

# THE RURAL HITCH

A Quarterly Publication of the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Association

## STORMS STRESS THE LAKES REGION WATERWAYS

see Page 10



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## From the Chief...

Jonathan M. Goldman, CPE



As the fourth quarter of 2023 draws to a close, I am reflecting on a year that offered its ups and downs, its challenges, and its successes. LRMFA as an organization had one of the most complicated and trying years in its most recent history, and yet will end 2023, and enter into 2024 as one of the organization's most successful years.

During 2023, LRMFA suffered the loss of more than 50% of our staff. Aside from being an industry trend throughout all public safety channels, it was devastating to us as an organization and the administrative staff. We lost a lot of good people for many reasons including earning potential, and more importantly, being overworked. Today's workforce values their time off in a lot of ways more than money. So when we begin to lose people it creates a cyclical effect on the other staff having to cover those open shifts until a candidate can be recruited and released from training. As an organization, we won't alter our hiring or training standards to push someone through training. We will always "hire the right person, and not the right now person." This is a long-term approach to creating the organizational culture we are trying to build within the communications center.

The quarter began with "go time" for the long-awaited CAD project "Go Live." Over the past ten years, LRMFA has been embarking on a new CAD project after a previous CAD program we were using was to be sunset, and the vendor attempted to move us to their newer product. After several years of working through that attempt, the vendor was unable to deliver a product to LRMFA, or any of the other 5-8 agencies nationwide that they were working with. We then began working with another CAD vendor, who after about 18 months decided to close up their CAD division. LRMFA worked with our attorneys and ultimately settled with both vendors and recovered the monies spent on both projects.

## The Rural Hitch

is Curated and Published Quarterly by:

**Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Association**

Chief Coordinator

**Jonathan M. Goldman, CPE**

Deputy Chief Coordinator

**Paul D. Steele Jr.**

Editor

**Nicholas Bridle**





After vetting multiple vendors, We initiated an RFP process and settled on Tyler Technologies in September of 2022 with a Go Live goal of October 2023. This project was going to be in cooperation with the Capital Area Fire Mutual Aid Compact as we have both used the same CAD for many, many years. By collaborating both agencies would realize financial savings, and essentially use the same CAD, meaning as each other's backups we will be able to work within the other agencies' CAD in real-time, we will be able to move mutual aid apparatus between the two systems simultaneously and allow more safe and efficient tracking of personnel across mutual aid districts.

Around 0900 on October 31, LRMFA went live on the new CAD system with the Franklin Fire Department having the first call entered and completed with the CAD. This project took up a lot of our time during Q4 as we are still working out the best ways we can maximize the efficiency of the system. With the new CAD also comes the capability to use Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) throughout the district. Tyler Technologies offers a traditional PC-based MDT or a lighter version that will run off of an iPad or Android Device. LRMFA has two MDTs deployed in Car 1 and Car 2 and a few departments are trialing the iPad version of the software. Both work well, and allow for Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and the ability for responders to read call notes, see where other resources are, and will have the ability to enter pre-plans and water sources as we move forward. We have asked agencies not to update their run cards for a while now in anticipation of transitioning to the new CAD. We are comfortable enough with the CAD now that if agencies would like to update their run cards we would ask that you contact Deputy Chief Steele and he will coordinate the updates with you. Please bear with us as there may be a lot of agencies needing to update their run cards as they have not been able to for a while.

During the last quarter of 2023, we presented our proposed 2024 budget to the Board of Directors. This year's budget was challenging as we changed the contribution and funding formula for the HAZMAT team, we will realize the full support payments from the CAD which will come from the budget, and not to confuse things the Board also decided to begin making adjustments to the community assessment formula. The adjustment to the assessment will see incremental increases and decreases to parts of the formula, while also adding a "call factor." During the 2024 budget process, we spent a lot of time with the Board of Directors highlighting the need for a serious adjustment to the current pay scale. There was a lot of great discussion within the Executive Committee, and the Board of Directors who ultimately agreed to make the much-needed pay scale adjustments. We are at full staffing, and with this adjustment and some other internal initiatives, we hope to remain that way, while developing and building our team into the next generation of LRMFA and industry leaders.





During Q4, Chief Goldman launched an internal initiative to spend some time in 2024 building and leading the current staff into a true team of collaboration and creativity. Babe Ruth once said "The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime." When we compared this quote to our staff, we realized we do have the greatest bunch of individual stars, and now we need to concentrate on leading them into a true team. As such during the December staff meeting, without warning Dispatcher Sattler, who is not a supervisor, was directed to get the entire team to the Escape Room Experience in Laconia and lead them through solving the puzzle. We knew this was a non-traditional approach, but each staff member participated and when they came back from the experience, they all agreed that there was team-building value in the exercise and they worked together to solve the puzzle successfully with a few minutes left to go in the game. During 2024 we are going to continue working with the staff individually and as a team to continue to build upon this foundation of collaboration and creativity within our staff.

In closing, we want to again thank the Board of Directors for their support this year, we hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday and we look forward to working with each of your agencies throughout 2024. 🇺🇸



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# CTFD BATTLES 2 ALARM BUILDING FIRE



At 1241 am on Friday, December 15, Lt. Ricky Fowler and Dispatcher Samantha Prentice took a 9-1-1 telephone call reporting a building fire on NH Route 175 in Campton. Campton-Thornton Fire Rescue, Campton Police Department, and Woodstock Fire Department, NH were dispatched and responded to a reported building fire. 35E4 was the first unit on the scene. The crew deployed a hose line and began extinguishing the fire from the exterior before entering the structure. Due to high heat and heavy fire conditions, they were forced to back out. The Woodstock Ladder set up and deployed their ladder to the second-floor window, where a hose line extinguished flames through the window opening.

The second alarm brought in additional personnel and apparatus from several nearby towns including Waterville Valley Department of Public Safety, Plymouth Fire-Rescue, Holderness, NH Fire Department, Ashland Fire Department, Rumney Fire Department, Hebron NH Fire-rescue, Bristol Fire Department, Meredith Fire Department, and New Hampton Fire Department, while Center Harbor Fire Department and Linwood Ambulance Service covered CTFD Station 1. Crews remained on scene for several hours putting out hot spots.

The cause of the fire is under investigation. One patient was evaluated for smoke inhalation, but declined ambulance transport and was released at the scene. The fire unit was a total loss. The two other units suffered smoke and water damage. The pickup parked in front of the building suffered only minor damage. Unfortunately, a dog perished in the fire and a cat was unaccounted for. The Red Cross is assisting displaced residents. No other injuries were reported. Eversource, Campton Village Water Precinct, and NHDOT also assisted at the scene. "Working smoke detectors alerted the sleeping occupants, allowing them to evacuate with seconds to spare," said Chief Daniel Defosses, who added, "aggressive fire attack by first arriving crews prevented further property loss."





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# LRMFA GOES "LIVE" WITH NEW COMPUTER-AIDED DISPATCH SYSTEM

On October 31, at approximately 0900, LRMFA went "live" on our new CAD system, by Tyler Technologies. This project has beleaguered the district for many years and is finally completed. The City of Franklin Fire Department was the first agency to have a call taken within the new CAD system. Chief Jon Goldman stated, "Although there were some expected hiccoughs by and large the transition went fairly smooth." He went on to say "This project has been in the works for over 6 years and finally came to fruition today. We'd like to thank Retired Lt. Dave Parker for his tenacity on this project he's been the CAD team manager for many years and was instrumental in this transition."



On duty today and taking the transition in stride were: Lt. Erin Hannafin, Lt. Matt LaDuke & Disp. Jen Olisky. Deputy Chief Steele and Lt. Parker were in the office working feverishly during the cutover. There are still a few things to work out but by and large, the cutover was successful and we'd like to thank the entire CAD Team for their help over the last 18 months: Retired Lt. Dave Parker, Lt. Erin Hannafin, Lt. Brian Dumka & Disp. Adam Sattler. Every staff member has been instrumental in some way to get us to this point and we are grateful for all of their assistance.

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# ALTON FIRE DEPARTMENT ISSUES LIFESAVING AWARD TO MEMBERS



On October 9 at 04:09 a.m., the Alton Fire Department duty crew on Ambulance 1 responded to a 52-year-old male experiencing severe chest pain. Shortly after their arrival on the scene, the man went into respiratory and cardiac arrest. They announced a "working code" and immediately began lifesaving measures by securing the airway, doing chest compressions, and attaching the cardiac monitor. They administered a defibrillating shock and after reassessing, a pulse had returned. As they were preparing the man for transport, he went into cardiac arrest two more times. They were able to bring back pulse and respirations both times through teamwork, impeccable skills, and practicing compassionate care. One off-duty member and one police officer responded as well and were an integral part of the teamwork needed to save a life. The hospital staff praised the crew's skills and abilities.

For their actions early that morning, Interim Chief Deborah Pendergast commended the team for their efforts resulting in the saving of a life. The following members were recognized and presented a LIFE-SAVING AWARD during a Board of Selectman Meeting:

Capt. Patrick O'Brien  
Lt. Ryan McQuade  
FF/Paramedic Brandon Wood  
FF/Intern Aaron Tice  
Officer Jamie Fellows

## SANDWICH FIRE DEPARTMENT TAKES DELIVERY OF NEW APPARATUS

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# CAMPTON-THORNTON FIRE DEPARTMENT AND MUTUAL AID RESPOND TO WATER PROBLEMS

At 1015 on Monday, December 18, 2023, Campton-Thornton Fire Rescue responded to a report of water encroaching on the roadway at NH Route 49, at the Campton Pond Dam. Per the Campton Pond Dam Emergency Action Plan, the roadway was closed. The NH Department of Transportation responded and placed a portable dam to extend the wing wall across NH Route 49. Per the predetermined plan, evacuations were ordered in several downstream locations, including Foothill Estates, the Woods Apartments, and the Beebe River Road area. A shelter was established at the Campton Town Hall and was later moved to the Campton Elementary School.



CTFD, Campton Police Department, Thornton New Hampshire Police Department, and mutual aid companies from Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid, Plymouth Fire-Rescue, Holderness, NH Fire Department, Ashland Fire Department, Hebron Fire Department, Bristol Fire Department, and Stewart's Ambulance Service responded to assist with multiple calls, evacuations, and station coverage throughout the day.



Personnel made contact with residents in several locations across Campton and Thornton to alert residents of rapidly rising water and in some cases, assist with evacuations. CTFD would like to thank their mutual aid partners for their assistance during this incident.



We would also like to thank Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid and Plymouth Police dispatch for coordinating manpower and equipment to handle the numerous incidents that occurred today. During this incident and ensuing storm Lt. Hannafin and Dispatcher Olisky dispatched 74 additional storm-related calls throughout the district. This number does not include non-storm-related emergency calls.





# LRMFA HIRES SEASONAL EMPLOYEE



For the first time, LRMFA hired a temporary seasonal employee in 2023. Zetron Max, who goes by Z. Max hails from a small community near the North Pole. According to him, he traveled through the seven levels of the candy cane forest, through the sea of swirly twirly gum drops, and then walked through the Welch-Dickey Loop Trail to get here.

Z. Max came to LRMFA in November of 2023, where he began to go through our APCO-certified Agency Training Program. The training program is certified through APCO to meet or exceed over 111 individual standards relating to Emergency Communications and call processing.

As Z. Max began learning about Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid, and our daily activities he was very interested. Dispatcher Hanson was able to utilize his 3D printer to make a headset for Z. Max, this way he could listen live to our telephone and radio calls while continuing to learn more about LRMFA and the NH Fire Service.

Chief Goldman made an observation shortly after Z. Max's arrival and was overheard saying "Weird things keep happening in my office, and I feel like the new guy may not have a very good attention span." Z. Max had drawn the ire of the Chief, and the Chief was watching him like a hawk. Although Z. Max may have had the best of intentions, he continued to get distracted and get himself into trouble. He was continuously distracted, drinking hot chocolate, and generally causing mischief. We tried to use progressive discipline to modify his behavior, but he continued to just float around in pools of mini marshmallows and kept stealing candy canes from the Christmas Tree.

On December 24th the contract with Z. Max's employer was completed and he returned to his small town near the North Pole. We hope to bring him back next year and use him to head up our social media team for the month showing people more about our agency, and the important work our staff does every day. We hope that Z. Max will return and hopefully use what he learned this year and not get into too much trouble.



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New Hampton Fire Department had a full house back in December 2023, with dinner and training. Franklin Deputy Chief David Hall presented on Lithium-Ion Fires





# BRISTOL RESPONDS TO BUILDING FIRE

At 12:22 AM on November 12, 2023, Lt. Dumka, Lt. LaDuke, and Dispatcher Olisky dispatched the Bristol Fire Department to a reported building fire at 16 Bennett Drive.

The Fire Department arrived on the scene at 12:30 AM to find a single-family home with fire showing from the rear of the structure. Two propane tanks had ignited due to the heat of the fire and were actively venting. Fire Department personnel actively engaged in firefighting operations and the fire was contained to the structure in question. The fire was placed under control at 03:43 AM. The structure is reported to be a total loss.

The home was vacant at the time of the event and there were no civilian or firefighter injuries reported. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Apparatus that responded from Bristol include: E2, E4, L1, A2, U1, C2/C3 totaling 12 personnel. Companies were clear of the fire scene and in service at 05:27 AM.

The Bristol Fire Department would like to thank Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid and their mutual aid partners for their assistance on the scene and for providing station coverage. Those agencies include the New Hampton Fire Department, Alexandria NH Fire Department, Danbury, NH Fire Department, City of Franklin Fire Department, Hebron Fire Department, Bridgewater Fire Department, Sanbornton Fire & Rescue, Plymouth Fire-Rescue, Meredith Fire Department, and Meredith EMS (Stewart's Ambulance Service). They also thank the Bristol NH Police Department, Eversource NH, and AmeriGas for their assistance on the scene.



This year, Plymouth Fireman's Association: Operation Santa Claus Program was able to provide 72 families, which included 163 children, toys this holiday season for 9 surrounding towns. The holiday spirit this year from people's donations made this possible. We cannot thank everyone enough. There is a lot of work that goes into this program. The outpouring of community donations and help is greatly appreciated to make this program successful.



## LRMFA Takes Possession of Media Wall for District Use

During the month of December LRMFA was able to order and take possession of a media wall for the district. This media wall is 8 feet by 8 feet and is adorned with the LRMFA District and Communications Center patches. The wall will be housed at the communications center in an easy-to-store carrying case and is available for any district agency that would like to use it. Walls such as this can be used as a backdrop or photo opportunity during media conferences, fire prevention week videos, promotional ceremonies, Department IDs, department or association dinners as a "photo booth" or any other function that an agency would like to have a clean, professional service-related backdrop for.

Any agency can use it, and it can be scheduled to be picked up or dropped off by contacting Chief Goldman, or Deputy Chief Steele.



## Want to receive the Rural Hitch by email?

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**LRMFA**

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# CAMPTON-THORNTON FIRE DEPARTMENT AND MUTUAL AID RESPOND TO FULLY INVOLVED CAMPER FIRE



At 5 am on Sunday, December 31, 2023, Campton-Thornton Fire Rescue, Campton Police Department, Plymouth Fire-Rescue, and Ashland Fire Department responded to a reported camper fire on NH Route 175 in Campton.

Upon arrival, crews located a well-involved camper with exposure to a house. Plymouth Engine 3 arrived on the scene and deployed 2 lines to protect the exposure and knock down the fire.

The fire was knocked down a short time later and crews began an extensive overhaul process. Fortunately, there was no extension into the main structure.

CTFD Ambulance 1 transported one patient with minor burn injuries to Spear Memorial Hospital in Plymouth for treatment. They were released a short time later. Crews were released approximately 90 minutes after initial arrival.

The occupants who were living in the camper have been displaced. The camper was a total loss. The NH Fire Marshal's Office is assisting with the investigation, but early indications point to the cause of the fire being accidental.

During the incident, Woodstock Fire Department, NH covered CTFD Station 1, while Rumney Fire Department and New Hampton Fire Department provided a cover engine and Ambulance respectively. "Early notification to 9-1-1 and quick action by our mutual aid partners from Plymouth, limited further property damage," said Campton-Thornton Fire Chief Daniel Defosses.







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# NEW HIRES



**Franklin Fire**  
FF/EMT Mike Dery



**Franklin Fire**  
FF/EMT Eric Tucker



**Plymouth Fire**  
Live In Student Adrian Espinal



**Plymouth Fire**  
Joseph Sullivan



**Tilton Northfield Fire**  
Peter Sargent



**LRMFA**  
Lieutenant Matt LaDuke

# ANNIVERSARIES



**Plymouth Fire**  
Deputy Chief Kevin Peirce  
2 Years



**LRMFA**  
Deputy Chief Paul Steele  
17 Years



**LRMFA**  
Lieutenant Ricky Fowler  
6 Years



**NEWS FROM THE DISTRICT**





# Central NH HazMat Team

## NEWSLETTER



The Central NH Hazmat Team gets delivery of a 2022 Ford 350. This is set up for a quick response vehicle and will pull one of our trailers. It will also have the ability to handle some of our routine calls. Thanks to Mick Costello for putting it together.

### **GAS LEAK IN FRANKLIN - 11/16/2023**

Significant gasoline leak was detected on Central Street in Downtown Franklin. Central NH HazMat Team assisted the Franklin and other Mutual Aid companies in Air Monitoring.







# CENTRAL NEW HAMPSHIRE



## HazMat Funding

Our new funding model start  
1/1/2024.

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## Meredith Fire Department Mourns the Loss of Captain Michael Taggett

It's with deep regret that Chief Jones of the Meredith Fire Department announces the unexpected passing of Center Station Captain Michael Taggett. Capt. Taggett passed away at his residence on 12/29/23 in the early evening hours. His professionalism, leadership, and knowledge will certainly be missed. Captain Taggett joined the Meredith Fire Department back in November of 1987, accepting the responsibilities of Engineer in 1990 and promotion to Captain in 2001, serving for 36 plus years in the Town of Meredith.



**NEWS FROM THE DISTRICT**

## Barnstead Mourns (Retired) Deputy Fire Chief Rodney T. Boyd

Deputy Chief Rodney Boyd started his fire service career on November 11, 1956, with the Center Barnstead Fire Department until his retirement on November 30, 2015, serving 59 years of continuous and dedicated service to the Town of Barnstead. Over all those years of service, Deputy Chief Boyd was not only active as a firefighter and an officer but during his tenure as Fire Chief of the Center Barnstead Fire Department; he contributed to the merger of the Center Barnstead Fire Company and Barnstead Parade Fire Company and was instrumental in guiding the Center Barnstead Fire Department and Ambulance Squad. His career with the fire service in the Town of Barnstead is truly remarkable and will be truly missed.

Deputy Chief Boyd was well known in the NH fire service. Deputy Chief Boyd was also an Instructor for Fire Service, he taught many classes throughout the area. Deputy Boyd also worked as a Lineman and a Supervisor for NH-COOP for many years until he retired.



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# LAKES REGION MUTUAL FIRE AID STATISTICS

	<i>Month</i>	<i>Admin</i>	<i>Emergency</i>	<i>Incidents</i>
2023 First Quarter	January	1300	2507	2322
	February	1212	2363	2232
	March	1228	2311	2168
	<i>Total for Quarter</i>	<i>3740</i>	<i>7181</i>	<i>6722</i>
	<i>Avg/Day</i>	<i>41.56</i>	<i>79.79</i>	<i>74.69</i>
2023 Second Quarter	April	1500	2819	2067
	May	1416	2819	2416
	June	1500	2819	2619
	<i>Total for Quarter</i>	<i>4416</i>	<i>8457</i>	<i>7102</i>
	<i>Avg/Day</i>	<i>48.53</i>	<i>92.93</i>	<i>78.04</i>
2023 Third Quarter	July	1485	3042	2862
	August	1527	2863	2646
	September	1476	2687	2513
	<i>Total for Quarter</i>	<i>4488</i>	<i>8592</i>	<i>8021</i>
	<i>Avg/Day</i>	<i>48.78</i>	<i>93.39</i>	<i>87.18</i>
2023 Fourth Quarter	October	1333	2482	2342
	November	1562	2481	2132
	December	1547	2484	2395
	<i>Total for Quarter</i>	<i>4442</i>	<i>7447</i>	<i>6869</i>
	<i>Avg/Day</i>	<i>48.28</i>	<i>80.95</i>	<i>74.66</i>
2023	<i>Month</i>	<i>Admin</i>	<i>Emergency</i>	<i>Incidents</i>
	<i>Total for 2023</i>	<i>17086</i>	<i>31677</i>	<i>28714</i>
	<i>Avg/Day</i>	<i>46.81</i>	<i>86.79</i>	<i>78.67</i>

## SEND US YOUR DEPARTMENT NEWS!

We want to help your agency shine.

- Do you have a New Hire or Promotion? Let us know!
- How about a retirement? Let us thank them for their service to your community.
- Did you get a new piece of Apparatus? Send us a Picture or two, we love new trucks!
- Hosting a Training? Let us help you fill seats.

Send your Department News to:  
[ruralhitch@lrmfa.org](mailto:ruralhitch@lrmfa.org)

*Extra!*  
*Extra!*