



HURRICANE VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT





MESSAGE FROM CHIEF DECKER

I am honored to present the 2023 annual report for the Hurricane Valley Fire District. A look back at 2023 quickly fills me with a sense of pride, seeing all the accomplishments that have taken place. Our District completed projects big and small, from a shift schedule change to a complete overhaul of personnel policies.

We responded to 5,118 calls for service in 2023, which equates to an increase of 7% compared to 2022 and an increase of 46% compared to 2019. The operations of the District would not be possible without great responders who dedicate themselves to the community and the mission of our agency. Throughout 2023 we had many responders expand their education and abilities. For example, five members in 2023 obtained their paramedic certifications. These accomplishments, along with all other accomplishments of our firefighters, stand as a testament to the commitment our responders have to our communities.

2023 was a solid year of improvement for our District, and we look forward to serving the community for years to come. With former Chief Kuhlmann retiring from his position in the second quarter of 2023, our organization adapted and continued to provide high quality care, training, prevention, and education to the public. My goal is to continue fostering an environment that (1) empowers employees to improve their training, and (2) allows the District to acquire and use equipment needed to provide quality and timely emergency services for years to come.

As always, we appreciate the great assistance, coordination, and leadership found throughout the communities we serve. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Decker'.

Joseph Decker
Interim Fire Chief

MISSION STATEMENT

PREVENT, PREPARE FOR, AND PROVIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSES IN A RESPECTFUL, PROFESSIONAL MANNER.

Hurricane Valley Fire District (HVF) provides emergency medical and fire services to eastern Washington County, encompassing over 600 square miles. Our medics and firefighters are trained professionals with extensive experience, which is needed to provide the broad range of emergency services for our residents and the millions of visitors that come here each year.

Our Fire Marshal's Office conducts fire safety inspections for our entire District, which promotes safety, uniformity, and predictability for our residents. Over 1,900 inspections were conducted in 2023.

We are home to Zion National Park, Redbull Rampage, state parks, Ironman World Championships, Matt's OFF-ROAD RECOVERY Games, world-class golf courses, and some of the best hiking and mountain biking trails in the United States.

NOTABLE EVENTS

Our firefighters were busy during 2023, responding to over 5,100 calls. Although all calls are important, the following are a few notable events that highlight our service.

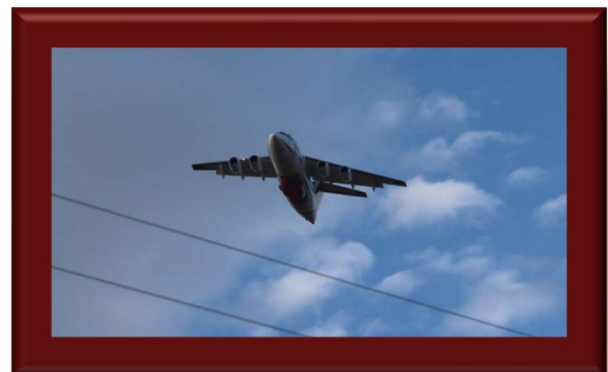
Dixie Springs Wildfire

A man-made wildfire erupted near Dixie Springs in June of 2023, threatening neighborhoods nearby.



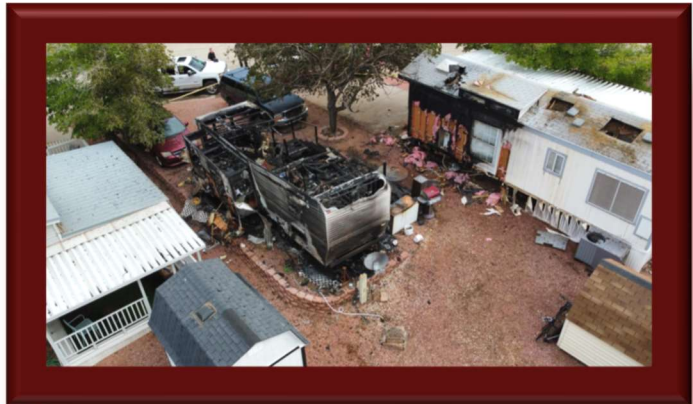
The wildfire moved rapidly, fueled primarily by high winds and cheat grass. However, the rapid response by Hurricane Valley Fire (along with other agencies) help minimize its potential for harm.

The fire crews, assisted with air support, were able to steer the fire away from homes and other structures, even though the fire continued for multiple days and consumed over 600 acres.



Mobile Home Fire

Early in the morning on August 15 (just before 1:00 am), Hurricane Valley Fire was dispatched to a mobile home fire. When the fire started, a mother and her four children were inside. But because of the brave efforts of the mother, all occupants survived, even though some suffered significant injuries. When the firefighters arrived, the home was already engulfed in flames and causing damage to nearby modular homes. The rapid response and skill of the firefighters saved the nearby homes (both only about 15 feet away).

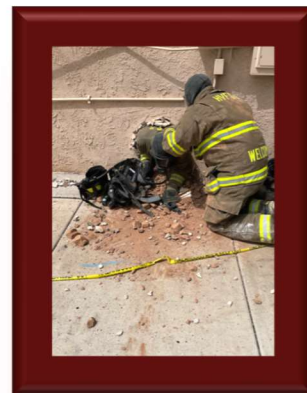


Structure Training



Hurricane City donated a 3-unit commercial building and a home to HVF for training (both buildings were going to be demolished). Over the span of three weeks, all crews were able to use the buildings for training. Some of the training included firefighter rescue, incident command, pumping operations, nozzle placement, hose management, vertical and horizontal ventilation, wall breach, self-rescue, ground ladders, and roof reports (accurate

roof reports are critical for fighting fires and keeping firefighters safe). In total there were over 160 hours of training using these structures. We sincerely appreciate Hurricane City for this rare opportunity.

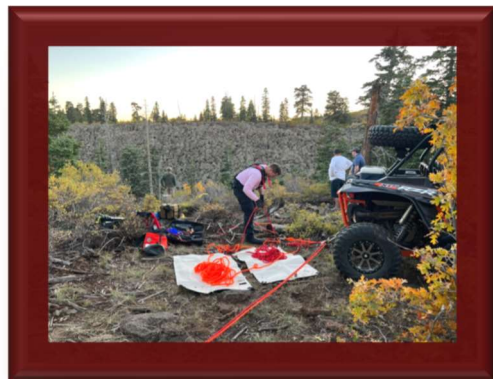


Zion National Park



On October 7, 2023, Hurricane Valley Fire assisted Zion National Park with the rescue of an individual that had fallen about 50 feet off a cliff. This rescue required skills in multiple disciplines.

The medics rapidly descended with ropes to reach the patient, where immediate medical care was provided.



While the patient was being stabilized, other firefighters set up a hoist system to safely bring the patient back up the cliff.



The patient was then transferred to a medical helicopter and flown to the hospital for further medical care.



Animal Rescues

Firefighters take an oath to protect life and property. They are known to rescue pets like dogs, cats, and birds. Rescuing pets also presents opportunities for training on equipment and practicing other skills. Here are a couple of pet rescues during 2023.

Bird Rescue

On October 12, a family bird was rescued by Captain Kevin Barlow. The pet was reported lost by the owner, but the firefighters were able to locate the bird high up in a pine tree. Utilizing ladders and other safety equipment, Captain Barlow was able to safely recover the pet and return it to its owner.



Cat Rescue

On December 6, a family kitten (barely six months old) was rescued by Firefighter/EMT Fred Lindhardt Devantier. The kitten was reported as being stuck, high up in a tree, for over 24 hours. The firefighters were able to practice using the ladder truck and other safety equipment to safely rescue the animal. To show his heartfelt appreciation, the owner delivered a brisket for the firefighters to enjoy.

MORE ABOUT US

We are trained professionals engaged to protect, rescue, and serve the residents and visitors within Springdale, Rockville, Virgin, Toquerville, Leeds, Hurricane, LaVerkin, and the unincorporated areas nearby, including Kolob Reservoir. Our service area also includes Sand Hollow State Park, Quail Creek State Park, and large parts of Zion National Park.

POPULATION GROWTH

HVF is in a rapidly growing area. In 2023, the residential population within our District reached approximately 35,000, which is over 7,100 more residents than we had in 2019, just five years ago.

VISITOR INCREASE

Our coverage area has also experienced a significant increase in the number of visitors. In 2023, we had approximately 6,325,000 people visit our communities. That's about 800,000 more visitors than we had in 2019.

VISITOR CARE

Of the emergency medical service calls, approximately 35% are for people that do not live in our area.

CALL VOLUME INCREASE

In 2023, we responded to approximately 5,100 emergency calls. In 2019, we responded to 3,500 calls.

STATIONS

We currently have six active stations:

Station 41 (Hurricane)



Station 42 (Hurricane)





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TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

Our firefighters are trained for a wide variety of emergencies. We employ paramedics and emergency medical technicians, and our firefighters receive training in auto accident extractions, structure fires, wildland fires, and high angle rope rescues, among others.

EQUIPMENT

HVF has some of the most modern, life-saving equipment available for the safety and protection of our residents and visitors. This equipment includes the following:



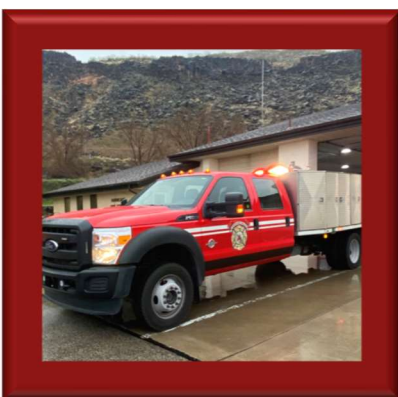
Engines carry water and firefighting equipment (such as axes, hoses, and nozzles). They also carry life-saving equipment and extrication tools.



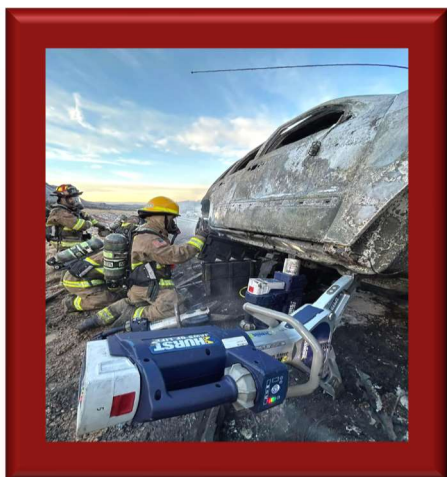
Ladder Trucks are used for hard-to-reach rescues, including those trapped on upper floors. They also provide safer and more efficient ways of fighting fires from above. Life-saving equipment is also on the trucks, much like the equipment on Engines.



Ambulances transport patients for emergency care. They have onboard life-saving medical equipment, and they are staffed with Paramedics and EMT's.



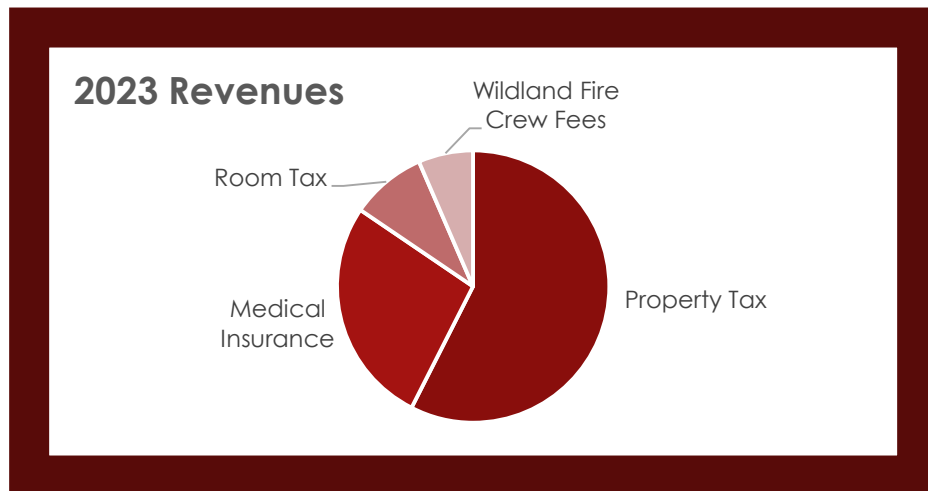
Brush Trucks are designed to fight wildfires. They have higher clearance to go offroad, and they carry tools such as picks, shovels, axes, and chainsaws. They also carry water and fire retardants suitable for stopping the spread of wildfires.



Jaws of Life are used to cut, spread, or push virtually any material to create openings for, and access to, patients.

FINANCIAL STATUS

For 2023, HVF's operational funds were generated primarily from property taxes, room taxes, medical insurance, and wildland fire crew revenues. The graph below provides a visual representation of the proportionate share for each.



VISITOR SHARE

With the unusually large numbers of visitors to our area (as compared to the number residents), HVF believes the visitors should pay their fair share for emergency services. A small sales tax has been suggested because it will allow visitors to pay for emergency services as they spend money in our area. This seems fair if the residents are not taxed on necessities, such as groceries or fuel. However, Utah law did not allow a county our size to charge a sales tax for emergency services.

HVF worked diligently with the Utah Legislature in 2023 to successfully change the law so a sales tax could be used to help fund emergency services in our area. Additional changes to the law are being proposed in 2024. If a sales tax is ultimately adopted, visitors will finally be paying their fair share, and property taxes can be reduced for our residents.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

HVF has independent auditors examine its books every year, to ensure compliance with all applicable rules and laws. 2023's audit will be available in the spring of 2024. The 2021 and 2022 audit reports are available on our website at [hvfssd.org](https://www.hvfssd.org).

Our 2024 Approved Budget is available on our website at <https://www.hvfssd.org/information/page/financial-disclosures>