



# NEWTON FIRE/EMS

Dedicated to a Constant Pursuit of Excellence

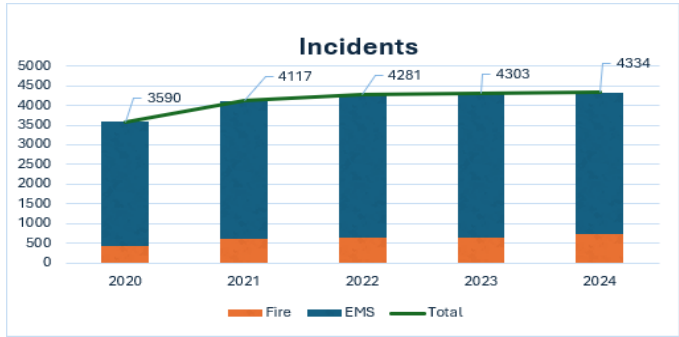


**2024**  
**Annual Report**

# Year in Review

The most common phrase we heard in 2024 was, “This must be the new normal.” What were once occasional events—such as holding rookie training academies, reviewing plans for new building construction, and managing medication shortages—became routine throughout the year. These changes were not entirely unexpected and, in many cases, reflect the cultural shifts and growth within our community. We’ve seen a more dynamic and evolving workforce, rapid residential and industrial expansion, and an increase in service demands. Calls for service not only rose in number but also grew more complex in nature.

In 2024, the department responded to 4,334 calls for service, a slight increase from the previous year. Despite the challenges of an eventful year, our team has risen to the occasion time and time again, continuing to provide the high level of service our community expects and deserves.



The Operations Division, led by Deputy Chief Cory Lehman, experienced a dynamic year marked by significant milestones and accomplishments. Staffing remained a major focus, with four hiring processes completed. The department welcomed Firefighter/Paramedic Camden Grove, Firefighter/EMT Jordan Boston, Firefighter/EMT Isaac Asher, and a new administrative assistant, Jylle Wilson. Additionally, the year included an acting officer promotional process, CMS audit, and the successful acquisition of over \$500,000 in grant funding to replace the aging 1983 water tender. Deputy Chief Lehman led the bid award process and design specifications for this critical project.

Newton Fire/EMS responded to several large, complex incidents creating unique challenges for responders. For example, a May straight-line wind event required extensive response efforts, an over-odorization of the natural gas system resulted in 65 calls over two days to check residences for gas odors, and a large-scale response to a chicken barn fire in November. Also, a vehicle crashed into the Walmart building during a medical emergency resulting in the evacuation of the store due to concerns about structural integrity. Additionally, crews supported community events like the U.S. Adaptive Open at Sand Creek Station, demonstrating their versatility and commitment to public service.

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division, led by Division Chief Andy Harder, had an exceptionally active year due to rapid city growth. The division reviewed 37 new building plans, conducted 24 fire investigations, and performed 502 building fire inspections, identifying 360 fire code violations to improve community safety. In collaboration with various crews, the division led 55 public education events, including fire prevention skits presented to all community grade schools during Fire Prevention Week in October.



Led by Division Chief Zane Hansen, the Training Division celebrated a year of significant accomplishments, ensuring the operational readiness and professional growth of our members. The division, working with the medical director, Dr. Bogner, was instrumental in the research and acquisition of new equipment for performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In total, the department completed 6,536 hours of training in fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous materials, and EMS. Three Rookie Training Academies (RTA) were conducted to prepare new recruits, and the department acquired three EleGARD neuroprotective CPR devices, advancing patient care. Additionally, the division carried out multi-agency rescue drills, advanced hazmat certifications, and expanded EMS continuing education. These efforts underscore the department’s dedication to excellence and continuous improvement, ensuring its readiness in 2025.

Led by Division Chief Joe Martin, the Logistics Division oversees fleet, equipment, and facility management. In terms of fleet and equipment, the division delivered a remounted 2024 Osage Type I ambulance featuring the department’s first graphic redesign in 20 years, now operating as Medic 1. Specifications were completed for a new build Medic 2, scheduled to arrive in spring of 2025. Unfortunately, fire truck maintenance presented challenges throughout the year, with Engine 1 requiring body crack repairs, serviced in Hays, and ongoing mechanical issues with ISL9 Cummins engines leading to repeated repairs of Engines 1 and 2. Facility improvements at Fire/EMS Station 1 included upgrades to the dayroom and office areas, with replacements of old carpet and tile, while Fire/EMS Station 2 underwent replacement of its 20-year-old commercial gas range.

As we reflect on 2024, it’s clear that adaptability, teamwork, and dedication have been central to our success. We are proud of our accomplishments and remain committed to serving our growing community with the highest level of professionalism. Here’s to building on this momentum in 2025!



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## Richardson Serving on Year Long Military Deployment



On August 12<sup>th</sup>, Dillon Richardson officially reported for military duty with Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron Eight at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, VA. The first two weeks of duty were spent doing mostly administrative work. Once completed, Dillon packed up

and drove to Fort Barfoot in Blackstone, VA. While at Barfoot, he completed weapons qualifications. According to Dillon, the qualification process for each weapon was a little different, but they all involved a lot of shooting in both daylight and nighttime settings.

After Dillon's time at Fort Barfoot, he went back to Virginia Beach, completing two weeks of hand-to-hand combat training which consisted of jiu-jitsu, boxing, knife defense, and weapon retention. After that, he got into the meat and potatoes of

training for the different missions his team could be tasked with, including aircraft security, base security, and embarked security. Embarked security is his primary mission which requires them to provide 24/7 security for non-combat vessels that the Navy or Department of Defense uses. Dillon's team provides security while they're out to sea performing their respective missions or ported in various locations around the world.

Dillon is a Tactical Supervisor for an 8-person security team. As the tactical supervisor, it is his responsibility to direct the team to employ different tactics in response to enemy forces. A big part of this responsibility is being one of only two people on the team who have the authority to order weapons release. Weapons release authority is the authority to order a teammate to engage the enemy with his/her weapon.



Continued on page 4

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## Fire Prevention Week 2024

Fire Prevention Week is observed the second week of October dating back to 1925. This year's theme was "Smoke Alarms: Make them work for you." According to the National Fire Protection Agency, Smoke alarms reduce the risk of dying in a home fire by 50%. The Newton Fire/EMS Public Education Team visited elementary schools throughout the week educating children about the importance of having working smoke alarms in the home. This year students were able to learn about escape plans and fire safety by going through the Fire Safety Ninja Course.

In addition to the educational programs at the schools, Domino's Pizza sponsored a free pizza give away. Newton Fire/EMS made random Domino's pizza deliveries and if the smoke



detector in the residence was working, a free pizza coupon was given to the customer. If the smoke alarm wasn't working, the Newton Fire/EMS crew fixed it or installed a new detector.



## Newton Fire/EMS Hosts 14th Annual Retiree Lunch

On October 11th, Newton Fire/EMS hosted the 14th annual Retiree Luncheon at station 3. This is an opportunity for retirees to reminisce the past with one another. It also gave current Newton Fire/EMS members an opportunity to meet and listen to stories from the past.

Retired Newton Fire/EMS Captain Rob Hiebert started the Retiree luncheon back in 2010, and we've continued to hold it every year during fire prevention week. This year's meal was prepared and served by current members and included fried tacos, Mexican rice, refried beans, chips, and salsa.

# Chicken Barn Fire

On November 21, 2024, Newton Fire/EMS along with mutual aid partners from Hesston and Halstead responded to the report of an explosion of a large chicken barn. Upon arrival, crews found an approximately 50' x 300' chicken barn that was badly damaged by a propane explosion with one-third of it on fire. Unfortunately, the fire spread rapidly as fire crews protected a large propane tank that was being impinged upon by flames. Within minutes, the entire structure was fully involved and collapsed a short time thereafter.

At the time of the explosion, one person was in the chicken barn but was not hurt. The barn was, however, at capacity with approximately 20,000 chickens. The chicken barn had just been built within the past six months. The structure and content were a total loss but thankfully, no one was hurt during the incident.



## Members Earn Paramedic Certification

In December of 2024, after 16 months of intense paramedic training, Josh Strotkamp and Garrett McEachern passed the National Board of EMS Registry exam to earn their paramedic certification.



During the program, the students participated in didactic, clinical, and field internship learning. Each phase of the program had to be mastered before moving on to the next. In the didactic section, students attend labs and lectures to gain skill proficiency and book knowledge. In a clinical setting, students spend many hours in the hospital under the supervision of healthcare professionals. The field internship is where students are paired up with an experienced paramedic on real-life calls.



With Josh and Garrett gaining certification, Newton Fire/EMS now has 32 certified paramedics on the department.

## Continued from page 3



After completion of all training, Dillon departed Virginia Beach, arriving in Guam on November 27<sup>th</sup>. After a week-long turnover with the outgoing unit, Dillon's team settled in and began to prepare for their first mission. Until Dillon returns stateside, the team will continue to train and remain ready for missions. Dillon's active duty is scheduled until the Summer of 2025, after which he will return to Newton Fire/EMS this summer.



4,334	Calls for Service
3,592	EMS Calls
742	Fire/Rescue Calls
13,507	People attending PR events
6,536	Training Hours
55	Community Service Events
22	Building Projects in Construction
37	Building Projects Completed
502	Fire Code Inspections
360	Fire Code Violations
24	Fire Investigations

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