



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



50 YEARS STRONG

Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services

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Table of Contents

Message from Fire Chief Jack Draves _____	3
Visions, Mission, Values _____	5
Fire Stations and Apparatus _____	6
Assistant Chief of Administration _____	7
Assistant Chief of Operations _____	8
Emergency Medical Services _____	9
Fire Prevention Office _____	10
Fire and EMS Training _____	11
2020 Department Highlights _____	12



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

JACK DRAVES, FIRE CHIEF



Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services is an all-hazards emergency response agency staffed, trained, equipped and ready to respond to your call for help due to fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical and trauma emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescue incidents, and many other less serious or hazardous incidents. Our Firemedics take great pride in delivering professional, competent, and compassionate services to the residents and businesses of

Strongsville. In fact, Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services will celebrate 50 years of professional, full-time service on June 1, 2021. We have come a long way in those fifty years as we grew and developed with our rapidly expanding community. However, there is still plenty of work to do as we adjust and adapt to the changes in society, in the public safety arena, and even our own community. We are committed to providing the best possible services based on the allocation of human, physical, and financial resources that our residents and businesses expect and deserve.

As we look back on 2020 we were faced with several challenges, COVID-19 at the top of the list. The COVID pandemic created a public health and economic crisis that we neither asked for, nor had any experience in how to deal with it. The whole experience put enormous stress on our operations, our Firemedics and their families, our residents, and our businesses. Yet, as we always do, we found a way to address the challenges and provide quality public safety services. Despite the national, state, county, and city declarations of emergency, the state shut-down orders, and the many public health restrictions, the Department was able to carry on. The Department took a very proactive approach to the COVID pandemic early on. We monitored updates from the CDC, ODH, CCBH, SWGHC and regional medical directors, and adjusted our operations to stay ahead of or in-line with the current public health recommendations. We isolated our operations as much as possible, provided PPE to our Firemedics when other agencies were scrambling to meet the most basic needs, and we instituted many practices and procedures to keep the Firemedics, their families, and the public as safe as possible. In spite of our best efforts to protect everyone we had several Firemedics test positive for COVID which caused further staffing challenges. However, all recovered in a timely manner and returned to active duty. Additionally, our Firemedics were some of the first people in the county to be eligible for the COVID vaccine.

Staffing was a concern due to the anticipated surge in COVID patients, the exposure and effects of COVID on Firemedics, and the financial impact on the City from the State shut-down, stay at home orders and decreased revenue collection. In order to protect the jobs and benefits of all full-time city employees Mayor Perciak directed all city departments to curtail non-essential spending and eliminate overtime. Although these directives kept the city financially stable to survive the economic crisis, they had an impact on fire department staffing and operations. In order to address the staffing shortfall, several



options were evaluated and ultimately Strongsville City Council elected to put a 2.5 mill fire operating levy on the November 3, 2020 ballot so additional Firemedics could be hired. Unfortunately, Strongsville voters rejected the levy by nearly 2,000 votes. As a result of the November defeat, Strongsville City Council elected to go to the ballot on May 4, 2021 with a revised 2.0 mill fire operating levy.

In reviewing 2020 incident call volume there was a 10% decrease in calls from 6,422 in 2019 to 5,784 in 2020. This decrease in call volume is most directly related to the COVID pandemic and state shut down orders in March through June. EMS call volume represents 70% of our total calls for service and fires, false alarms, service calls, and other incidents represent the other 30% of the total calls.

Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services has received the American Heart Association Mission: Lifeline Gold Plus EMS Recognition Award for identifying and treating heart attacks in the field for the past seven years. Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services is one of only 33 agencies in the nation to receive the Gold Plus Award every year. This is just another example of the professional and competent Firemedics we have in this organization and the quality service we provide to our residents and the community.

In addition to our primary duties and responsibilities of emergency response, the Department also had a busy year performing many non-emergency activities. The Office of Fire Prevention performs fire inspections and code enforcement, construction plan reviews, and public education. The Department is also responsible for city-wide emergency management and takes an active management role in Southwest Emergency Dispatch Center, Southwest Council of Governments, Southwest Regional Communications Network, and Southwest General Health Center SAFES and EMS Advisory Boards.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your Fire Chief. I have the great fortune to work alongside many talented, dedicated and highly-trained Firemedics and Officers. These individuals have dedicated their lives to helping others by providing quality services to our residents, businesses and visitors on a daily basis. They provide these services with near flawless perfection, often under the most stressful and dangerous circumstances. Thank you to the entire Strongsville community for your continued dedication and support.

Sincerely,

Jack Draves
Fire Chief



OUR VISION

The **VISION** of Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services is to continue being the finest fire and emergency services organization possible by utilizing and developing our members to their fullest potential, maximizing our use of the resources available to us and being responsive to the growth and changing needs of our community.

Our Mission

Our **MISSION** is to protect the lives, property and environment of the people who live, work or travel in Strongsville.

Our Values

The **VALUES** of Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services are to provide its members with a framework for making management decisions and guiding individual behavior. Our value system describes those attributes that make the organization and our members an asset to the community.

The values of Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services are:

- ❖ HUMAN LIFE- OUR TOP PRIORITY
- ❖ SERVICE- OUR REASON FOR EXISTENCE
- ❖ EXCELLENCE-OUR GOAL
- ❖ INTEGRITY-THE BASIS FOR TRUST
- ❖ ACCOUNTABILITY-PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL
- ❖ INNOVATION-FOR CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
- ❖ EDUCATION-FOR GROWTH



Ward 1 Fire Station

located at 11297 Webster Road, opened in April 2001 and serves the northeast quadrant of the city. The two and one-half bay station also has a community meeting room and serves as the ward 1 police mini-station. The station is staffed by a Lieutenant and two Firemedics. Station 1 is equipped with a 95' platform aerial and an ambulance, and also houses the Region 2 Northeast Ohio Urban Search and Rescue truck and trailer



Ward 2 Fire Station

located at 15939 Drake Road, opened in January 1997 and serves the southeast quadrant of the city. The one and one-half bay station also serves as the Ward 2 police mini-station. The station is staffed by a Lieutenant and two Firemedics. Station 2 is equipped with a pumper truck and an ambulance.



Ward 3 Fire Station

located at 22000 Albion Road, opened in March 1981, was renovated in 2016 and serves the northwestern quadrant of the city. The two-bay station has a hose tower and hose room. Station 3 also serves as the Ward 3 police mini-station. The station is staffed by a Lieutenant and two Firemedics. Station 3 is equipped with a pumper truck and an ambulance. It also houses a third-line back-up pumper and ambulance.



Ward 4 Fire Station

located at 17000 Prospect Road, just north of Drake Road. The Fire Department began operations at Station 4 on February 11, 2008. This station serves the southwest quadrant of the city. Station 4 serves as the Department's administrative headquarters. The five and one-half bay station includes a classroom, training tower and the Ward 4 police mini station. The station is staffed by a minimum of a Lieutenant, two Firemedics, and a Captain as the Shift Commander. Station 4 is equipped with a 75-foot ladder truck, an ambulance, a reserve pumper, a reserve ambulance, a command vehicle, and several staff cars. The station is also equipped with SERT hazardous materials vehicles and equipment.



ASSISTANT CHIEF of ADMINISTRATION

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF NEIL ROZMAN



The Assistant Chief of Administration is responsible for human resources, payroll, facilities management & capital improvements, Health and Safety, and coordinating operations with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Human Resources:

1. The retirement of Captain Ken Barrett after 34 years of service, Assistant Fire Marshal Randy French after 27 years of service, and Firemedic Jon Bouts after 21 years of service.
2. The hiring of four new Firemedics.

Payroll: Implementation of system-wide upgrade to timekeeping system Kronos.

Facilities management:

1. 75,000 sq. ft. of heated space across four fire stations
2. \$1,425,000 invested in facility repair and renovation over last five years.

CERT:

Due to all the COVID-related cancellations and lock down orders, CERT had a relatively slow year. As the restrictions started lifting toward the end of the year, CERT quickly responded, participating with safety assistance in the annual holiday tradition of the Winter Wonderland.

COVID-19 Pandemic:

The global pandemic presented Strongsville Fire & Emergency Services with challenges in several key areas.

1. A significant effect on daily operations with the need to constantly wear PPE while providing top-notch care added an element of sensory isolation and increased body heat.
2. Maintaining appropriate distance, not only on all calls, but also within the fire stations.
3. Numerous frequent changes to our treatment protocols as best practices evolved as our knowledge and experience increased.
4. The logistical challenge of maintaining adequate supplies of PPE.
5. Staffing challenges caused by global financial instability.
6. Limitations on training due to distancing.

I am proud to report to the residents of Strongsville that the Firemedics and Officers of SFES handled these difficulties every day and continued to perform at an exceptional level throughout the most challenging year in the history of our department.



ASSISTANT CHIEF of OPERATIONS

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF AJ ALJABI

The Assistant Fire Chief of Operations is responsible for coordinating the daily operations of the department. In addition, he is in charge of vehicle and equipment maintenance and purchasing, Fire and EMS training and is the liaison for Southwest Emergency Dispatch Center.



2020 Operational Summary (10% decrease from 2019)		Incident breakdown	
TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE	5784	Fire	65
EMS Calls	4085	Rupture/Explosion	6
EMS Transports	3303	EMS	4085
AMBULANCE BILLING COLLECTIONS	\$1,098,187	Hazardous Conditions	193
FIRE & SERVICE CALLS	1699	Service Calls	526
TOTAL FIRE LOSSES	\$137,500	Good Intent Calls	367
FIRES WITH PROPERTY LOSS	38	False Alarms	373
FIRES WITH LOSS EXCEEDING \$10K	3 structures	Weather/Disasters	4
MUTUAL AID GIVEN	161	Special Incident	4
MUTUAL AID RECEIVED	90	Mutual Aid Given	161
		Total	5784

- **Staffing**
 - 54 members on three shifts
 - 3 members assigned to Fire Prevention (Captain/Fire Marshal and 2 Inspectors)
 - 1 Lieutenant/Administrative Officer
 - 3 Chief Officers (Fire Chief, Administration Assistant Chief, Operations Assistant Chief)
- **Regional Teams**
 - 16 SFES members
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Land: structural collapse, trench, high angle
 - Water: dive, swift water
 - Fire Investigation
- **Equipment**
 - Signed 5 years Preventative Maintenance Agreement with Stryker for cots, stair chairs, and power load systems.
 - New Thermal Imaging Camera for Incident Commander vehicle
 - New hose tester
 - New 4 gas meter
- **Fleet**
 - Signed a Purchase Agreement for a new Sutphen SPH 100' aerial for \$1,292,834
 - Remount M-3 with a new chassis at a cost of \$234,231



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

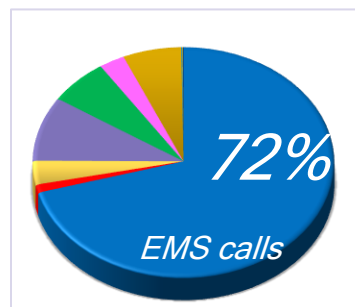
ADMINISTRATIVE LT. BRIAN TOMCANY



The Administrative Lieutenant is responsible for verifying that department members have the necessary Fire and EMS credentials needed to operate as a Firemedic on SFES. He leads an EMS committee and is responsible for researching new EMS equipment, searching out EMS training opportunities, and assuring compliance with state requirements. He is also responsible for coordinating clinical site training opportunities for UH Parma and Tri-C paramedic schools.

The Administrative Lieutenant leads a Community Outreach Program by coordinating healthcare resources for some of the most vulnerable residents in our community as well as coordinates fire department personnel who participate with the Strongsville Police Department and Ohio Guidestone for the Opioid Task Force.

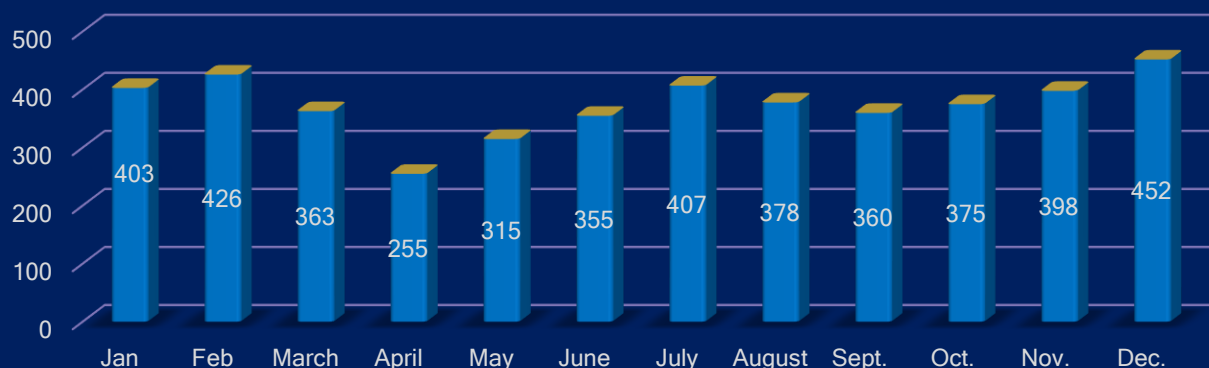
COVID brought a number of challenges when it comes to continuing education, and the fire department worked closely with Southwest General and other agencies to try to provide quality education. COVID has also presented extraordinary challenges with patients who had comorbidities, often with devastating outcomes. Several of our members participated as COVID vaccination providers with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. In 2020, we were awarded the 2020 Mission: Lifeline Gold Plus EMS



Recognition Award for the 7th year in a row.

SFES transports primarily to the main campus of Southwest General Health Center and Southwest-Brunswick ER, which together account for 88% of our transports. SFES also transports to The Cleveland Clinic Main Campus, Brunswick ER, Fairview, Medina; University Hospitals Main Campus & Parma Medical Center, UH-Broadview Hts, MetroHealth Medical Center Main Campus, Parma, and Brecksville ER's.

EMS runs by Month 2020



FIRE PREVENTION OFFICE

CAPTAIN MATT TILBERT FIRE MARSHAL



The mission of the Fire Prevention Office (FPO) is to educate the community about the benefits of proper safety practices and to identify and eliminate all types of hazardous conditions that pose a threat to life, property, and the environment. FPO is staffed with a Fire Marshal and two Assistant Fire Marshals and completes a wide variety of inspections. These include, but are not limited to, new construction, commercial and industrial facilities, schools and institutions, and specialized inspections related to child adoption.

Assistant Fire Marshal Randy French retired in 2020. He began his career in Strongsville on July 21, 1992 and joined the FPO in 1998. Randy has been the core of the FPO office for 22 years and is directly responsible for its continued success. Besides his inspection duties, Randy was also the FD representative to Planning Commission, taught Safety Town, headed the Knox Box and residential lock box program, Fire Department historian, and Department graphic artist. Randy designed the current Department patch, many station and T-shirt logos, and even a few firehouse comics.



Despite a chaotic year with COVID-19, FPO performed 1,641 system and inspection tests in over 1,313 occupancies, they rendered an additional 2,262 community services.

<u>Annual Inspections</u>		<u>Semi Annual Inspections</u>		<u>Residential Services</u>	
Sprinkler	208	Pre-Engineered Systems	177	Lock Box Installations	64
Fire Alarm	221	Special Suppression	29	Smoke and CO Detector Installation	34
General	229	Paint Booths	19	Home Safety Inspections	10
Fire Pumps	24			Shift Incident Follow Ups	55
Massage/Tattoo License	30			Written Violation Notices	27
Propane	21			Mobile Food Truck Inspections	5



Fire Marshal Capt. Matt Tilbert & Asst. Fire Marshal Mike Pace



Asst. Fire Marshal Randy French, retired

"Preventing Fires and Saving Lives through education and code enforcement one building and one person at a time"

FIRE AND EMS TRAINING

ASSISTANT CHIEF AJ ALJABI
LIEUTENANT BRIAN TOMCANY

FIRE and EMS training is developed by their respective committees. The training is designed to meet the needs of an all-hazards department. To accomplish this, the committees create a variety of quarterly NFPA suppression and non-suppression drills, monthly hands on training exercises, EMS protocols, and medications review. These

training exercises are evaluated through subjective, written, and/or manipulative methods. COVID created several obstacles in our normal training cycle. We had to suspend certain aspects of our multi-company training and allow companies to train on individual company training exercises.

Virtual training became more popular. In the Fire Service, nothing replaces in-person and hands-on training classes; however, with all the restrictions, there were not many training options for our Firemedics. Many institutions had to become creative and change their curriculums. Some institutions, such as Southwest General Health Center scheduled monthly visits to the fire stations to make sure we were able to meet the required training hours to maintain our certifications. Additionally, all in-person SERT training was suspended in 2020.

Nonetheless, our Firemedics continued to log in over 5,700 hours of Fire and EMS training to meet the demands and requirements for their certifications and responsibilities of an all-hazards department.



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS IN 2020

Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services was awarded was the American Heart Association 2020 Mission: Lifeline Gold Plus EMS Recognition Award. This makes the 7th year in a row that Strongsville has been awarded this prestigious award.

The Mission: Lifeline Gold Plus EMS Recognition Award is an EMS recognition program designed to showcase Emergency Medical Service organizations across the nation for excellence in early recognition and treatment of S-T elevated myocardial infarctions (STEMI) care. Prehospital personnel are the first providers of care to patients suffering from cardiac emergencies and the role of EMS in the system-of-care for these patients is crucial and often sets the course for the patient's outcome. The Mission: Lifeline EMS recognition program was launched in 2014 and continues to celebrate the achievement of the pre-hospital providers and their collaboration with each other and destination hospitals specific to STEMI patient care. This year's 7th consecutive award places Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services as one of only 33 agencies in the nation and the *only one* in the State of Ohio to receive this award every year that it has been awarded.



COVID created a lot of challenges for the City of Strongsville, especially the Fire Department. As guidelines from the CDC were constantly changing, Strongsville hosted biweekly regional conference calls with surrounding Fire Departments and Medical Control to stay current with the most up-to date changes. As supply chains continued to dry up, we found ourselves competing for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The community responded as we received donations (masks, hand sanitizers, shields, and food) from residents and business. Cuyahoga County also provided thousands of masks, gowns and gloves.

M3 Accident Strongsville Medic 3 was involved in a MVA with a police vehicle on the evening of February 9, 2020. The significant accident caused injuries to all three Firemedics and the police officer. The three Firemedics were off duty for months recovering from their injuries. Both vehicles sustained major damage. The police car was totaled and the ambulance was replaced with a Braun remount (new chassis and patient compartment refurbished).



Levy- On November 3rd, the City suffered a disappointing defeat on Issue 49, which was a 2.5 mill Fire Operating levy. Passage of this levy would have authorized the city to hire an additional 20 full-time Firemedics.

As more businesses locate here, senior and skilled nursing facilities continue to expand in our city, the need for a fifth station is especially evident in the center of town. The City forefathers accurately predicted our city would grow into a population that would need five fire stations. This was formalized in the Master Plan approved by City Council in 2001 and again in 2019. The center of town needs the last piece of the puzzle to ensure better response times and better service for our residents and businesses.



Retirements- 2020 saw the retirements of Captain Ken Barrett after 34 years of service, Assistant Fire Marshal Randy French after 27 years of service, and Firemedic Jon Bouts after 21 years of service.

Promotions- 2020 saw the Promotion of Captain Scott Fridley to “B” Shift, Captain Andrew Green to Fire Training Office, Lieutenant Matt Kasza to “A” Shift and Lieutenant Joe Agresta to “C” Shift.

New Hires- 2020 saw the new hires on the fire department; Firemedics Ryan Colegrove, Adam Buga, James Gaffney, and Grant Loeding.

Separation of Service- 2020 Dalton Jalovec and James Gaffney.





9/11 Ceremony- The Strongsville Fire and Police Departments led a ceremony on Sept. 11 recalling the terrorist attacks of 2001, vowing "We will never forget." Fire Chief Jack Draves and Police Chief Mark Fender both spoke at the short ceremony, which was closed to the public this year but attended by members of the police and fire departments. Safety Director Charles Goss read the benediction, and Firefighter Randy French led the tolling of the bell, a time-honored tradition that marks the death of a firefighter with the ringing of a bell. Strongsville has held a ceremony every year to recall the 2,974 people killed as the result of terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Included in that number are 343 firefighters and 73 members of the law enforcement community who were killed in the line of duty.



Firefighter of the Year Award- Since 2009, The



Knights of Columbus St. Francis of Assisi Council 10792 has been recognizing a member of our department for outstanding service. This year's award went to Firemedic Jon Cameron. Jon was nominated by Captain Ken Barrett and received

overwhelming support from every shift and the administration. Jon has been a department member since 2007 and has been instrumental in the



implementation of our EMS electronic medical records. His contributions have modernized our record keeping, helped our department become compliant with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and other insurance mandates, and assisted in collecting millions of dollars in EMS revenue.



SFES Department Recognition Awards

Leadership award- Captain Ken Barrett- for command of Cherry Tree fire July of 2019.

Meritorious Services Award- Lieutenant Chuck Zerman, Firemedic Jamie Petrick, and Firemedic Brandon Sposit for the stabilization and extrication of an unresponsive patient in a vehicle on its roof deep in the water within the Metroparks.

Community Service Award- Lieutenant Tom Zinn for actions performed off duty on a customer who suffered cardiac arrest at a grocery store.

