

Wausau Fire Department 2025 Annual Report



City of Wausau
Doug Diny, Mayor
Lisa Rasmussen, Council President

Wausau City Council

CAROL LUKENS

First Aldermanic District

MICHAEL MARTENS

Second Aldermanic District

TERRY KILIAN

Third Aldermanic District

TOM NEAL

Fourth Aldermanic District

GARY GISSELMAN

1/1-8/9/25

Fifth Aldermanic District

AARON GRINER

10/29-current

Fifth Aldermanic District



BECKY MCELHANEY

Sixth Aldermanic District

LISA RASMUSSEN

Seventh Aldermanic District

SARAH WATSON

Eighth Aldermanic District

VICKI TIERNEY

Ninth Aldermanic District

LOU LARSON

Tenth Aldermanic District

CHAD HENKE

Eleventh Aldermanic District

WAUSAU POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION

Cheryl Bahr, Commissioner (4/28)

Thomas Garver, Commissioner (4/29)

Katie Rosenberg, Commissioner (4/30)

Kathy Strasser, Commissioner (4/27)

Vylius Leskys, Commissioner (4/26)

Rick Reyer, Commissioner until 9/1/2025



**WAUSAU FIRE FIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION
LOCAL 415**

Adam Rahn, President

Maxxwel Nowitzke, Vice President

Mark Koepke, Secretary/Treasurer

Jared Koss, Member at Large



Wausau Fire Department

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

POPULATION 39,994	AREA SERVED 19.22 Sq. Miles	CALL VOLUME 7,206	UNIT RESPONSES 9,947	FIRE STATIONS 3	TOTAL PERSONNEL 66 Ops / 9 Admin
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→ STRUCTURE FIRES 49	→ MEDICAL/1ST RESPONDER 6,340	COMMUNITY IMPACT 4,112 Adults & 6,568 Children	BUSIEST STATION Station 1 – 2,812 Calls
→ VEHICLE FIRES 12	→ TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS 122	TOTAL INCIDENT HOURS 5271:21:21 Hours	BUSIEST CREW B Crew – 2,474 Calls
→ BRUSH/GRASS FIRES 12	→ EXTRICATIONS 13	TRAINING HOURS 15,255.24 Hours	BUSIEST UNIT Med 1 – 1,725 Calls
→ FIRE ALARM ACTIVATIONS 328	→ HAZMAT SPILLS/LEAKS 35	#1 MEDICAL DISPATCH Falls – 1,065 Calls	BUSIEST MONTH January – 677 Calls
→ ELECTRICAL CALLS 14	→ PUBLIC ASSISTANCE 127	ALL AID GIVEN/RECEIVED 310 / 39	BUSIEST DAY Wed – 1,095 Calls
UNIT TURNOUT TIME PERFORMANCE (STATION NOTIFICATION – UNIT ENROUTE) 2 Minutes 10 Seconds / 90% OF THE TIME	UNIT TRAVEL TIME PERFORMANCE (UNIT ENROUTE – UNIT ARRIVAL) 6 Minutes 49 Seconds / 90% OF THE TIME	FIRE INSPECTIONS 3,517	BUSIEST TIME 11 AM – 436 Calls
CARDIAC (STEMI) ON SCENE TIME (UNIT ARRIVED AT PATIENT – LEFT SCENE TIME) 15 Minutes 08 Seconds / 90% OF THE TIME	STROKE ON SCENE TIME (UNIT ARRIVED AT PATIENT – LEFT SCENE TIME) 18 Minutes 47 Seconds / 90% OF THE TIME		

MISSION

It is the mission of the Wausau Fire Department to provide rapid, professional, emergency services to protect and enhance our community.

CORE VALUES

Professionalism - We choose to take pride in our work, communicate effectively, project a positive image, and deliver service at the highest standards every time, in every situation.

Accountability - We accept responsibility and take ownership for our actions.

Integrity - We act ethically, honestly, and lead by example by having our actions reflect our word.

Respect - We choose to treat everyone the way we would like to be treated.

Compassion - We recognize individuals stricken by misfortune and take action to alleviate their pain as we serve them with kindness and understanding.



2025 Fire Chief Report



Wausau Fire Department
606 East Thomas Street
Wausau, WI 54403
Telephone (715) 261-7900
Fax (715) 261-7910



Doug Diny, Mayor

Jeremy Kopp, Fire Chief

Introduction

The 2025 calendar year marked a period of significant progress, transition, and challenge for the Wausau Fire Department. Throughout the year, the department remained focused on strengthening staffing levels, improving operational readiness, investing in leadership development, and addressing long-standing facility needs—all while continuing to provide high-quality emergency services to the residents of Wausau. Despite ongoing infrastructure limitations and staffing pressures early in the year, 2025 concluded with meaningful accomplishments that position the department well for the future.

Staffing and Workforce Development

One of the most significant achievements of 2025 was the department's successful return to full staffing for the first time in more than three years. This milestone was the result of persistent recruitment efforts, creative workforce solutions, and strong partnerships.

In partnership with Northcentral Technical College (NTC), the department launched its first Firefighter/EMT Apprenticeship Program. Six apprentices were assigned to shifts while attending paramedic school and learning WFD operations. All six completed paramedic school in November and were welcomed as probationary firefighter/paramedics, marking the successful completion of the department's inaugural apprenticeship program.

This program not only addressed immediate staffing needs but also established a sustainable pipeline for future workforce development.

In addition, the department transitioned from the California schedule to a 48/96 shift schedule, which has improved work-life balance, reduced overtime strain, and increased overall efficiency.



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Leadership Development and Succession Planning

Leadership development and succession planning were major areas of focus throughout the year. After staffing levels stabilized, the department reinvested in preparing members for future leadership roles.

Key initiatives included:

- Sending three Lieutenants to the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) to support leadership growth and succession planning
- Launching a structured leadership development track with mentorship and administrative exposure
- Conducting multiple assessment centers to promote and prepare internal candidates

These efforts supported:

- A Battalion Chief promotional process in anticipation of a March 2026 retirement
- A Lieutenant promotional process to fill an immediate vacancy and establish an eligibility list
- The selection process for a new EMS Division Chief
- Hiring to fill a Fire Prevention Inspector vacancy

These investments ensure continuity of leadership and institutional knowledge as the department prepares for future retirements and organizational growth.

Operations, Training, and Public Safety

Operational readiness remained a priority across all four quarters. The department continued to train extensively for:

- Cold-weather emergencies
- Ice rescue and water-related incidents
- Fireground operations and technical rescue

Public education efforts increased during the winter months, particularly related to ice safety, fall prevention, and holiday fire risks. The annual *Keep the Wreath Green* campaign once again highlighted the importance of safe cooking practices and space heater use, as multiple fires occurred during the holiday season.

Falls continued to be one of the leading causes of 911 calls, particularly during icy winter conditions, reinforcing the need for continued public awareness and prevention efforts.

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Community Care Paramedic Program

The Community Care Paramedic (CCP) Program continued to demonstrate strong value in 2025. Led by Community Care Paramedic Matthew Kozloski, the program expanded its reach and impact.

Highlights include:

- A 15% increase in home visits during the second quarter
- Increased focus on high-risk senior citizens
- Collaboration with Aspirus to develop a preventive care referral network

The CCP program has helped reduce non-emergency 911 calls, improve patient outcomes, and alleviate pressure on emergency departments, reinforcing its importance as part of the department's service model.

During 2025, the department faced significant challenges related to the EMS Division Chief position. These circumstances required the department to operate without a dedicated EMS Division Chief for more than half of the year. As a result, we took the opportunity to reevaluate several EMS-related policies, procedures, and administrative functions to ensure continuity of service and compliance during this transitional period.

Deputy Chief Pluess was asked to assume many of the responsibilities of the EMS Division Chief in addition to his existing duties. This required substantial commitment of additional time and effort. I cannot say enough about how much we appreciate his willingness to step into this role and ensure the continued success of our EMS operations. His leadership, professionalism, and dedication were instrumental in maintaining operational stability during this challenging period.

Grants, Equipment, and Capital Planning

Throughout 2025, the department aggressively pursued grant funding to modernize equipment and reduce reliance on local capital funds. Notable successes included:

- A Forest Fire Protection (FFP) Grant providing wildland firefighting gear for 13 members
- A \$15,000 Community Foundation grant for extrication equipment
- Advancement in qualifying for a Leary Firefighters Foundation Grant for thermal imaging cameras

The department also submitted multiple FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) applications and continues to await determinations.

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Significant effort was dedicated to refining the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), outlining needs over the next five years, including:

- Replacement of extrication equipment
- Replacement of cardiac monitors
- Additional parking at existing stations
- A new training facility and training tower
- A new fire station to address operational and space limitations

Facilities and Infrastructure

Facilities remain one of the department's most pressing challenges. Central Fire Station continues to show significant signs of aging and inadequacy for the department's current size and operational demands.

Ongoing issues include:

- Leaking pipes
- HVAC system failures
- Deteriorating exterior platforms
- Chronic overcrowding and insufficient parking
- Shared infrastructure challenges with the Police Department

A facility assessment identified critical needs, and the department is actively pursuing \$700,000 in funding for architectural design of a new fire station on Grand Avenue. In the interim, early planning has begun to add office space at Station 2 to relieve overcrowding at Central.

The department continues to work with state representatives and local partners to explore funding opportunities for both short-term fixes and long-term solutions.

Strategic Planning and Partnerships

A strategic planning committee was formed and met regularly throughout the year to guide the department's future direction. Core focus areas include:

- Staffing and personnel development
- Facilities and infrastructure
- Technology and equipment modernization
- Public engagement and education
- A refreshed mission statement and department branding

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Partnerships remained strong in 2025, particularly with:

- Northcentral Technical College (NTC)
- SAFER Fire District and Riverside Fire District for joint purchasing and vendor coordination
- City departments and community organizations

These collaborations enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and strengthen regional response capabilities.

Conclusion

The year 2025 represented a turning point for the Wausau Fire Department. From restoring full staffing and launching a successful apprenticeship program to advancing leadership development, securing grant funding, and laying the groundwork for future facilities, the department made substantial progress while continuing to meet daily service demands.

On behalf of the Wausau Fire Department, I extend sincere appreciation to the City of Wausau, our community partners, and the residents we serve. Your continued support allows us to meet the evolving needs of our community with professionalism, strength, and resilience.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or for additional information at 715-261-7901.

Respectfully,
Jeremy Kopp
Fire Chief
Wausau Fire Department



2025 Deputy Chief's Operations Report

Personnel:

In 2025, the Wausau Fire Department has seen a lot of changes in personnel with promotions, retirements, and new hires.

Retirements

Lieutenant Patrick Moucha	12/01/2025
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Promotions

FP Division Chief Shahn Kariger	03/03/2025
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FP Lieutenant Brad Ludwig	05/25/2025
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New Hires

Firefighter/Paramedic Matthew Bahr	02/03/2025
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Firefighter/Apprentice Ethan Kariger	02/03/2025
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Firefighter/Apprentice Jess Myerscough	02/03/2025
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Firefighter/Apprentice Jared Jacobs	03/03/2025
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Firefighter/Apprentice Nathaniel Cumberland	03/03/2025
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Firefighter/Apprentice Matthew Sitte	03/17/2025
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Firefighter/Apprentice Riley Humphrey	03/17/2025
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Firefighter/Paramedic Cory Hanson	05/12/2025
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Firefighter/Paramedic Anne Bares	06/09/2025
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Firefighter/Paramedic Benjamin Guiry	09/15/2025
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Firefighter/Paramedic Justin Borski	09/22/2025
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Years of Service Milestones

Lieutenant Patrick Moucha	35 Years
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Lieutenant Hyden Prausa	20 Years
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Engineer Marlon Marks	20 Years
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Engineer Derek Pionke	15 Years
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Battalion Chief Tim Bingham	15 Years
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2025 Deputy Chief's Operations Report

Operational and Organizational Report by Deputy Chief Justin Pluess

The year 2025 was a year of significant progress, operational demand, and organizational growth for the Wausau Fire Department. Across all divisions, the department remained focused on its core mission of protecting life and property while also making deliberate investments in personnel development, training, equipment modernization, and long-term sustainability. The initiatives undertaken this year reflect both the increasing complexity of emergency responses and the department's commitment to preparing for the future.

Emergency Operations and Community Impact

Throughout 2025, WFD crews responded to a total of 7,206 total calls for service, demonstrating an increasing demand for emergency services within our community. These responses included 49 structure fires, 12 vehicle fires, 12 brush fires, 14 electrical fires, and 328 fire alarm activations. The department also responded to 6,340 emergency medical calls, accounting for approximately 88% of all emergency responses. Additionally, crews handled 122 traffic accidents, including 13 vehicle extrications, 35 hazardous materials incidents, and 127 public assistance calls. The department also experienced an increase in water rescue responses and drowning-related incidents.

The fourth quarter alone included several serious incidents involving rescues, significant fire spread, and one tragic fatal fire. These incidents highlight the dedication of WFD personnel, as well as the critical importance of strong interagency partnerships, particularly with local law enforcement and regional response agencies.

For historical perspective, the Wausau Fire Department responded to 2,038 calls for service in 1970 when the City of Wausau's population was approximately 34,000 residents. In 2025, with a population of 39,994, the department responded to 7,206 calls for service. While the community population has grown by roughly 15%, emergency call volume has increased by more than 250%. On a per capita basis, this represents a substantial increase in service demand of the Wausau Fire Department.

The department continues to operate at a high operational tempo, often under challenging and rapidly evolving conditions. This sustained workload reinforces the ongoing need for appropriate staffing levels, advanced training, and modern equipment to ensure we can continue providing the high level of service our community expects and deserves.

Firefighter Paramedic Apprenticeship Program Success

In December 2025, the Wausau Fire Department celebrated a major milestone with the successful completion of its firefighter/paramedic apprenticeship program, approved the previous year. All six apprentices; Jared Jacobs, Ethan Kariger, Matthew Sitte, Nathaniel Cumberland, Jess Myerscough, and Riley Humphrey, completed the program while actively serving as full-time members of WFD and successfully passed the National Registry Paramedic examination, a nationally recognized and rigorous certification. This intensive program required each apprentice to balance emergency response duties with over 1,000 hours of classroom instruction, clinicals, and field experience. The completion of this program represents a significant investment in WFD's long-term staffing stability for the department. WFD is proud to recognize these six members for their achievement and for exemplifying the high standards, professionalism, and excellence expected of all personnel serving the community.

2025 Deputy Chief's Operations Report

The WFD firefighter/paramedic apprenticeship program has emerged as a model for other career fire departments in Wisconsin, demonstrating an effective approach to developing firefighter/paramedics while maintaining service continuity.

Leadership Development and Promotional Processes

Developing future leaders remains a priority for the Wausau Fire Department. In 2025, the department successfully completed multiple promotional processes that resulted in filling two Lieutenant positions. Jared Koss and Adam Rahn were selected through a competitive process focused on leadership competency, operational knowledge, and decision-making ability. Both will assume their Lieutenant duties in early 2026.

The department will also see a transition at the Battalion Chief level. Cody Wiesman will be promoted to Battalion Chief in March 2026 following the retirement of Battalion Chief Michael Becker. We extend our sincere appreciation to BC Becker for his more than 22 years of dedicated service to the Wausau Fire Department and the community he faithfully served.

The department also conducted a highly competitive promotional process to fill the Division Chief of EMS position. The process attracted many strong candidates with impressive experience, resumes, and professional backgrounds. Ultimately, Matthew Tormohlen, a former WFD employee who left the department to serve as a flight medic, was selected to lead WFD EMS operations beginning in early 2026. Additionally, in early 2025, Shahn Kariger was promoted to Division Chief of Prevention, further strengthening the department's focus on fire prevention, public education, and community risk reduction. Chief Kariger brings extensive experience and a strong commitment to proactive community safety initiatives. Also in 2025, Brad Ludwig, a dedicated member of the department for more than 22 years, was promoted to Lieutenant within the Prevention Division. Lieutenant Ludwig's extensive operational experience, institutional knowledge, and long-standing commitment to service make him a valuable leader within the division and an important contributor to the department's prevention and community outreach efforts.

Fleet

Ladder-2 Replacement. As part of the ladder apparatus replacement strategy, the Wausau Fire Department successfully sold the 2020 Sutphen ladder truck for more than originally purchased. The higher-than-expected sale price allowed the department to close the funding gap on the purchase of the new Pierce 75 ft ladder truck, making the replacement financially achievable.

Truck 1 Replacement Status: The replacement of Truck 1 remains a critical priority for the Wausau Fire Department. Now exceeding 12 years of frontline service, Truck 1 has experienced increasing mechanical and structural issues, including significant frame rust and a recent power steering pump failure that posed a serious safety concern. Funding for replacement was cut in the 2024 budget.

In 2025, replacement funding was deferred again due to budget constraints, further extending the service life of an already aging apparatus. Given that an aerial apparatus typically requires approximately three years to manufacture, even if approved in the 2027 budget, delivery would likely be in the year 2030, placing Truck 1 at approximately 18 years old at the time of replacement. Each year of delay increases maintenance risk, reduces operational redundancy, and elevates long-term costs.

2025 Deputy Chief's Operations Report

In 2025, the Wausau Fire Department took delivery of a new ambulance, Med-3, which was delivered in September 2025. Due to a backorder of the cot loading system, the vehicle has not yet been placed into active service. Once the required equipment is installed, Med-3 is expected to be fully operational in early February 2026.



Training

Training was a major focus for the Wausau Fire Department in 2025 as the department worked to rebuild staffing levels while maintaining a high standard of operational readiness. Over the course of the year, WFD successfully conducted four separate 4-week fire academies to train and onboard new personnel. Running multiple academies within a single calendar year represented a significant logistical and staffing challenge, particularly as these efforts occurred without a filled Division Chief of Training position due to ongoing budgetary constraints.



2025 Deputy Chief's Operations Report

Despite these limitations, the department delivered consistent, high-quality training through strong internal leadership, and the dedication of WFD Lieutenants. A key contributor to this success was Lieutenant Tautges, who voluntarily stepped away from his regular crew assignment and adjusted his work schedule to lead the academies. His commitment ensured that new hires received structured, comprehensive instruction while allowing the department to continue meeting daily staffing demands. This adaptability played a critical role in bringing the department to full staffing by December and highlights the professionalism and commitment of WFD personnel to the long-term success of the organization.

In addition to recruit training, one of the most impactful training initiatives of the year was the extended live fire training opportunity made possible through a generous partnership with Kolbe & Kolbe. The donation of a residential structure allowed WFD crews to conduct hands-on training throughout the summer and fall, culminating in a large-scale live burn training event in November.



Firefighters were able to train under realistic fire conditions, practicing coordinated fire attack, ventilation techniques, primary search operations, and command functions in a controlled but authentic environment. Live fire training opportunities of this scope are rare and invaluable.

The department placed emphasis on regional readiness and interagency coordination. WFD's Hazardous Incident Team (HIT) conducted outreach and awareness training with the Town of Wausau Fire Department and other neighboring agencies, sharing information on specialized hazmat resources and response capabilities. As one of only eight regional state hazmat teams in Wisconsin and the primary provider of hazmat coverage for Marathon County, this outreach strengthens mutual aid coordination.

Interagency collaboration extended beyond fire services as well. WFD crews participated in joint K-9 emergency medical training with the Wausau Police Department, focusing on the treatment of K-9 officers injured in the line of duty. Firefighters worked alongside police handlers and their K-9 partners to practice canine-specific trauma care, enhancing preparedness for rare but critical incidents and reinforcing the strong working relationship between departments.



2025 Deputy Chief's Operations Report

Additionally, the Dudley Tower has been an outstanding training partner for WFD, providing our Technical Rescue teams with a unique and challenging environment to refine their skills. Crews were able to rappel from the tower, practicing high-angle rescue and other technical operations in a safe, controlled setting. This collaboration continues to strengthen the department's preparedness for complex rescue scenarios and reinforces the importance of community partnerships in supporting firefighter training and operational excellence.

Federal Reporting Transition to NERIS

In 2025, the Wausau Fire Department completed the federally mandated transition from the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS), as required by FEMA and the U.S. Fire Administration. This transition was and continues to be a significant operational and administrative undertaking. It required extensive updates to the department's incident reporting software, the implementation of numerous new and expanded data fields, and fundamental changes to how incident information is documented and submitted.

To ensure compliance, WFD conducted department-wide trainings, so all members understood the new reporting requirements. The system officially went live at midnight on New Year's Eve, requiring a manual and immediate transition from NFIRS to NERIS to prevent any lapse in reporting. Following implementation, the department encountered multiple software and system-related issues that required ongoing troubleshooting with the department's third-party reporting vendor, ImageTrend, further increasing staff time devoted to report completion and correction.

Administrative Analyst Mindy Walker completed the majority of the troubleshooting efforts. She devoted substantial additional time to preparing the department's software systems for implementation and continues to identify and resolve system bugs and reporting challenges.

Despite these challenges and the increased workload placed on personnel, the department remains fully compliant with federal reporting requirements.



2025 Deputy Chief's Operations Report

Resiliency and Behavioral Health Initiatives

Recognizing the cumulative stress and mental health challenges faced by first responders, WFD continued to develop and formalize its Peer Support Team. Supporting the mental health and resiliency of our personnel remains a priority for the Wausau Fire Department. Over the past year, we have continued building our Peer Support Program to strengthen internal support systems, reduce stigma surrounding behavioral health, and ensure our members have access to meaningful resources when they need them.

A key accomplishment was hosting the IAFF Peer Support Training through funding provided by a grant from the Office of Rural Health. Hosting this training allowed several department members to participate and further strengthen our peer support program. The training included interactive, scenario-based learning designed to prepare participants to effectively support fellow WFD members during both personal and professional challenges.

In addition to internal peer support development, WFD personnel participated in behavioral health training led by our partners at Rogers Behavioral Health. During this training, members were introduced to Fire Watch, a virtual outpatient mental health program specifically designed for veterans and first responders. Fire Watch provides a confidential and trusted environment tailored to the unique stressors associated with emergency service work. The program offers flexible scheduling and evidence-based treatment options, creating an additional and highly accessible resource for department members seeking support.

The department also implemented the IAFF Resiliency Training, an eight-hour program focused on strengthening individual stress management and overall wellness. The training emphasizes self-assessment, adaptive stress response techniques, team cohesion, and practical tools such as tactical breathing, mindfulness, and healthy lifestyle habits. It also reinforces the importance of purpose and meaning within the fire service profession.

These initiatives demonstrate WFD's continued commitment to the overall health, wellness, and longevity of our personnel. The fire service is built on a culture of strength, sacrifice, and service to others; however, the demands of this profession often place a significant and sometimes unseen burden on those who serve. By expanding behavioral health resources, strengthening peer support, and providing resiliency training, the department is working to ensure our members know they are never alone in carrying those burdens. Supporting the mental and emotional well-being of our personnel is not only essential to maintaining operational readiness, but also reflects our responsibility to care for the dedicated men and women who selflessly serve the Wausau community every day.

Looking Ahead

The accomplishments of 2025 reflect a department that is actively preparing for the future while meeting today's demands. Investments in people, training, leadership development, mental health support, and equipment have positioned the Wausau Fire Department to continue providing high-quality service to the community. As emergency response challenges grow more complex, maintaining this momentum will remain essential.

2025 Deputy Chief's Operations Report

Type of Training	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	8,466.04
Driver/Operator Training	824
Facilities Training	353
Hazardous Materials Training	317.40
Misc Training	61
Officer Training	485.75
Specialty Training	975.75
Total	11,482.94

Training Categories:

Company Training – General firefighting training

Officer Training – Included leadership, management, supervision, and tactical considerations

Driver/Operator Training – Operation of fire apparatus

Hazardous Materials Training – How to mitigate the leak or spill of hazardous substances

Specialty Training – Rope, confined space, trench, collapse, ice, water, and other special rescues.

Facilities Training – Training at a live-burn facility (may include off-duty time)

Misc Training – Any other training category such as software, administrative, etc.

Type of Training	# of Hours -YTD
Admin Training	208
EMS Training	3,032.05
Fire Instructor Training	401.25
Fire Prevention Training	67
Investigation Training	64
Total	3,772.30



Station Information

Central Fire Station

2,812 Incidents

Central Fire Station is located at 606 E. Thomas Street, Wausau, WI. It houses Car 1 (Chief's vehicle), Car 2 (Deputy Chief), Battalion 1 (Incident Command), Truck 1, Engine 1, Med 1, Rescue 1, Med 4, Med 5, Car 5, three Inspection vehicles, Utility 1, Water Rescue Boat, Airboat, and Inflatable Rapid Deployment Craft.



Of the 22-line crew on each of our 3 crews, 11 of those are stationed at Central Fire. This includes, one Battalion Chief, one Lieutenant, 2 Engineers, and seven Firefighter/Paramedics.

Wausau Fire's Administrative staff is also stationed at Central Fire and includes the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, Training Division Chief, EMS Division Chief, Lieutenant of Inspections, Firefighter/Inspector, Administrative Analyst and one part-time Administrative Assistant.

Station Information

Station 2

2,138 Incidents

Station 2 is located at 3017 Seymour Lane, Wausau, WI. It houses Ladder 2, Med 2, Engine 4, and the Hazardous Materials Truck and Trailer.



Of the 22-line crew on each of our 3 crews, 6 of those are stationed at Station 2. This includes one Lieutenant, one Engineer, and four Firefighter/Paramedics.

Station 3

2,256 Incidents

Station 3 is located at 800 E. Bridge Street, Wausau, WI. It houses Engine 3, and Med 3.



Of the 22-line crew on each of our 3 crews, 5 of those are stationed at Station 3. This includes one Lieutenant, one Engineer, and three Firefighter/Paramedics.

2025 Fire Prevention/Inspection Report

The Fire Prevention Division is responsible for many facets of risk reduction through various activities. The most prominent is enforcing fire codes by performing annual and semi-annual inspections for all places of employment, public buildings, and businesses within the City of Wausau. The Division also investigates fires to determine origin and cause, provides fire safety education through public outreach and school programs, consults with citizens or business owners to resolve complaints.

Inspections: The Prevention Division completed a total of 3,517 inspections in 2025. Of those, 402 businesses were found to have fire code violations documented during routine inspections. This total also includes 90 consultation inspections, which involve new construction and remodeling projects, as well as fire protection system installations and upgrades within the City of Wausau. Entering January 2026, 31 violations remained outstanding and will be carried over from 2025. The Division will continue follow-up efforts at these locations to ensure compliance. To reduce carryover and improve compliance, the initial re-inspection interval was reduced from 28 days to 14 days in 2025. This change shortened the duration that businesses remain in violation, resulting in safer buildings for the public.

Technology and Software: Our APX inspection and pre-plan software, SmartInspect and SmartCapture, continues to be updated with building and contact information critical to successful emergency response through SmartMap. The Division also began using APX SmartInvestigate for fire investigation reporting in 2023 and continued its use through 2025, proving to be a significant improvement over the previous Word-based reporting system. Currently, 55 investigation reports are maintained in PDF format and include photographs for efficient access and reference.

The Wausau Fire Department entered into an agreement with The Compliance Engine (TCE) in 2021. TCE is a proactive compliance solution application and service which will reduce time spent enforcing fire code requirements. This increases our ability to verify compliant fire protection systems and strengthen the protection for citizens and visitors. The Prevention Division received and reviewed 1,624 inspection and repair reports throughout 2025. Of those reports, 1,507 were compliant, and 117 were deficient. This number is up nearly 10% from the 2024 numbers of 1,376 compliant systems and 111 deficient. The reason for the increase is simply due to the Division's effort in updating profile information, removing outdated information while also adding new buildings with fire protection systems. We remain vigilant seeking a greater level of compliance when deficiencies are found.

Investigations: The Prevention Division performed a total of 15 formal Fire Investigations for 2025. The state requirement for any municipal Fire Department is that every reported fire is investigated. The non-formally investigated fires are completed by the line crews while still on scene. These are simple fires that are either witnessed by the owners or obvious in nature. These smaller, less complex fires may be vehicle-related, dumpster, cooking/kitchen, chimney fire or where the owner already knows what may have occurred prior to the fire department being called. The origin and cause can then be determined without calling fire investigators to the scene.

Continuing Education: The Prevention Division attended the 4-day, 30-hour Wisconsin IAAI conference at Stevens Point in early June. This conference helps us meet the tested continuing education criteria needed to maintain our International Association of Arson Investigators - Fire Investigation Technician (IAAI-FIT) and Certified Fire Investigation (IAAI-CFI) certifications.

2025 Fire Prevention/Inspection Report

Division Chief Kariger and Lt. Ludwig attended the Wisconsin State Fire Inspector Association (WFSIA) 4-day, 28-hour conference at Wisconsin Dells in October. The annual conference included continuing education in the topics of CRR, stress management, home oxygen safety, fire protection and fire stop systems, fall prevention, lithium-ion battery safety, occupancy load, plan review, and updated NFPA codes and standards.

Public Outreach: The department performed 16 smoke alarm and/or CO detector installs for 2025, reaching a total of 21 people. We need to increase these numbers as we know there are many owner/occupied residents who do not have working smoke alarms. This program is a collaboration between the Wausau Fire Department, American Red Cross, and the City of Wausau's Community Development. Each household must have the detectors installed by the Prevention Division. During the installation, personnel provide a 20-minute fire safety talk and courtesy inspection of their home.

In a typical year the Prevention Division would also attend meetings with multiple community organizations. These organizations include but are not limited to- the United Way, Neighbor to Neighbor, Noon Optimist, ADRC, and assisted living communities or private businesses throughout the City of Wausau. These meetings consist of discussions ranging from fire safety and prevention to day-to-day department operations to coordination of fire alarm drills or evacuation planning.

Problem Properties Resource Team: The Prevention Division participates in a joint committee with other City of Wausau department heads and members from zoning, inspections, public works, PD, City attorney's office, and the mayor. This quarterly meeting presents problem properties to the committee for remediation solutions. We discussed multiple properties within the City during 2025. Typically, these properties deal with problem landlords, delinquent taxes and blight or dilapidated buildings.

School Programs: 2025 was another routine year of in-person fire safety education during the month of October with the Wausau School District. We were able to visit seven elementary schools providing this vital program, reaching approximately 2,043 students and 117 adults. Only one public school did not respond to our request to provide education. An instructional learning plan was still available for each school by way of a flash drive if they chose that route. These lessons were a combination of websites and videos pertaining to fire safety. We witnessed a total of 12 fire drills for the school system throughout 2025. We observe the drills, noting any areas of improvement, and then perform a small critique with the principal and staff on ways to improve this process. It includes input about the time it takes to evacuate, egress and exiting pathways, and staff communication for student accountability.

Promotions and a Vacancy: Lt. Kariger was promoted to Division Chief in March 2025. FF/Inspector Ludwig was promoted to Lieutenant in May 2025, leaving a vacancy for the remainder of the year. This vacancy highlighted the importance of the third position. This was the first time the Division performed all prevention duties, in addition to all required fire inspections, with only two personnel. Prior to 2017, before the addition of a third full-time Prevention position, engine and ambulance crews assisted by completing approximately 30% of all fire inspections. As a result, 2025 was an extremely busy year for the Division. Despite operating one position short for the entire year, the Fire Prevention Division remained fully committed and successfully completed all required work and fire inspections through limited light-duty assistance and a high level of dedication, teamwork, and professionalism.

2025 Tactical EMS (TEMS)

Quick history, in 2013, the Marathon County Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team partnered with the Wausau Fire Department and SAFER (South Area Fire and Emergency Response) to integrate paramedics into high-risk law enforcement operations. This collaboration was developed in response to critical incidents locally and nationwide, recognizing the need for immediate, on-scene medical care for officers and members of the public during tactical operations.

The multi-jurisdictional Tactical Emergency Medical Services (TEMS) Team experienced a highly productive and milestone-filled year in 2025. In addition to responding to operational callouts, the eight-member team significantly expanded its training and outreach efforts.

TEMS members provided tactical medical instruction at the first-ever Central Wisconsin SWAT School. Participating agencies included the City of Wausau Police Department, Mountain Bay Metro Police Department, Stevens Point Police Department, Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, and Marathon County Sheriff's Office. Training consisted of both classroom and hands-on instruction focused on lifesaving medical care in high-threat and high-stress environments. Topics included self-aid and buddy-aid, treatment of injured civilians, casualty movement, and safe extraction to higher levels of medical care.

The TEMS Team also delivered tactical medical training to all members of the Marathon County Sheriff's Office as part of its annual in-service program. Previously limited to SWAT personnel, this training was expanded department-wide to ensure deputies across all shifts received practical medical skills directly applicable to their daily patrol duties. Training sessions were conducted over multiple days to maximize participation and operational readiness.

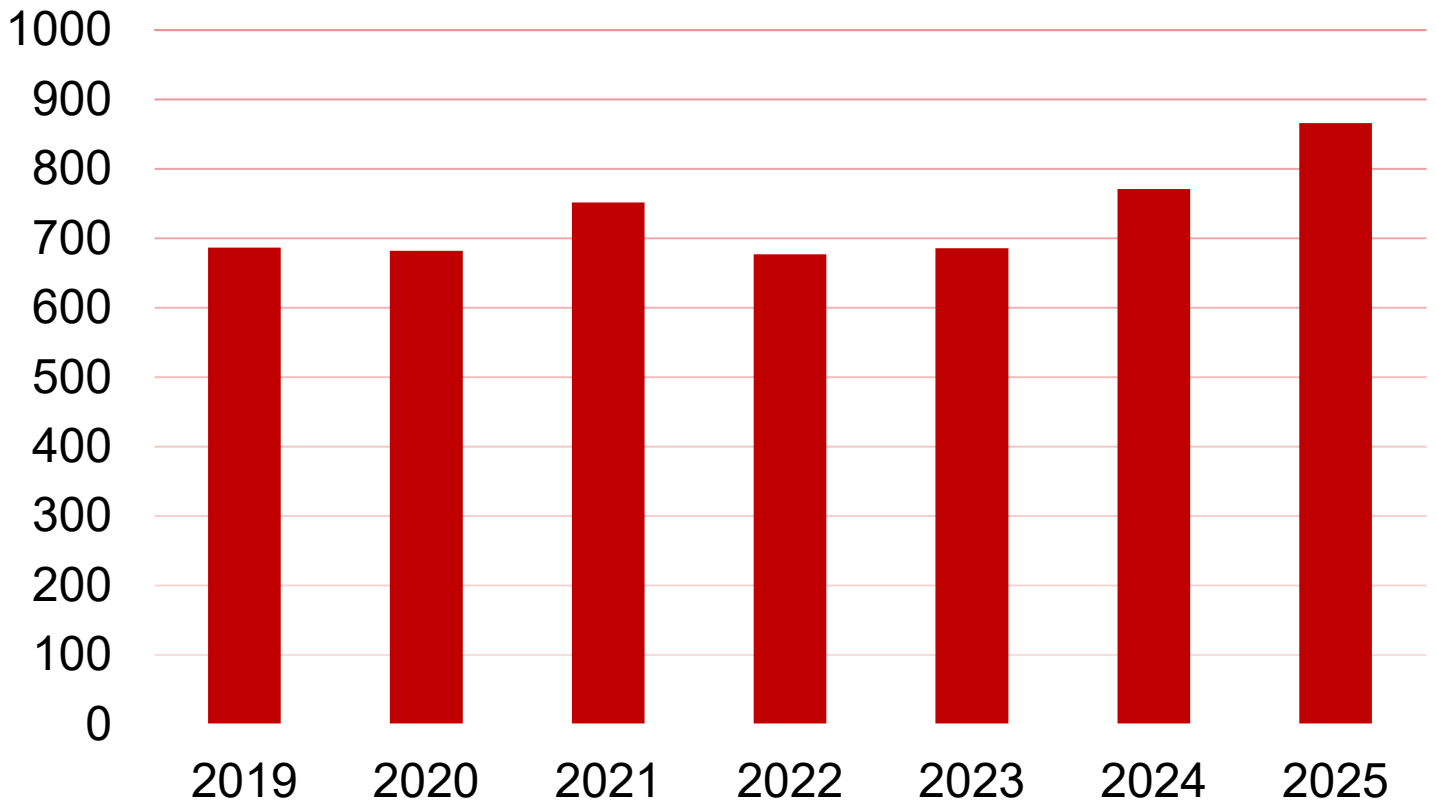
In March 2025, tactical teams from the Portage County Sheriff's Office, Stevens Point/Plover Police Departments, Marathon County Sheriff's Office, and Waupaca County Sheriff's Office were jointly recognized as SWAT Team of the Year by the Wisconsin Association of SWAT Personnel at its annual conference.

This recognition was awarded for the teams coordinated response to an armed and barricaded subject in the Village of Amherst, Wisconsin, in July 2024. The incident required sustained operations over nearly 26 hours and involved complex tactical and safety challenges. Through extensive training, disciplined communication, and seamless interagency cooperation, the situation was resolved without injury to civilians, law enforcement officers, firefighters, or EMS personnel.

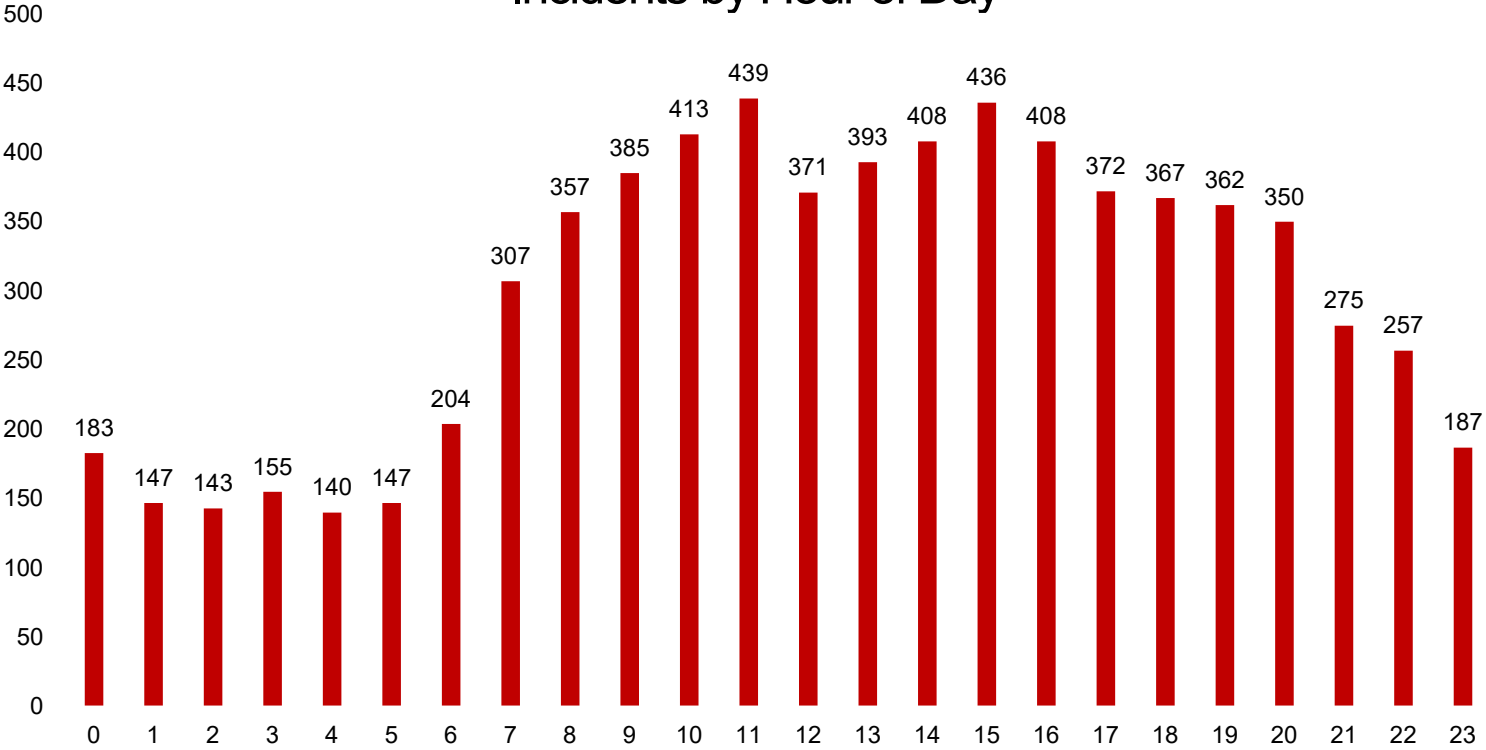
The continued success of the TEMS program reflects the strong partnerships between fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies across the region. The ongoing support of the citizens and communities served by the Wausau Fire Department, SAFER, and the Marathon County SWAT Team has been instrumental in strengthening training opportunities, enhancing interagency collaboration, and improving the overall safety and effectiveness of emergency response operations.

Yearly Fire Response Comparison Chart 2019-2025

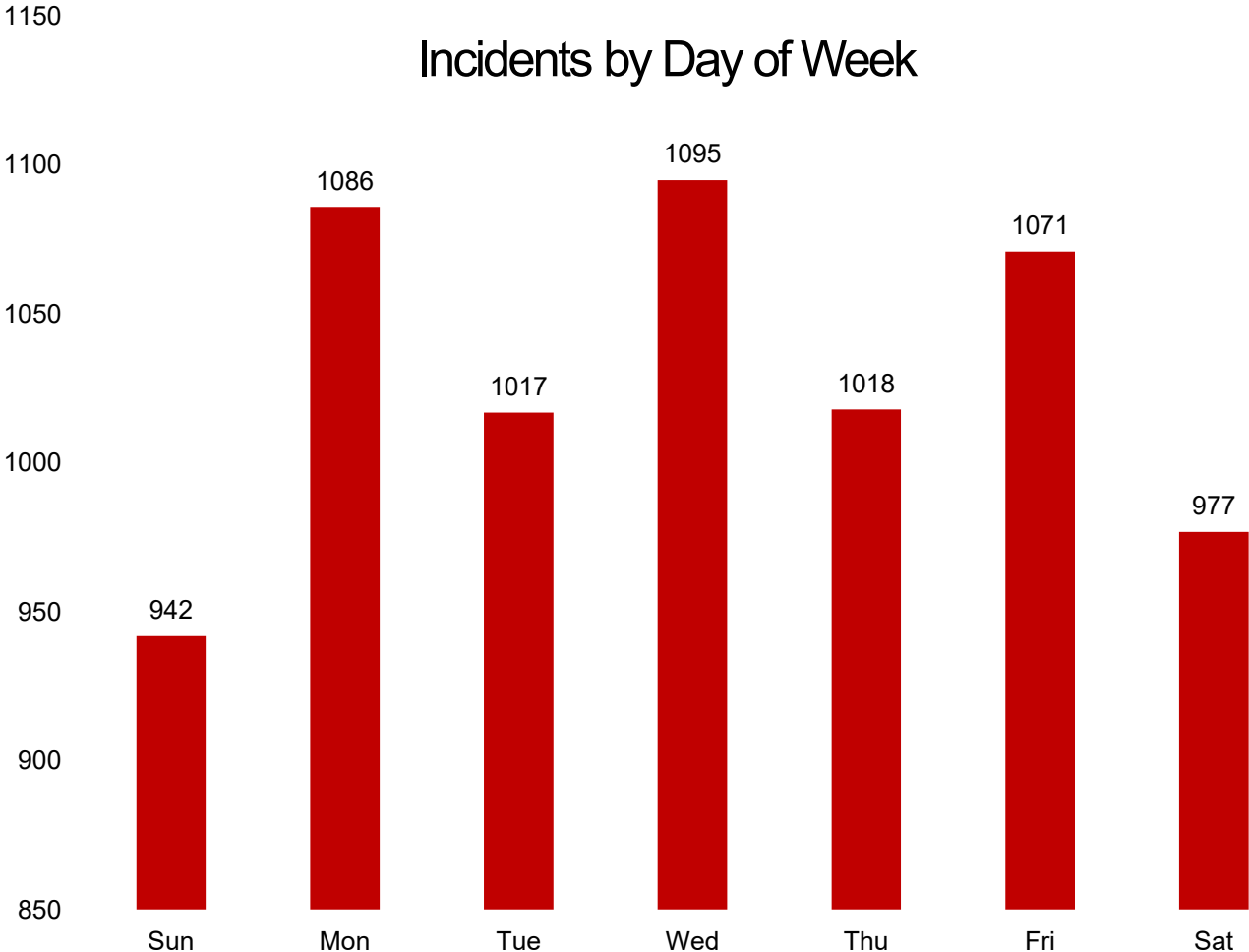
Year	Total
2019	687
2020	682
2021	752
2022	677
2023	686
2024	771
2025	866



Incidents by Hour of Day



Incidents by Day of Week



Patient Care Reports 2019 - 2025 (by month)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Tot	% of Chg
2019	484	449	524	514	464	457	546	469	496	479	480	507	5,869	+5.22%
2020	468	451	433	330	409	463	483	454	473	539	466	507	5,476	-6.69%
2021	453	404	439	443	487	526	496	515	484	495	515	525	5,782	+5.59%
2022	543	464	487	448	526	512	481	539	478	500	524	551	6,053	+4.69%
2023	528	466	501	475	537	510	611	512	486	563	547	577	6,313	+4.30%
2024	586	553	500	485	548	515	508	500	480	505	499	550	6,229	-1.33%
2025	601	531	478	507	562	512	557	546	530	471	512	553	6,360	+2.10%



Township Ambulance Responses

Township	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
City of Abbotsford		2	3	3	
City of Antigo			1		
City of Merrill	2	2	1	1	
City of Mosinee	3			1	1
City of Schofield	1	2	1	3	
Clark County	1	1	1		1
Oneida County				1	
Town of Bergen			1		
Town of Berlin	27	28	37	29	36
Town of Bevent		1			
Town of Bern		1		1	
Town of Cassel	10	3	5	9	11
Town of Elderon	1	1			
Town of Emmet	3				
Town of Frankfort			1		
Town of Franzen		1			
Town of Hamburg		6		6	2
Town of Halsey		1	1	1	
Town of Harrison		1		1	2
Town of Hewitt	14	25	27	13	19
Town of Johnson		1	3	1	4
Town of Knowlton			1		
Town of Marathon	1	3	2	4	5
Town of Mosinee	2		1		
Town of Norrie			1		
Town of Plover				1	1
Town of Rib Falls	7	5	5	1	5
Town of Rietbrock	2	1	1	3	3
Town of Ringle				1	
Town of Stettin	5	2	2	1	4
Town of Texas	79	62	54	71	77
Town of Wausau	89	113	136	93	101
Town of Weston			1		
Town of Wien	4	3	3	5	6
Village of Athens	1	5	7	1	3
Village of Edgar	5	1	4	4	6
Village of Hatley			1		

Township Ambulance Responses

Township	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Village of Kronenwetter	1		1		1
Village of Maine	109	102	151	101	129
Village of Marathon City	16	2	12	8	10
Village of Rib Mountain	3	6	8	6	10
Village of Rothschild	1	2	1		
Village of Stratford	1	1		1	1
Village of Weston	12	12	26	5	5
Wittenberg		1			
Wood County		1			
Total	451	398	504	377	443



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