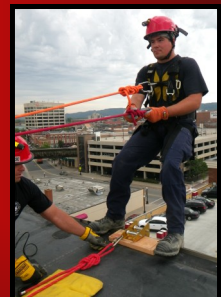


# La Crosse Fire Department

## *Community Report*



# 2012

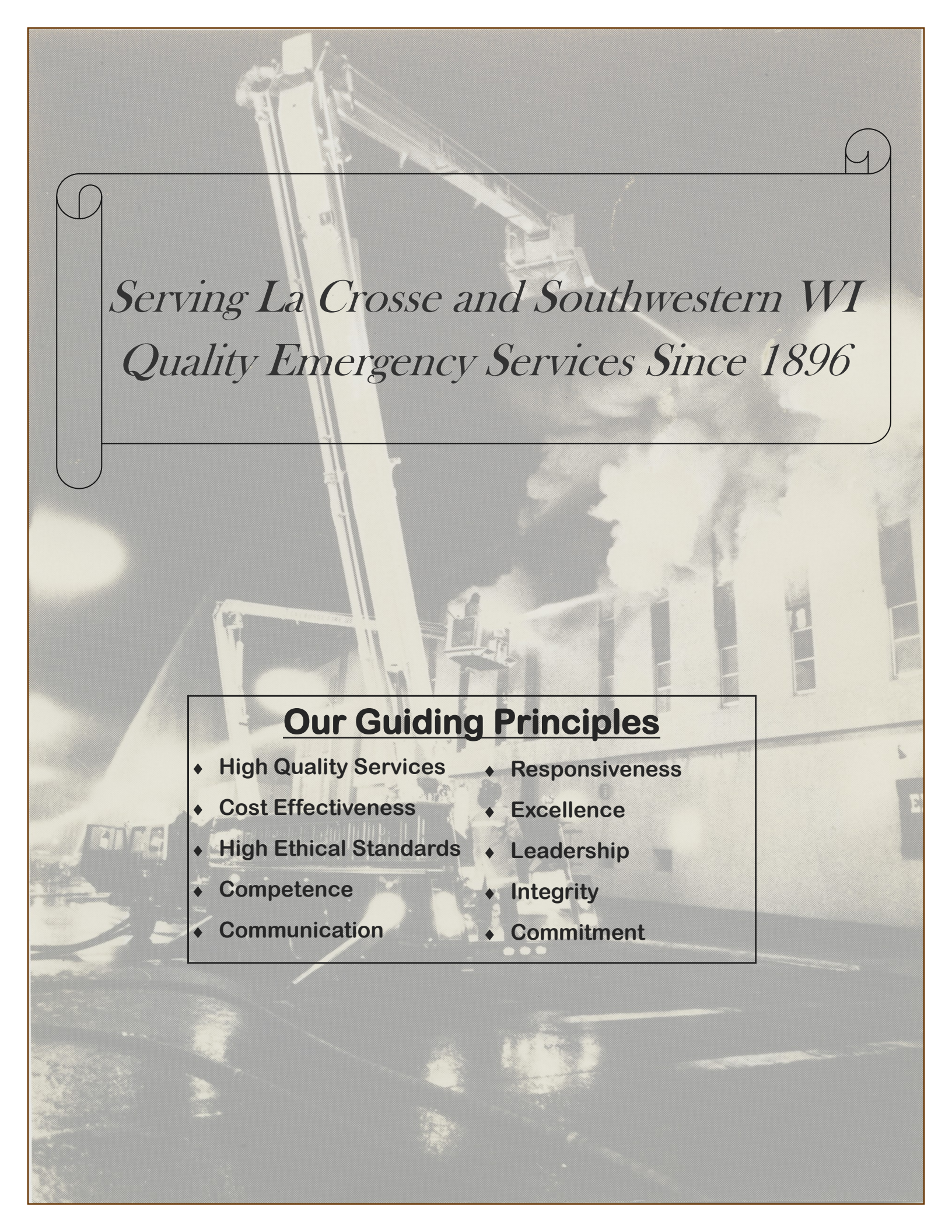




# Mission Statement

The La Crosse Fire Department serves all who live in and visit the City of La Crosse through excellence in fire protection, safety, emergency medical services, rescue, and educational services at the highest professional standard in a compassionate, ethical, and cost effective manner.





*Serving La Crosse and Southwestern WI  
Quality Emergency Services Since 1896*

### **Our Guiding Principles**

- ◆ High Quality Services
- ◆ Cost Effectiveness
- ◆ High Ethical Standards
- ◆ Competence
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Responsiveness
- ◆ Excellence
- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Commitment





## *From the desk of Fire Chief Gregg Cleveland.....*

Mayor Mathias Harter  
Members of the Common Council  
Members of the Police and Fire Commission  
Citizens of the City of La Crosse,

On the following pages is the overview of the fire department's community report for 2012. It has been a challenging year for the fire department; however, the persistence and determination of the men and women of the La Crosse Fire Department allowed the department to continue to provide excellence.

Included in the fire department's 2012 budget were a number of fees approved by the common council. These included fees for false alarms, vehicle fires, recreational fires, and fire inspections. What was challenging for the fire department was that we had no previous invoicing experience for the billing of these fees. However, great progress was made regarding the invoicing process and the fees program. While not popular with some, it has been a success. Our biggest challenge was the overestimation of our fees and the impact of our revenue shortfall on our operating budget.

Regarding the fire department's budget, the department did again operate within the financial parameters established by the common council. The department finished 2012 with a surplus of \$249,688.00. This surplus was used to offset the shortfall in projected revenue in order to balance our budget. It should be noted that the department stayed within the overtime budget for 2012 as well.

In 2012, the department saw an extreme rise in our medical responses to overdoses, particularly heroin overdoses. This is a significant problem for the fire department as well as the community. We are committed to working with our police department to support them in the efforts to reduce the effects of drug use in La Crosse.

The year 2012 came to a close on a sad note. On December 2, 2012 we responded to a report of a fire on the 7th floor at Stoffel Court, 333 South Seventh Street, and found a significant fire in the apartment of Ms. Nancy Skailand. We found her conscious and removed her from the apartment; however, unfortunately she passed away from her injuries in January of 2013. Our condolences go out to the Skailand family.

Looking ahead to 2013, we have become a registered agency with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International through the Center for Public Safety Excellence. We now have approximately 18 months to complete the process in order to become an accredited fire department. Division Chief Mark Amann is managing this project and has been working adamantly to make sure we complete the process and become an accredited agency.

Another challenge will be for us to respond to emergencies as a result of our reduction of overtime. In 2012 we had limited "brownouts", meaning we had instances where we had a light rescue out of service because of not having enough personnel on duty to staff the vehicle. While I do not agree with taking apparatus out of service, I have no other options as a result of our funding level. I presented to the council my plan for staffing in 2013 and because of the limited funding brownouts will occur again in 2013.

We are replacing our oldest aerial ladder and we anticipate taking delivery of a new aerial in the summer of 2013. This purchase will be a much needed improvement to our department and community.

Overall, I am very pleased with the progress the fire department achieved in 2012. I would like to thank my secretary, Barb Glomstad for her efforts in implementing the fees as well as my division chiefs for their efforts all year. A special thanks to Computer Clerk Adam Markert for his efforts in compiling this Community report.

Respectfully,

*Gregg A. Cleveland*

Gregg A. Cleveland, Fire Chief  
La Crosse Fire Department





# ABOUT US:

## What We Do:

- ◆ Fight fires to save lives and minimize property and environmental damage
- ◆ Provide emergency medical services
- ◆ Provide specialty rescue services such as vehicle extrication, technical rescue, hazardous materials response and water/ice rescue
- ◆ Investigate cause and origin of fires
- ◆ Enforce public safety codes
- ◆ Conduct fire safety education and events



## Who We Are:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Occupied Positions</u>
Fire Chief	1
Assistant Chief	1
Division Chief	5
Facilities Maintenance Mechanic	1
Captain	16
Lieutenant	10
Apparatus Engineers	27
Firefighters	31
Administrative Assistant	1
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>93</b>

### **Total Years of Experience:**

1235.75 Years

### **Average Years of Experience Per**

**Personnel:**

13.43 Years

90 of 93 positions (97%) are “boots on the ground” personnel providing direct services to the public.

## Demographics & Services Provided

The City of La Crosse Fire Department currently operates out of four fire stations that cover 22 square miles. Those stations are staffed with a minimum of 24 personnel each day. There are two Engines, three Quints (Ladder Trucks), one or two Light Rescues, one Heavy Rescue, two fire boats and a Command Vehicle in service each day to serve the citizens and visitors of La Crosse. In addition, each shift has specialists in the areas of water and ice rescue, hazardous materials response and mitigation, and technical rescue, which consists of confined space rescue, trench rescue, high angle (rope) rescue and structural collapse rescue. These specialists are available at any moment to respond to any one of these incidents. The water rescue team covers approximately 17 miles of the river while the technical rescue team covers about 4800 acres of bluff land. The hazardous materials team is a State sanctioned Regional Team that is able to respond to any level of hazardous materials release within all or part of nine counties in the region. Within this area the team covers 90 miles of the Mississippi River, 287 miles of railroad track, and 121 miles of interstate highway.

In 2012, the City of La Crosse Fire Department responded to 4,947 incidents. Of those calls, the fire department responded to 3,694 emergency medical calls.

The La Crosse Fire Department Inspection and Arson Bureau conducted 5,852 inspections. Out of these inspections, there were 3,539 violations.

Ninety-three percent of those violations (3,054) were corrected. The bureau also investigated 37 fires.

They provide community education through a number of different programs. Most of these programs are targeted to children, teaching them fire safety and prevention. In 2012, the bureau delivered 115 educational/ safety programs or demonstrations.



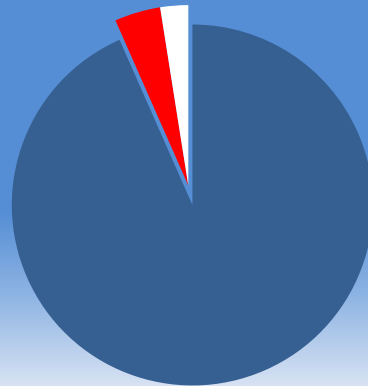
# 2012 Fire Department Budget

**Total Fire Department Budget for 2012:**

**\$10,075,490.01**

## **La Crosse Fire Department 2012 Budget Expenditure by Category**

Source: City of La Crosse Munis Financial Program



■ Personnel - \$9,650,724.90

■ Operating - \$424,765.11

■ Surplus- \$258,121.89

### Goals and Accomplishments

**Goal:** To implement an invoicing system for vehicle fires, false alarms, fire inspections, and recreational fires that results in accurate billing and accomplishes the revenue goals as outlined in the 2012 La Crosse Fire Department budget.

**Outcome:** An invoicing system was implemented that resulted in an accurate billing system as established by the common council in 2012 as reflected in the La Crosse Fire Department's budget.

### Grants

The department received an Assistance to Firefighters grant in the amount of \$25,744. This grant was used to purchase equipment and provide training for fires in standpipe equipped buildings.

The department also received \$105,000 to operate a Regional Hazardous Materials Team for Wisconsin Emergency Management.

Finally, the department received \$25,000 to operate a Radiological Field Team for the Wisconsin Department of Health and Wisconsin Emergency Management.

### New Equipment Purchased

The department purchased miscellaneous equipment including a hose tester and high rise equipment with light weight hose.



# Key Organizational Strategies for LCFD

## 1) Priority of Service Delivery

1. Heighten the community understanding of our delivery of inspection services
2. Improve overall skill development
3. Utilize marketing and public education
4. Maintain service level standards commensurate with mission statement
5. Internal talent utilization to optimize existing manpower
6. Create incentives for cost savings

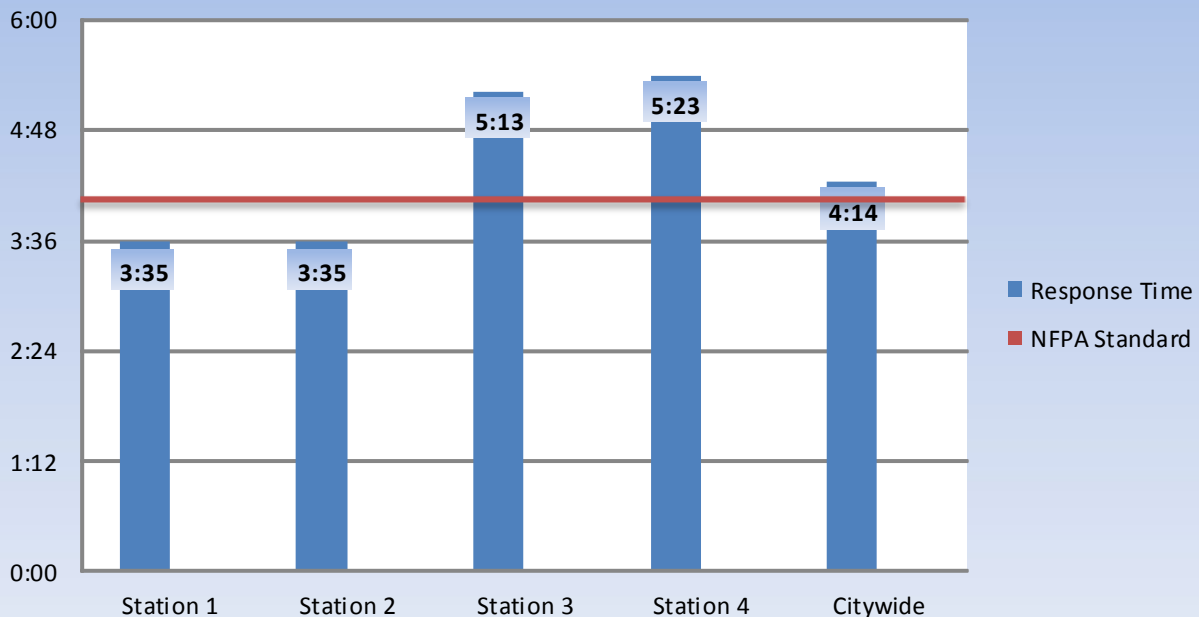
## 2) Maintenance of Standards

1. Insurance Services Office Rating
2. State Regulations
3. National Fire Protection Assn. Standards
4. Emergency Medical Technician Licensure
5. Technical Training
6. Local Standards

## 3) Mandate Program Compliance

1. Educate the LCFD organization and personnel on what and why we do it
2. Eliminate the "Justa FF" attitude while increasing department pride and understanding
3. Increase community knowledge and appreciation
4. Budgetary tool for decision making
5. Define effectiveness vs. cost

## La Crosse Fire Department 90th Percentile - Response Time 2012 All Emergency Calls



**Response Time:** The travel time that begins when units are en route to the emergency incident and ends when units arrive at the scene.



# La Crosse Fire Department





# and its Community





# Training for 2012

The La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau would like to present a review of training accomplished by fire department members in 2012. It was a successful training year with many classes and trainings conducted. I would like to take a moment to thank all personnel who helped present training to staff and to all personnel who attended our training sessions in 2012. Your hard work, dedication, and commitment are the reasons that

**Division Chief of Training**

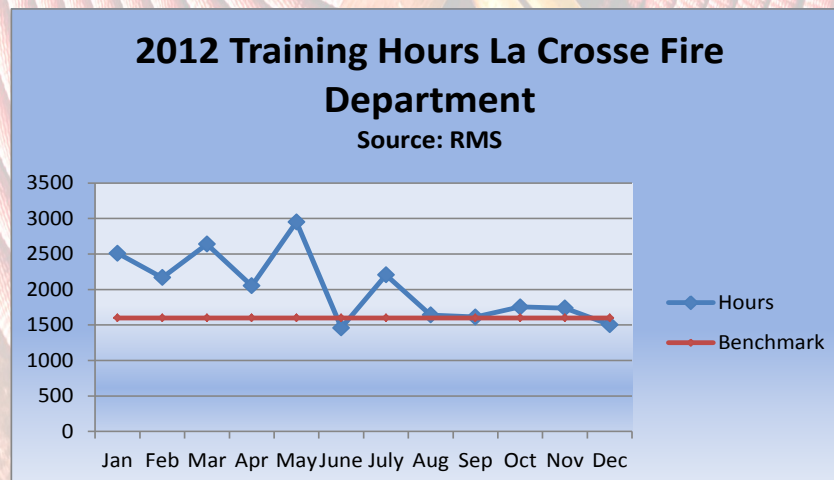
**Greg Temp**

[tempg@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:tempg@cityoflacrosse.org)

we are successful as a fire department. Training continues to be a focus for the La Crosse Fire Department. It builds the confidence and the competence that our firefighters need to operate at any emergency scene. The Training Bureau counts on La Crosse Fire Department staff as well as outside instructors to help provide specialized training to our firefighters on many different subjects throughout the year.

The La Crosse Fire Department responded to just under 5,000 calls in 2012. This number shows the need for La Crosse Fire Department staff to be trained on a variety of subjects so they can be relied upon out in the field to assist and help on any emergency that arises and to maintain a high degree of professionalism when responding.

In 2012 the total hours of training completed by La Crosse Fire Department members totaled 21,885 hours. These hours of training include fire suppression, rescue, emergency medical services, administrative, prevention, and inspection. It also includes specialized training such as hazardous materials, water rescue, technical rescue, auto extrication and others.



The La Crosse Fire Department Specialty/Core Teams continued to hold monthly training sessions for their members. Each team leader posts letters in the annual report highlighting their training sessions as well as responses. These teams continue to stay current with associated training and sending members to additional training opportunities throughout the year.



## TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS OF 2012

- **High Rise Firefighting** – In 2012, training on high rise firefighting operations was presented to all LCFD staff. A high rise presents unique challenges to firefighters in the event of a fire. Tactics for high rise incidents were presented, and the students were given a chance to demonstrate these tactics at buildings operated by the La Crosse Housing Authority, the Children’s Museum, and the fire department. This training will continue in 2013.
- **Ice Rescue** – La Crosse Fire Department personnel were certified in ice rescue during the winter of 2012. LCFD Captain Kevin Kappauf and House Security Nicholas Meinertz, who are certified instructors for Dive Rescue International, instructed this valuable training.
- **Thermal Imaging Cameras** – Thermal imaging cameras allow firefighters to see in a smoke filled environment. They are a valuable tool for both rescue and fire attack.
- **Airport Disaster Drill** – La Crosse Fire Department participated in the semi-annual airport disaster drill with La Crosse Airport Police and Fire personnel. This was an excellent drill for a low frequency/high risk event.
- **LNG** - The La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau partnered with Kwik Trip and Xcel Energy to deliver training on Kwik Trip’s new LNG fuel delivery system.
- **Building Construction** - Building construction techniques have changed drastically over the years. These changes have a direct impact on fire behavior. A special thank you to Lt. Tom Griffith for developing this class.
- **Vehicle Operations** - Safe and effective operation of our vehicles is a high priority for the La Crosse Fire Department. Training was conducted on pump operations, aerial operations, and driving in 2012.
- **Vehicle Extrication** – Auto accidents continue to rise every year. Thank you to Alters Scrap for providing vehicles for this training and to Don’s Towing & Repair Auto Service for moving the vehicles. We would not be able to deliver this training without the support of these two La Crosse businesses.
- **EMT Refresher** - The La Crosse Fire Department started its required semi-annual EMT refresher. This training will continue in 2013.
- **CPR-Health Care Provider** - All staff participated and completed the required Adult, Child, and Infant CPR as well as AED usage.
- **Fire Ground Operations** - La Crosse Fire Department staff participated in numerous training sessions on fire ground operations. Live fire training was included in these training sessions. Thank you to Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company of La Crosse and Fred’s Brake and Alignment for providing buildings for training.
- **EMS Week** - Numerous crews spent time at elementary schools teaching kids about EMS and the fire service. Students were encouraged to assist and were used as patients. This is an annual event and the students and firefighters truly enjoy participating.
- **CPR Saturday and other CPR Classes** - The La Crosse Fire Department CPR instructors helped train hundreds of people in CPR in 2012. Courses were presented to various day cares, city departments, the Children’s Museum staff as well as many others.

### Other Training Given

- Annual Health and Safety Week (IAFF & IAFC)
- Officer Leadership
- Zoll Conference
- State Arson Conference
- EMS Leadership
- Bloodborne Pathogen
- Zetron Training
- Telestaff Training
- Health Risk Assessments
- Annual Hearing examinations
- WI Hazardous Materials Conference
- WI EMS Conference

**2012 was a successful year for the La Crosse Fire Department Training Bureau. The Training Bureau works to ensure each member of the La Crosse Fire Department receives the necessary training to be a professional, successful firefighter that can be relied on at a moment’s notice to rescue, protect, or treat the citizens and visitors of the City of La Crosse.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Division Chief of Training Gregory Temp

La Crosse Fire Department







Division Chief of Inspection Craig Snyder  
snyderc@cityoflacrosse.org

# LCFD Inspection and Arson Bureau

The Inspection and Fire Investigation Bureau of the La Crosse Fire Department delivered its Fire Prevention Program for the La Crosse Public Schools for the 28<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The program which began in 1985 delivers an important fire safety message to all children grades K-5 in the La Crosse School District.

Since 1985, the La Crosse Fire Department has delivered its fire safety message to over 116,000 students.

The Fire Prevention Program culminated with a Fire Safety Open House on October 6<sup>th</sup>. This year we hosted over 600 people at fire station number 3. Families were invited to tour the fire station, sit in a real fire truck, visit our fire safety house, and enjoy some fire safety handouts and treats. This year Safe Kids of the La Crosse Coulee Region and Batteries Plus assisted in this community event.



In addition to fire prevention, the La Crosse Fire Department performed 5,852 inspections in 2012. These include semi-annual, annual, and occupancy inspections.

Since 2009, the La Crosse Fire Department has found 11,049 fire code violations with 9,661 corrections being made. This gives a compliance rate of 87% over the four year period.

In 2012, the La Crosse Fire Department investigated 37 structure fires, including the University of Wisconsin La Crosse's Drake Hall fire which displaced 271 students. The La Crosse Fire Investigators are on call for fire investigations 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Along with their semi-annual inspections, the La Crosse Fire Department Inspection Bureau performed over 100 aboveground and underground petroleum and chemical storage tank inspections. The bureau is responsible for inspecting these tank systems annually along with performing plan approvals and inspections for new installations and tank removals.



## Fire Safety topics covered each year

1. **Stop Drop and Roll**
2. **Do NOT Touch Matches and Lighters**
3. **Test Your Smoke Detectors**
4. **Get Low and Get Out – Get Out and Stay Out**
5. **Have a Family Escape Plan**
6. **Be a Home Smoke Detective for Your Family**
7. **Practice in our Safety House**
8. **Do not be a Juvenile Fire Setter**



The La Crosse Fire Department Fire Inspection and Investigation Bureau continues to strive to provide the safest community possible for all La Crosse residents and visitors.



# EMS: 2012 AT A GLANCE



**EMS Trainer Stephen Dickow**  
*dickows@cityoflacrosse.org*

The La Crosse Fire Department has been providing emergency medical services to the City of La Crosse since 1975. The department provided First Responder service and then upgraded to Emergency Medical Technician in 1995. The department has had a long history of involvement in emergency medical services. The department implemented La Crosse's public access defibrillator program, hosts CPR/ first aid classes, and helps with EMS Week in the schools. The demand for medical calls continues to rise each and every year.

Some of the highlights of the department's EMS program include:

- Started our 2012-2013 Emergency Medical Technician refresher which includes the new national standard of care transitional material
- Average response time to medical calls was 6 minutes 32 seconds compared to the national average of 8 minutes 32 seconds
- Because of our rapid response time to cardiac emergencies, our region's cardiac survival rate is 13.4% as compared to the national average of 5.4%
- We have seen a marked increase in heroin overdoses
- Two additional defibrillators were purchased to equip both of the back-up engines
- We have started to replace our existing FR2 defibrillators with the FR3 defibrillators



# LCFD REGIONAL HAZ-MAT TEAM

The La Crosse Regional Hazardous Materials Team is a 26 member unit that specializes in responses to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive related incidents. The team was formally established under the direction of WI Emergency Management in July of 2000. The La Crosse Fire Department provides all members to the team with welcome and frequent cooperation from other local response assets. We currently provide hazardous materials response for all or parts of nine counties in West Central Wisconsin. Within this area, the team covers 90 miles of the Mississippi River, 287 miles of railroad track, and 121 miles of interstate highway. Employing specialized training and the latest technologies, the team will deploy and perform a systematic risk based assessment regardless of incident scale. The team also has the capability to identify unknown substances and develop incident specific mitigation tactics.



**Capt. Jeff Schott, Team Leader**  
[schottj@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:schottj@cityoflacrosse.org)

## Specialized Training in 2012

- ◆ FEMA sponsored Tri-State area communications exercise
- ◆ Joint exercise with the 54th Civil Support Team and the Onalaska Armory
- ◆ Team training with new field kit for identification of unknown liquids and solids
- ◆ Juneau County joint decontamination exercise at Volk Field with Military
- ◆ Hazmat mitigation strategies for compressed liquefied gases with Safety Systems
- ◆ WI Dept. of Health annual radiological field training
- ◆ Radiological training at CDP in Anniston, AL
- ◆ Juneau County table top exercise of a simulated train derailment
- ◆ FTIR and RAMAN training with new equipment from Thermo Fisher
- ◆ Exercise observation with Gundersen Lutheran Hospital for a simulated HF release
- ◆ WI Association of Hazardous Materials Responders Conference in WI Dells
- ◆ 12 hazmat core team drills with mandatory competency training and hands on scenarios
- ◆ Developed and implemented training for La Crosse Fire Department hazmat refresher
- ◆ Numerous outreach trainings for surrounding County Hazmat teams
- ◆ Simulated Anhydrous Ammonia rail car leak with Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad

The La Crosse Regional Hazardous Materials Team also operates one of two Radiological Field Teams for the Wisconsin Department of Health. The team responds to radiological/nuclear incidents to perform rescue, reconnaissance, mitigation and sampling operations. The State of WI provides 100% of the funding for both Radiological and Hazmat Teams. The funding includes worker's compensation and reimbursement for costs incurred during a response when there is no responsible party.

Another busy training year has served us well in our response capabilities and experience. Continued implementation of advanced air monitoring technologies, hazard categorization methodologies, and mitigation tactics will continue to be the primary goal of becoming the best hazmat team in the nation. Our team is proud to offer quality emergency response that ensures top level service from a well trained and experienced La Crosse Regional Hazmat Team.

My special thanks to all the members of the Hazmat Team. Their commitment to excellence has provided the foundation to establish a level of service that is second to none.

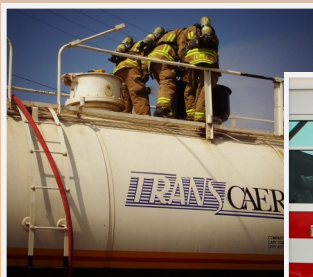
Respectfully Submitted,

Captain Jeff Schott

Regional Hazardous Materials Team Leader

## HAZMAT Responses in 2012

- ◆ Unknown liquid with thermal hazard
- ◆ Fuel oil spill in basement
- ◆ Overfilled propane vessel
- ◆ Unknown chemicals and powders
- ◆ 500lb LP tank liquid valve leak
- ◆ Unknown chemical odor
- ◆ Unknown white powder with exposure
- ◆ Liquid Natural Gas Vessel leak
- ◆ Semi trailer leaking chemicals
- ◆ Suspicious container with flammable liquid





# LCFD URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM



Lt. Frank Devine, Team Leader  
devinef@cityoflacrosse.org

The US&R Team of The La Crosse Fire Department is made up of 18 core team members and 8 additional department members who are trained above and beyond ordinary firefighting skills to respond to emergencies related to rescues of a technical nature. The Team is a NIMS Compliant TYPE-III US&R asset capable of responding locally and regionally to structural collapse, major extrication, confined space, trench, and high and low angle rescue incidents for Urban

Search and Rescue purposes. Of the 26 trained members, 16 are also members of Wisconsin Task Force 1 (WI-TF1) Urban Search and Rescue Team, a NIMS Compliant TYPE-I emergency response team under the umbrella of Wisconsin Emergency Management. These members, along with 100 other members from throughout the state, are highly trained to respond and support overwhelmed communities after or during large scale disasters. This team is logistically capable of being completely self-sufficient for a minimum of 72 hours, including food, fuel, and lodging. Over the past eight years the LCFD US&R Team has secured over one million dollars in specialized equipment and related training from Homeland Security funding and other Federal grant sources. This equipment and training is extremely beneficial to the citizens and fire fighters of La Crosse and for surrounding areas requesting mutual aid related to Technical/Urban Search and Rescue emergencies. Although team members are only required to attend a minimum of 24 hours of training each, they trained an average of 50 to 100 hours in 2012.

## 2012 Responses

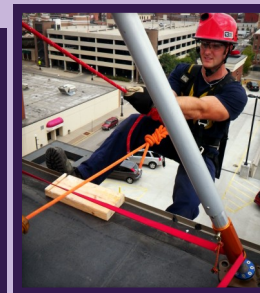
- 01/10/12 – Vehicle vs. garage, Shoring Operation
- 01/29/12 – Broken femur in Hixon Forest, evacuate to ambulance
- 02/22/12 – Lost hikers in conservancy, locate and evacuate to safety
- 02/27/12 – Possible jumper on the bluff, stand by
- 03/15/12 – Body recovery from La Crosse River marsh bridge, rope operations
- 04/19/12 – Shoring and cutting operation to remove persons trapped finger
- 08/10/12 – Rescue 2 boys trapped in Pammel Creek, rappelling operations
- 09/04/12 – 2nd story floor collapse, recon and search operations

## 2012 Training included

- ◆ Structural Collapse Rescue Specialist
- ◆ Confined Space Rescue Technician
- ◆ High and Low Angle Rope Rescue Technician
- ◆ Trench Rescue Technician
- ◆ Other related topics included: US&R Leadership, Safety, Logistics, Planning, Tower Rescue, and Off Trail Search and Rescue.

The La Crosse Fire Department US&R Team is a dedicated group of professionals that strive to be better trained so that when called upon for an emergency of a technical nature, they will be prepared, and so that they can continue to be a valuable asset to the department, the citizens of La Crosse, and surrounding region.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lieutenant Frank Devine  
US&R Team Leader



# LCFD WATER AND ICE

## RESCUE TEAM

The La Crosse Fire Department serves their community and the surrounding area with an 18 person unit that specializes in different techniques of water and ice rescue.

The waters that flow through the Coulee Region have dynamic features that produce dangerous situations. Some of these situations are swift water, flooding, and thin ice. The Water Rescue Team participated in over 400 hours of training in 2012 to better serve our community.

We also assist with the training of other members of the La Crosse Fire Department. This cross training allows for rapid response to safely rescue and render aid to victims involved in water related emergencies.

The Water Rescue Team continues to advance in both tactics and technique. This would not be possible without the support of management and the cooperation of all fire department personnel.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Travis R. George, Captain  
Water Rescue Team Leader

### 2012 Water Related Calls:

- ◆ Fire: 3 calls
- ◆ EMS/Rescue: 8 calls
- ◆ Watercraft Assist/Rescue: 6 calls
- ◆ DLAV: 1 call

### Advanced training for 2012:

- ◆ Ice Rescue/Water Rescue/Swift Water Rescue
- ◆ Medical care for victims in water
- ◆ Technical Rope Rescues involving water ways
- ◆ Underwater Search and Recovery (underwater camera)
- ◆ Dry Land Access Vehicle operations
- ◆ River familiarization and navigation
- ◆ Night time boat navigation
- ◆ Sonar and GPS
- ◆ Rapid Deployment Craft-Rescues and operations
- ◆ Advanced Boat Operations



Capt. Travis George, Team Leader  
[georget@cityofflacrosse.org](mailto:georget@cityofflacrosse.org)

