



# MERIDIAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2024 Annual Report



Compassion | Professionalism | Honesty | Ownership | Trust





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2024

# A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



As we close out 2024, it is my honor to share the remarkable progress and achievements of the Meridian Fire Department this year. This has been a period of growth, innovation, and commitment to excellence, made possible by our team's dedication, our community's support, and our elected officials' trust.

## Key Accomplishments in 2024

- 1. Station Alerting Enhancements:** This year, we implemented significant upgrades to our station alerting systems, with the long-term goal of reducing response times and improving coordination. These enhancements will ensure enhanced notification processes and better service for the residents of Meridian during emergencies.
- 2. Opticom Upgrades:** The department successfully upgraded the Opticom system, improving traffic signal preemption for emergency vehicles. This advancement allows us to navigate through city streets more efficiently, ensuring timely responses and enhancing the safety of our crews and the public.
- 3. CPSE Accreditation:** We are proud to announce that in 2024 the Meridian Fire Department became the first and only accredited fire agency in the state of Idaho through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) under the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). This prestigious accreditation recognizes our dedication to continuous improvement and commitment to providing the highest standard of service.

It is a profound honor to serve as your Fire Chief. These achievements are only a small sample of our accomplishments in 2024. Please read the following pages to learn more about the tremendous efforts that have been made over the past year. In short, these pages reflect the unwavering dedication of our team of professionals who consistently rise to meet challenges and strive for excellence. None of this would be possible without our community's support and the trust our elected officials placed in us.

Together, we have set the bar high for the fire service in Idaho and across the nation. As we look forward to 2025, we remain steadfast in our mission to protect and serve the citizens of Meridian with honor, professionalism, and compassion, ownership and trust. Thank you for your continued support. We are proud to serve you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kris Blume'.

**KRIS BLUME**

8

FIRE STATIONS

22

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

113

FIREFIGHTERS



**CITY OF MERIDIAN**  
**Mayor**  
 Robert Simison  
**City Council Members**  
 Brian Whitlock, Liz Strader, Doug Taylor, John Overton, Anne Little Roberts & Luke Cavener

Citizens of Meridian

**Meridian Rural Fire District Commissioners**  
 Marvin Ward, Randy Howell, & Derrick Shannon

**Fire Chief**  
 Kris Blume

**Public Safety Information Officer**  
 Jordan Robinson

**Administration**  
 Deputy Chief  
 Charlie Butterfield

**Division Chief Logistics**  
 Josh Janssen

**Logistics Captain**  
 Brad DeCastro

**Division Chief Health & Safety**  
 Michael Warmuth

**Community Risk Reduction Division Manager**  
 Carly Shears

**Community Risk Reduction Specialist II**  
 Brad Hunt

**Community Risk Reduction Specialist I**

**Prevention**  
 Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal  
 Steven Taulbee

**Prevention Captains**  
 John Overton  
 Brandon Medica  
 Mike Gould

**Operations**  
 Deputy Chief  
 Jordan Reese

**Division Chief Training**  
 Brady George

**Training Captains**  
 Lance Smith  
 Jeremy Ditlove

**Division Chief EMS**  
 JD Hendrick III

**EMS Captain**  
 Corey Patocka

**Battalion Chiefs**  
 Kristian Forbey-A Shift  
 Tyler Rountree-B Shift  
 Ken Wellborn-C Shift

**Administrative Services**  
 Division Manager  
 Braidy Ross

**Administrative Coordinator**  
 Rilee Harrold

**Administrative Assistant II**  
 Brittany Egurrola

**Administrative Assistant I**  
 Kari Irby

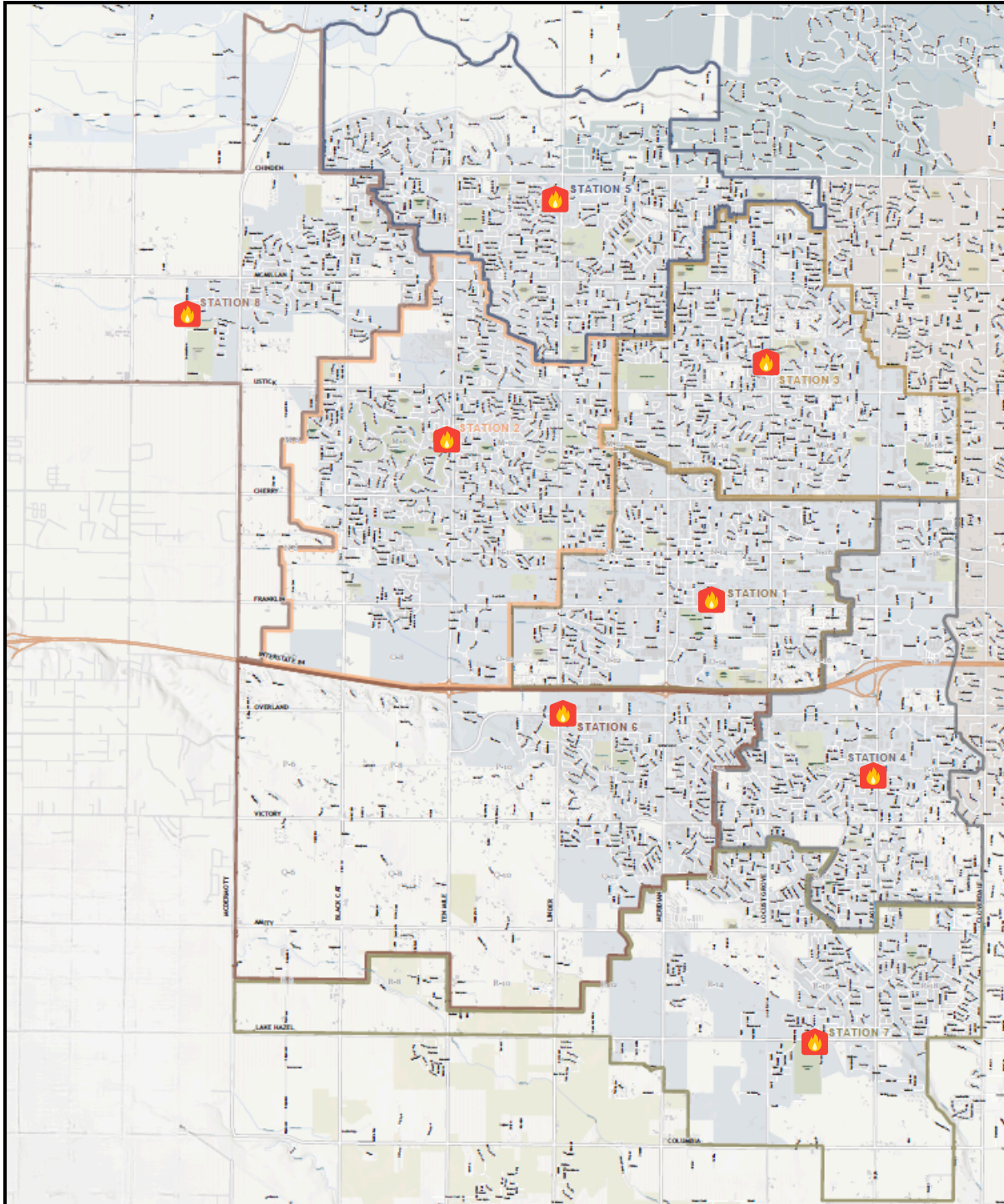
**A Shift**  
 Captains  
 Engineers  
 Firefighters

**B Shift**  
 Captains  
 Engineers  
 Firefighters

**C Shift**  
 Captains  
 Engineers  
 Firefighters



# FIRE STATION LOCATIONS



**Station #1**  
540 E Franklin Rd.  
Meridian, ID 83642

**Station #2**  
2401 N Ten Mile Rd.  
Meridian, ID 83646

**Station #3**  
3545 N Locust Grove Rd.  
Meridian, ID 83646

**Station #4**  
2515 S Eagle Rd.  
Meridian, ID 83642

**Station #5**  
6001 N Linder Rd.  
Meridian, ID 83642

**Station #6**  
1435 W Overland Rd.  
Meridian, ID 83642

**Station #7**  
6343 S Recreation Ave.  
Meridian, ID 83646

**Station #8**  
4250 N Owyhee Storm Ave.  
Meridian, ID 83646

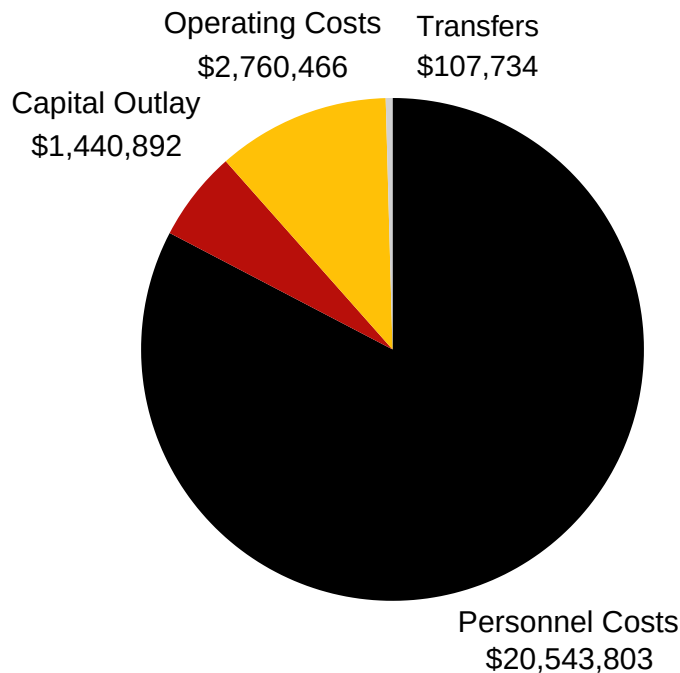
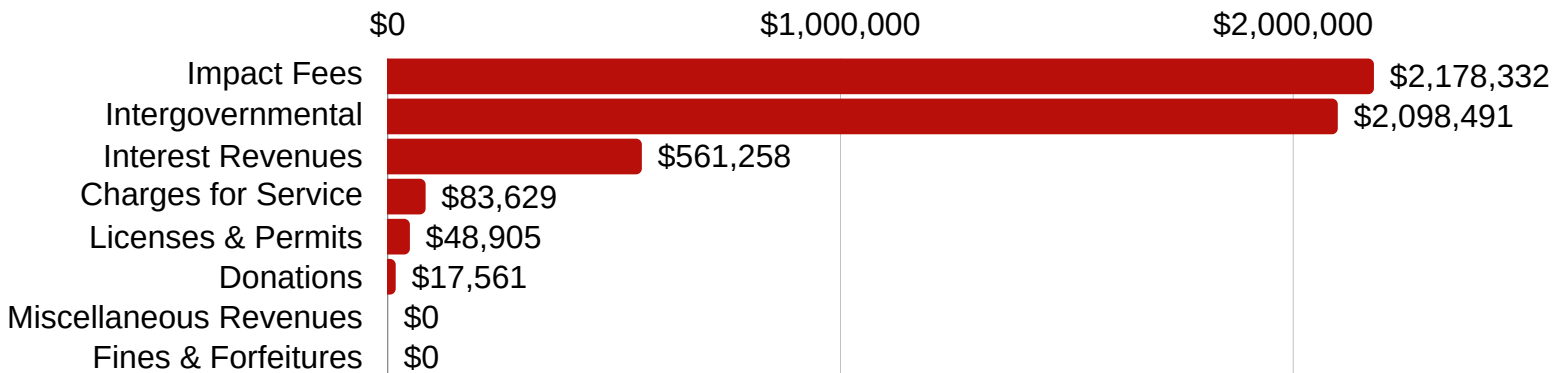
# FINANCIAL REPORT

In fiscal year 2024 we saw an increase to our budget due to the carry-forward costs for the completion of Stations 7 and 8 along with the hiring of 13 new firefighters.

Revenue received was largely due to impact fees and funds received from the Meridian Rural Fire District.

Meridian Fire's continued focus is to provide the highest level of service for the citizens of Meridian while keeping costs as low as possible. We would like to thank all members of the Department that contributed to the preparation of the 2024 budget including the City's Finance Department, the Mayor, our City Council and our Rural Fire Protection District Commissioners.

<b>FY24 EXPENSES</b>	<b>FY24 REVENUES</b>
\$24,852,894	\$4,995,117



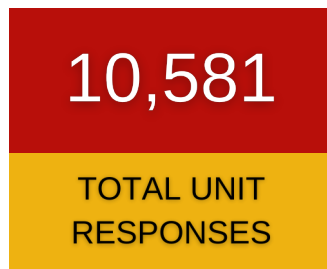
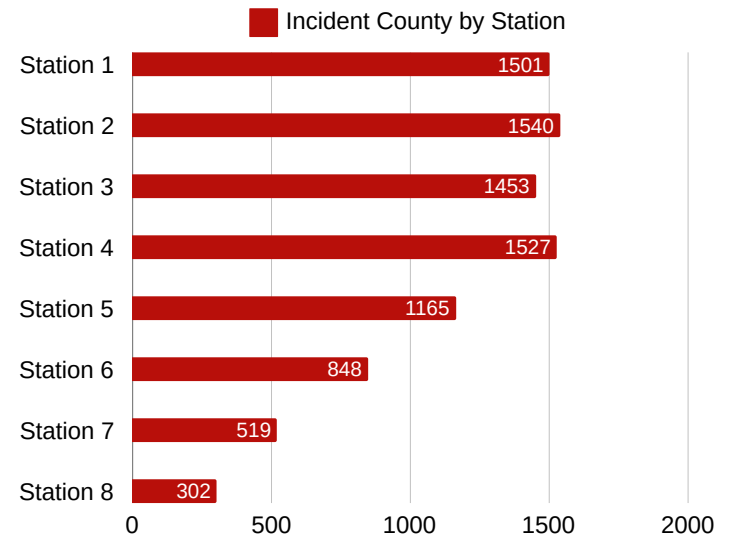
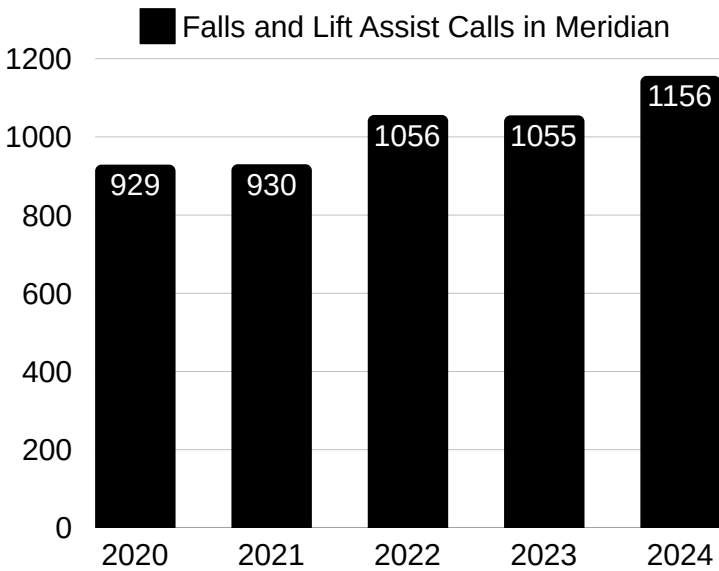
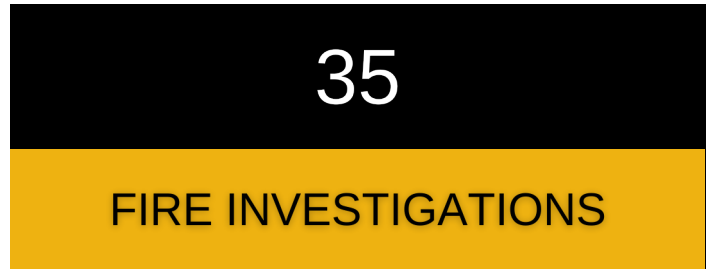
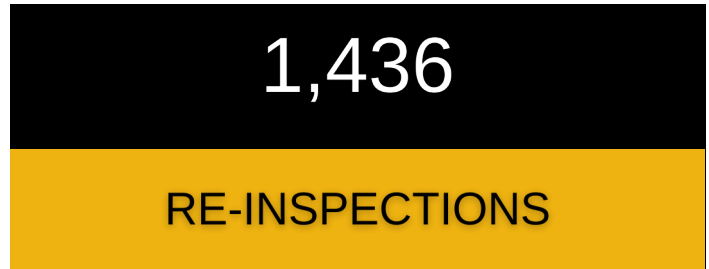


# DEPARTMENT STATS

Meridian Fire has observed a steady increase in the number of our units responding to identified incidents. In 2024, we recorded 10,582 unit responses to a total of 8,855 incidents, with 77% of these incidents related to EMS.

Stations 1, 2, and 4 continue to be our busiest locations. With the recent addition of Stations 7 and 8, our crews can stay within their designated response districts more often, resulting in a higher number of incidents handled by our busiest stations in 2024.

Additionally, our Prevention Division is experiencing growth in the overall number of inspections and fire investigations as our community expands.



# BRYX FIRE STATION ALERTING SYSTEM

In an effort to enhance emergency response efficiency, Ada County has invested in the Bryx Fire Station Alerting System, a state-of-the-art Early Notification System. Integrated with the Bryx Mobile App, this system delivers immediate alerts, full station automation, and significant improvements in response times.

The Bryx platform is a comprehensive, fully integrated solution designed to support emergency responders. By leveraging commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) technologies and secure cloud storage platforms, Bryx ensures cost-effectiveness, reliability, and data security.

The seamless integration of the Bryx Mobile App with the Fire Station Alerting System equips first responders with rich, real-time information and direct communication tools, optimizing their ability to act swiftly and effectively. Studies have demonstrated that the implementation of these systems can reduce emergency response times by up to 90 seconds.

Beyond technological advancements, Bryx is backed by a dedicated team of engineers, technology specialists, and experienced first responders, including firefighters and EMTs. This team is deeply committed to understanding public safety needs, empowering first responders, and improving emergency outcomes on a global scale.

When fully implemented, Bryx will transform emergency response operations in the City of Meridian. This system will enhance efficiency and significantly support our efforts to deliver the highest quality fire department services to our community. The estimated completion date is anticipated to be February 2025.





# OPTICOM ENHANCEMENT



Opticom is an innovative traffic control system designed to help fire trucks, police cars, and other emergency vehicles navigate urban traffic efficiently. This system minimizes delays at intersections and ensures quick responses to critical situations. In 2024, we collaborated with ACHD to enhance the Opticom system at traffic lights in the City of Meridian.

By the end of 2024, 66 out of 93 intersections have been installed, tested, and are operating as intended. The new Opticom system has been successfully implemented in all front-line vehicles and is functioning properly. Early statistics indicate that the upgraded system has the potential to reduce delays at intersections by up to 25% and decrease the risk of collisions involving emergency vehicles by as much as 70%.

With the completion of all intersections and the final installation on MFD emergency apparatus, MFD anticipates noticeable improvements in response times in 2025.

# ACCREDITATION

In early 2024, the Meridian Fire Department became the first fire department in the State of Idaho to achieve Accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). This achievement was the culmination of several years of work by internal and external stakeholders. This effort included the completion of a three-year strategic plan, the development and completion of a standards of cover/community risk assessment document and completion of a self-assessment document as outlined by the Center for Public Safety Excellence. An external peer assessment team of fire service subject matter experts visited the Meridian Fire Department in November of 2023 to conduct an on-site review of the fire department to validate and verify all administrative and operational functions of the department. This accreditation represents the current and on-going efforts of the Meridian Fire Department in pursuing excellence in fire service industry best practices and standards.

Accreditation promotes excellence and encourages quality improvement leading to higher service delivery levels for citizens. The process enables fire and emergency medical services agencies to:

- Assure the public and colleagues that they have definite missions and objectives that are appropriate for the jurisdictions they serve
- Provide a detailed evaluation of the services provided to the community
- Identify areas of strength and weakness within the Department
- Create methods or systems for addressing deficiencies while building organizational success
- Encourage professional growth for both the Department and its personnel
- Create a mechanism for developing strategic and program action plans
- Provide a forum for the communication of organizational priorities
- Foster national recognition by the public and colleagues





# HEALTH & SAFETY

The Division of Health and Safety is dedicated to promoting the well-being of all personnel through ongoing enhancements in safety practices, risk mitigation, and health initiatives. This year, we made notable strides in enhancing the health, safety, and welfare of our department members. Through strategic initiatives and collaborative partnerships, along with a sustained emphasis on prevention and risk reduction, we have fortified our safety culture and offered essential resources to protect our personnel. We are committed to furthering these initiatives in the coming year to ensure the ongoing success of our health and safety programs. Some of the key activities and accomplishments include, but are not limited to:



- **New PPE Implementation for Firefighter Health:** Introduced particulate-blocking hoods as part of our ongoing commitment to firefighter health. These new personal protective equipment (PPE) items significantly reduce firefighters' exposure to harmful carcinogens and toxic particles, such as smoke and fire debris, by filtering out harmful particulates.
- **PPE, Cleaning, and Respiratory Protection:** Conducted internal appraisals of the PPE, PPE cleaning, and respiratory protection programs. Evaluations used to assess the effectiveness of each program, ensuring that they meet their objectives and are being implemented properly.
- **Near Miss Reporting Program:** Following CPSE recommendations, we implemented an internal Near Miss Reporting Program. This program aims to identify potential hazards and prevent future accidents.
- **Partnership with Firefighter Cancer Cohort Study (FFCCS):** Partnered with the Firefighter Cancer Cohort Study (FFCCS) to gather crucial health data on cancer-related exposures in firefighters.
- **Joint Labor Management Health and Safety Committee:** Launched the Joint Labor Management Health and Safety Committee which serves as a proactive platform to identify, assess, and address potential hazards, review incidents, and recommend improvements to equipment, procedures, and training.
- **Firefighter Health & Safety Trainings & Conferences:** Organized the regional Air Coalition Conference, hosted a nationwide virtual luncheon in collaboration with the Fire Department Safety Officers Association, and conducted a three-day wellness series in partnership with the Emergency Health Responders Clinic.

# COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is an ongoing process used to identify, prioritize and address local risks. This year, our CRR team has dedicated its efforts toward recognizing community hazards, developing programs, and strengthening partnerships to effectively tackle these challenges.

- Our Smoke Alarm Assistance Program continues to be highly utilized by the community. The Meridian Fire Department has collaborated with both the Red Cross and Elite Restoration to conduct smoke alarm sweeps and to help with routine battery changes.
- We will continue to seek out creative ways and partnerships in providing this service to the community without impeding emergency response operations.
- We welcomed Faces of Hope to the Meridian Community, creating an active partnership with them in providing training to help support our Car Seat Check Program.
- This year marked our inaugural participation in the West Ada School District's Health Fair, where we offered cardiac screenings to student athletes in collaboration with Who We Play For. These screenings offer an added level of prevention and awareness to Sudden Cardiac Arrest among the student athlete demographic in Meridian.
- In celebration of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we partnered with Saint Alphonsus to bring their mobile mammogram unit to Public Safety Day and City Hall, increasing accessibility for the community. Additionally, we collaborated on a breast cancer awareness t-shirt design, with proceeds benefiting their breast cancer program.





# 13 NEW PROBATIONARY FIREFIGHTERS ADDITIONAL 10 RECRUITS TO BEGIN 2025



In 2024, the Meridian Fire Department was awarded eight (8) million dollars from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This money will be utilized to hire and onboard eighteen (18) new recruit firefighters, allowing the department to move to a four (4) person engine staffing model.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants (SAFER) was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities. The Meridian Fire Department was one of three hundred (300) award recipients out of an applicant pool of three thousand (3,000). This is the largest SAFER grant ever awarded in the State of Idaho.

Under the existing three person staffing model, engines arriving to house fires must wait until a second engine arrives in order to begin search and rescue. Adding the fourth person will allow Meridian Fire Department to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by the NFPA (NFPA 1710 and/or NFPA 1720).

So far, 13 members have been hired. The department plans to hire an additional 10 firefighters (5 for SAFER grant, and 5 to fill department vacancies) in early 2025.





## STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT FOR 2025-2028

As the current Strategic Plan for the department approaches its conclusion in 2024, we have begun crafting a new strategic plan for the period of 2025-2027. Given the ongoing and consistent changes within our community, we've opted for a three-year planning cycle to ensure we can adapt to the evolving needs of our community. We gathered 25 individuals from the department, representing a majority of our ranks and positions. Our strategic initiatives and goals are centered around fostering advancement and leadership, enhancing member support, engaging stakeholders, optimizing facilities and equipment, and ensuring operational capacity. The new strategic plan for the department is available on our website.



## DARKHORSE ANALYTICS

In 2024, the Meridian Fire Department subscribed to Darkhorse Emergency, an analytic software company that specializes in data analytics for emergency services performance. After two months of custom configuration, the department can now review and analyze response and performance metrics in a dynamic environment. The department now has the ability to review trends related to call types and response performance outputs. This ability will allow for improvements to be made on operational performance and improve outcomes to emergency responses. Furthermore, Darkhorse Emergency has predictive analytical abilities which provides for a geographic analysis of anticipated future call volume to aid in the identification of future fire station locations.



# AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS



## **30 Years of Service**

Brian Zimmerman

## **15 Years of Service**

Jerin Jones

## **10 Years of Service**

Bradley Warner

## **5 Years of Service**

Conrad Burnap, Jonathan Hoffman, Kory Simmons, Jill Targos, Nicholas Vernon, Jordan Williams

## **New Hires**

Mouhsine Boukharsa, Casey Cope, Samson Doan, Roy Egizi, Cameron Hoitt, Ryan Jester, Matthew Keller, Nicholas Kretzmann, Kyle Lundgren, Tyler Souza, Jared Thackery, Joey Verhaegh, Lance Wittenbrock

## **New Admin**

Rilee Harrold, Bradley Hunt, Kari Irby, Josh Janssen, Carly Shears, Steven Taulbee, Jordan Robinson

## **Retirements**

Joe Bongiorno - 20 years of service  
Kenny Bowers - 52 years of service



## **Distinguished Service Award**

Bill Schuler, Dylan Anderson, Coit Souza, Lance Smith, Mike Zumwalt, Kristian Forbey, Steve Hayes, Brock Clapp, Ben Sletmoe, Tyler Rountree, Anja Sundali

## **Unit Citation Award**

Brock Clapp, Adam Johnston, Steve Hayes, Chase Christopher, Jared Carlisle, Nick Piccono, Ben Sletmoe, Jordan Reese, Derek Nelson, Nick Piccono, Brycyn Campbell, Conrad Burnap, Scott Warren,

## **Chief's Award of Excellence**

Chase Christopher, Anja Sundali

## **Suppression Employee of the Year**

Tyler Bryner

## **Non-Suppression Employee of the Year**

Braidy Ross

## **Promotions**

Logistics Captain - Brad DeCastro  
Prevention Captain - Mike Gould





