the training calendar. Riding a bike is a great way to work on your personal fitness and establish good rapport with your co-workers.

In 2016, the Bike Team will be visible at local events and it is our hope that, now with 10 certified members, we will be expanding our list of events.





WILDLAND STRIKE TEAM BY BC MARC SANDOVAL



The El Nino weather pattern provided New Mexico with significant rainfall in the spring and summer. It continued to provide above average moisture in the fall and winter and the weather pattern is expected to remain in place for the first part of 2016. These rains helped with decreasing the fire danger in the state and the number of large fires were down from previous years.

Unfortunately, the residents in the northwest were not as lucky. California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska had large fires this season and requested resources from the southwest to help fight them. Rio Rancho's Wildland Strike Team was deployed to the following incidents:

- Rescue 4 was sent to a fire south of Magdalena, N.M.
- The NM Management Team #5 was dispatched to Alaska with RRFr's Capt. Robert Bacon serving as the Medical Unit Leader.
- Crews were sent to a lightning strike fire south of Socorro, NM with RRFr's BC Marc Sandoval serving as the Division Supervisor in training.
- One of RRFr's wildland engines was sent to northern California to help in response to a number of reported fires.
- After their assignment, the engine was called to the South Fork Complex Fire.
- RRFr's Capt. Tom Parascandola led a strike team of engines in California and was assigned to the Grizzle Fire Complex.

The wildland dozer was a concept that we developed and delivered to the department administration and, eventually, the City's administration. The equipment for the program was obtained through surplus equipment programs from the

military or state government at no cost or a significantly reduced cost. The initial inspection of the dozer was completed and it was determined that we had an engine in the dozer that was recently rebuilt. Potential operators for the dozer project completed their Commercial Driver License (CDL) class. In January of 2016, the department held a Dozer operator class taught by the New Mexico Department of Transportation, who also provided certification for the operators. In addition, a tractor and a low-boy trailer were obtained from surplus equipment programs.

The wildland team did accomplish the goals that were set out for this 2015. This year's goals were:

- To successfully complete the data information transfer from the department to the state online database.
- To have the wildland dozer's initial inspection. It was completed and passed with flying colors.
- Start the training process for the dozer personnel to become operational.
- Start the process to obtain a tractor and low-bed trailer for the dozer.
- Complete any outstanding task book training.
- Budget for the additional personnel protective gear for dozer operators.

The goals for the wildland team for 2016:

- Budget for Personal Protective Equipment for the dozer group.
- Start to look for project work to generate off-season revenue.
- Start task book training for team members.
- Complete the dozer project to include being deployment ready for 2016.



THE MEN & WOMEN OF RRRFR



FF Jeremy Martinez rescues a small family dog after a fire filled the house with smoke.



RRFR members pose with celebrities Dennis Miller and Bill O'Reilly.



Members of A-shift, Station 1 pose with a survivor of a heart attack after his release from the hospital.



Above: DC Bearce and Chief Meek pose with State Fire Marshal John Standefer at the State Fire/EMS Conference.

Far left: FI Brian Bratcher poses with his daughter during the annual open house.

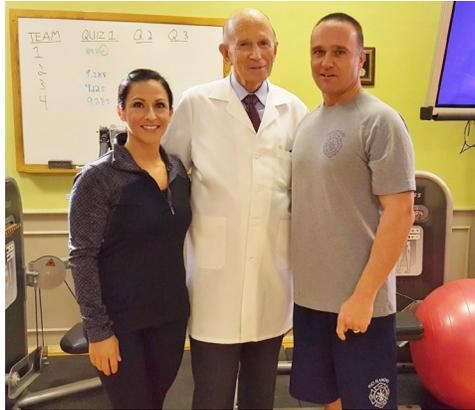
Left: FF Daniel Wild practices his bagpipes with a member of Santa Fe's fire department.

Right: Capt. Daniel Chavez shows off his St. Baldrick's helmet during the event last year.



OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS—2015

- RRFR achieves an ISO rating of 2
- Completion of Station 1 living quarters renovation
- “Peak Hour” rescue placed in service to assist with high call volumes
- First annual RRFR Awards Ceremony held
- RRFR’s Heavy Technical Rescue Team partners with Sandoval County F.D. and Corrales F.D. to form a regional HTRT
- Participated in the Metro Public Safety Day and First Responder Appreciation Day
- Raised \$60,000 for children’s cancer research through the St. Baldrick’s Foundation
- Two fire personnel achieved their certification from the Cooper Institute for firefighter health and fitness
- Battalion Chief Doty achieves his ACE certification for fitness
- Three new rescues placed in service
- One new pumper placed in service
- Project Heart Start trains over 300 citizens in hands-only CPR
- Several dozen pre-teens attend annual Fire Camp
- RRFR holds the 10th Annual Open House and Halloween Costume Contest
- Bike EMS class hosted by RRFR
- Several RRFR firefighters help to raise funds for the Benner Family during a telethon at KOB TV
- Station 3 on A-shift help build a wheelchair ramp for a disabled firefighter
- RRFR personnel raised money for Cowboys for Cancer with the annual sale of pink t-shirts for breast cancer research and awareness
- An extensive wilderness search and rescue class held for the regional HTRT



FI Jessica Duron-Martinez and Capt. Adam Arrossa pose with Dr. Cooper during their training in Dallas.



FF Neal Naranjo teaches CPR to citizens during the annual Project Heart Start.



FF Carlos Trujillo, along with other members of RRFR and Albuquerque Fire Departments, assist in building a wheelchair ramp for a retired firefighter.

- RRFR firefighters raise \$9,800 for MDA during the fill the boot campaign
- RRFR’s Facebook hits 2,500 followers
- RRFR hosts CISM training for the regional Peer Support Team
- RRFR personnel attend a resuscitation conference
- After a New Orleans F.D. captain died in NM while here on training, RRFR assisted in providing escort for his body
- Firefighters help to serve Thanksgiving lunch to kids at UNMH
- HTRT members train with the 64th CST and other agencies
- The Wildland Dozer program gets underway
- RRFR hosts the EMS Consortium physician training
- The families of RRFR personnel attend the first annual Family Day at the Firehouse
- All RRFR personnel completed their occupational health exam
- Honored those lost on 9/11 during annual memorial ceremony
- Attended Firefighter Day at the State Fair
- Two fire personnel attend confined space instructor course and teach curriculum to HTRT
- Firefighters read to kids at various schools
- RRFR helps celebrate the successful battle against cancer for two Rio Rancho kids
- Five personnel attend the “Modern Fire Attack” class
- DC Bearce receives Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation from the Commission on Public Safety Excellence

Looking to the Future By Deputy Chief Paul Bearce

Rio Rancho Fire Rescue is proud to be on the front-lines of providing fire and EMS response to our community. We are also proud to be a progressive fire department, looked upon by other departments throughout the region for our innovative programs and policies.

Firefighting is a mentally and physically demanding profession. The demands of the job can take their toll on the mind and body of a firefighter over the tenure of their career. RRFR worked hard to find the means to help protect the people who provide life and property saving services to the community. An effective and comprehensive behavioral health program and a fit-for-duty standard were high on the planning agenda.

Throughout 2015, RRFR's leadership and fire personnel worked closely to develop a new behavioral health program to provide valuable counseling and peer support services to first responders (*see story on next page*). In addition, the program is being developed to expand throughout the metropolitan area and include our brothers and sisters in law enforcement.



The agreement between the City of Rio Rancho and the Local International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), often referred to as the union contract, was renegotiated during 2015. Both the labor and management sides worked in conjunction to develop an effective and cooperative agreement on many issues. One of the issues, which was a high priority for both sides, was to create an effective and sustainable fit-for-duty standard.

The fit-for-duty standard approaches the health and safety of firefighters from a multi-tiered approach. Not only is the program designed to address the mental well being of fire personnel, but also the health and wellness of our crews through annual medical evaluations and a strong fitness program.

These two programs are both innovative and serve as models for other departments. We are proud to provide these services to RRFR's firefighters and to help other departments develop similar programs.

In addition to furthering these programs,

RRFR also plans to accomplish the following in 2016:

- Develop a paramedic supervisor position to assist with our FDCares program, administer the occupational medicine program, and provide advanced life support assistance.
- Implement a new physical fitness standard for new cadets.
- Install new diesel exhaust filtration systems on all diesel apparatus to provide for a safer environment for the public and our personnel.
- Continue to foster cooperation and team building with Sandoval County and Corrales fire departments for our Heavy Technical Rescue Team.
- Apply for grants and special funding opportunities to help finance our programs and equipment.
- Develop a more efficient and effective apparatus maintenance and driver education program to help with vehicle reliability/longevity and cost.
- Update and review all of our Policies and Standard Operating Guidelines to better reflect our day-to-day operations.

Occ/Med Program Focuses on Firefighter Health By Admin PM Karl Doering

In 2015 Occupational Medicine physicals were made a mandatory part of the Fit for Duty program. A full-year appointment schedule was created and distributed to all personnel, so MOS were able to plan for the month in which their physical exam was scheduled. At year's end, 100% of personnel who elected to obtain their mandatory physical in house had completed their exams. 98% of all personnel had completed physicals in contrast to 2014 during which only 72% of personnel completed physicals. There were several minor scheduling issues, with personnel unable to make their appointments due to scheduled time off or training. Two scheduled make-up days in May and September allowed these physicals to be completed.

In July, 2015 at the start of the fiscal year, we began testing all

personnel for communicable diseases including Hepatitis A, B, C, HIV, Varicella, and Measles as recommended by the NFPA. By the end of the year, 50% of personnel had been tested in order to verify immunity from previous vaccinations, establish baseline status for diseases for which there is no vaccination, and determine which vaccinations are still needed. The remaining personnel will be tested at the time of their scheduled physicals in 2016.

Future plans for the Occupational Medicine program include sending on-duty personnel for needed vaccinations utilizing a recently established contract with Albertsons pharmacy and completing the process of digitizing all Occupational Medicine Patient Care Records (PCRs), which was started in 2014.

“We’ve Got Your Back”

New Peer Support Team Aims to Help Firefighters Deal With Stress

By Deputy Chief Paul Bearce

Firefighters are no different than anyone else when it comes to the stresses of life. Relationships, kids, finances, and other daily stressors affect our lives in the same way as everyone else. However, compounding this stress at home is the stress of being on the front-lines to witness the trauma and emotions associated with the incidents in which we respond. This increased incident stress can lead to signs of mental strain, post traumatic and acute stress disorders, or even suicide. In an effort to address these issues before they become invasive in the lives of firefighters, RRRF has begun a new program.

The RRRF Peer Support Team and Behavioral Health Program has been implemented and is available to all MOS and their families. A brochure explaining the program was produced and is available for all firefighters who may be looking for resources.

The goal of the program is to provide a multi-level approach to keep all of our members healthy and happy throughout their career. Here is a general breakdown of the components the program will have when it is fully developed:

First Level of Support After Action Review

This part of the program is still in the development phase; however, it will involve the training of Captains to perform basic after-incident debriefs and be able to recognize their staff who may be having difficulties at home or at work, and then directing the MOS to the proper resources. All Captains will receive basic training in performing these functions. This function should be accomplished after every call, even those considered routine.

Second Level of Support Peer Support Team (PST)

The PST is comprised of firefighters and Captains in our department who have received training in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). We are currently looking at more training for these individuals, but they have the first-level of basic training. The approach for PST members is to have informal one-on-



one conversations with MOS who may be having difficulties.

We also have the ability to bring in PST members from our neighboring departments to assist. Responders from other neighboring agencies, including Albuquerque Fire Department, Bernalillo County F.D., and Albuquerque Ambulance, have joined



forces to develop a Metro Peer Support Team to create a regional approach to this problem. It is anticipated that, eventually, this regional team will include resources for our brothers and sisters in law enforcement.

This program is confidential; any conversations are kept between the individuals, unless there is something discussed that falls under a required reportable (threat of harm to self and/or others, etc.).

Third Level of Support Chaplain Corps

The Department’s chaplains also receive training in CISM and are available to MOS and their families to discuss any issues they may be having. Again, this program is confidential. Anyone who accesses the chaplains have the option to approach issues with faith-based elements (i.e. prayer or scripture reading). All chaplains are aware that not everyone wants this type of approach and are willing to be there for support and guidance as needed for our personnel.

Top Tier of Support First-responder based EAP

The City/Department has contracted with Public Safety Psychology Associates to provide all Fire and Police personnel with a first-responder-based Employee Assistance Program. Dr. Troy Rodgers and his associates are heavily involved in

providing CISM and EAP services to many fire and law enforcement agencies in the metro area. His group has been around for many years and, most recently, he has hired a retired FDNY firefighter to assist in their outreach to firefighters. There is no longer a cap on the number of EAP visits that MOS need to resolve issues. Services are available for MOS and their immediate family members and are not limited to incident-related stress. We are excited to

have Dr. Rodgers involved in our new program.

This multi-tiered approach addresses the issue that “one size does not fit all.” There are numerous resources available to RRRF firefighters and their families. The goal of the program is to break down the cultural barriers within the fire service and allow all members the freedom to ask for help.



'ON THE JOB'



Left: FF Rob Mitchell and FF Adam Getty provide EMS coverage to the annual Patriot Triathlon at the Aquatics Center.



Above: FF Neal Naranjo ascends a ladder at a house fire in Northern Meadows.

RIO RANCHO FIRE FAMILIES & FIREFIGHTER WIVES *BY JC GARCIA*

The Rio Rancho Fire Families group continues to reach out to the family and friends of Rio Rancho fire personnel. Throughout the year, the group sponsored several social and educational events to begin to develop relationships and a positive support network among the people who are important to the lives of our firefighters.

The goal of the RRF is to continue to find opportunities to support the family members who support the firefighters. This network will aim at helping families in times of need, when incidents occur while firefighters are on shift, and to help each other with emotional support and a kind ear. In 2015, we were invited by the Rio Rancho Police Wives to help organize and be a part of the 1st annual First Responders Appreciation Day. We had a big turn out and the RRF Wives donated a considerable amount of the money we earned from the sale of baked goods to TEN82 to help First Responders and their families in need. Hopefully this event will be bigger and better in the years to come. We look forward to working with the Police wives again.

We also hosted a BBQ for our Fire Families and had some very good key speakers to help with everyday marriage concerns as



well as some outlets to help with counseling for our families that the City/Department offers.

Big news this year for our RRWIVES Group—we applied for and received our 501C3 and are now a non-profit organization. We are hoping to expand our horizons as far as helping in our community and around the county with our charitable donations.

Upcoming events are planned in 2016, which will help strengthen our organization and develop long-term relationships. This year, at St. Baldrick's, we plan to have a "Blessing of The Badges" for any first responders who would like for their shields/badges to be blessed by our own chaplains. We are hoping this will be an event we can build on every year.

2016 promises to be a productive and positive year for our Rio Rancho Families. Thank you for your support and we look forward to another year of growth.

For more information about Rio Rancho Fire Families, please contact JC Garcia at 505-239-6639 or email at jcordovagarcia@yahoo.com.

UNION LETTER BY EXECUTIVE BOARD—IAFF LOCAL 4877

Rio Rancho Firefighters Association had a successful 2015, thanks to the efforts and vigilance of our members. Association members going above and beyond expectation has been a constant theme throughout the year and not enough appreciation can be expressed. Our Association is respected throughout the area; we work diligently with our administration, city council, and the other city unions.

IAFF Local 4877 believes in the importance of giving back to our community. Some events we participated in 2015:

- Donating to members in appreciation for service above and beyond the call of duty

- Participation in St. Baldrick's
- Softball tournament in honor of fallen Officer Anthony Haase
- Donation to Police Unity Tour for fallen officers
- Voluntary MDA participation meet and exceeded goals
- Donation to the 4H Amigos who work with the youth in Sandoval County
- Belt buckle sponsorship for the 2015 Sandoval County Fair

IAFF Local 4877 has worked tirelessly with its members and RRFD administration to implement changes to benefit its members:

- Contract negotiations, which passed with an amazing 83% approval
- Continued member support through the Peer Support Team development and implementation
- Members physical/mental wellbeing concerns continue to be addressed through the Fit for Duty Assessment Program

We would like to thank our members for making this another exceptional year. As a union, we would like to make a continued commitment to support our members. Our use of appropriate chain of command, through the union and department, promotes good communication.

Good communication strengthens our relationships with administration and collective bargaining. Strengthened bonds between members and administration ensures we have the resources needed for our day-to-day operations and our long term commitments with the City. With appropriate use of our resources, we can ensure both the physical and mental wellbeing of our members. As 2016 begins, we continue to work with our members and community to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the IAFF Local 4877 members.

