

2024



A N N U A L
R E P O R T



OUR MISSION IS TO PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY IN OUR
COMMUNITY THROUGH A PERSONAL COMMITMENT IN ALL
SERVICES PROVIDED



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



Fire Chief Ronald D. Fowler

Monroe Fire Department is pleased to provide our 2024 Annual Report. This report provides a variety of information about the activities of our department over the past year. In keeping with our mission, Monroe firefighters have consistently demonstrated a personal commitment to protecting life and property in our community.

This has been a busy and productive year for the Monroe Fire Department. In addition to responding to emergency situations such as fires, emergency medical needs, hazardous materials incidents, and technical rescue situations, Monroe firefighters have also provided services such as fire code administration, fire cause investigations, and fire and life safety education. Whatever your need was, we hope we exceeded your expectations in meeting that need. Firefighters are often called when someone experiences a situation that is unexpected and unfortunate. We understand the loss and pain that is often associated with an incident requiring our service and it is my hope we provided not just the professional response necessary to mitigate these emergencies, but also the heartfelt compassion to support the individuals and families involved in these situations.

Thank you for the support and trust you have demonstrated in our department over the past year. We do not take this for granted and we strive to act in a manner to maintain that support and trust. I also thank the Monroe City Council and City Administration for their guidance and support, which enables us to offer the level of service we provide. I especially thank the devoted men and women of Monroe Fire Department for their commitment and professionalism in carrying out their duties in making Monroe Fire Department the outstanding organization it is today. I am honored and blessed to serve with them as we serve you!

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your fire chief. God has richly blessed me in many ways, including the opportunity and abilities to serve in this capacity. I do not take my responsibilities lightly and constantly strive to meet your expectations. Please contact me should you have questions or anytime that we may be of service.

Sincerely,
Ronald D. Fowler, CFO, EFO
Fire Chief



City Council /City Manager



MAYOR ROBERT BURNS



MAYOR PRO TEM DAVID DOTSON



COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES KERR



COUNCIL MEMBER SURLUTA ANTHONY



COUNCIL MEMBER JULIE THOMPSON



COUNCIL MEMBER FRANCO MCGEE



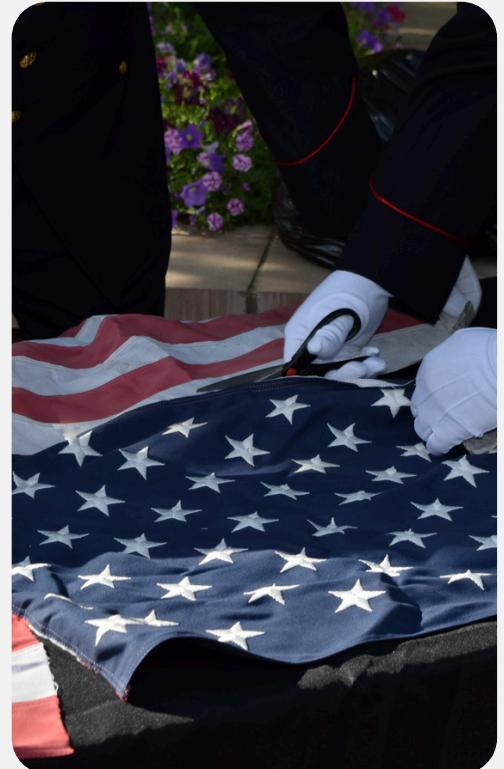
COUNCIL MEMBER GARY ANDERSON



CITY MANAGER MARK WATSON

PRIORITIES

Monroe Fire Department's mission is to protect life and property in our community through a personal commitment in all services provided.



Monroe Fire Department's Vision is to continue to fulfill our personal and organizational commitment to protect life and property in the City of Monroe, while living our core values in all that we do. This vision will only become reality by dedicating ourselves to service, embracing history living for our future, and pursuing excellence in all that we do.

STATISTICS

In 2024, MFD responded to 7,822 incidents, with a 90th percentile response time of 8 minutes and 29 seconds from 911 call to arrival, with a minimum of three personnel on scene for emergency incidents.



Monroe Fire Department operates 7 companies across three shifts, staffed by 87 firefighters from 6 fire stations. The busiest fire district in 2024 was Station 2, which handled 2,292 calls. Quint 2, the busiest ladder company, responded to 2,224 calls, while Engine 1, the busiest engine company, answered 1,858 calls.

COMMAND STAFF



Our Fire Chief sets the department's vision and ensures its overall functioning, while the Deputy Fire Chief's and other command staff support day-to-day operations, emergency management, and specialized functions. Together, they form the leadership team that drives the fire department's success.



*Fire Chief Ron Fowler (Top Left)
Deputy Chief of Operation Greg Collins (Bottom Left)
Deputy Chief of Administration Bryan Kindley (Bottom Right)*

BATTALION CHIEFS

MFD Battalion Chiefs are critical for maintaining operational readiness, ensuring compliance with safety standards, and supporting overall department goals. They step into command during complex or high-risk incidents, leveraging their experience to make decisions under pressure.



*A Shift Battalion Chief Johnny Blythe (Top Right)
B Shift Battalion Chief Rodney Chaney (Bottom Left)
C Shift Battalion Chief Travis Stegall (Bottom Right)*



TRAINING

Training Program Management:

Develops and manages training programs for fire department personnel.

Formulates drills, classes, and evaluations to ensure maximum operational efficiency.

Focuses on both manipulative skills (hands-on tasks) and technical knowledge.

Record Keeping & Reporting:

Maintains accurate records of fire training activities, incidents, and responses.

Ensures reports are complete and up to date for accountability and review.

Health and Safety Program:

Serves as the coordinator for the fire department's health and safety program.

Manages accident prevention and investigation efforts. Oversees annual NFPA 1582 medical evaluations to ensure personnel health and fitness.

Ensures OSHA compliance within the department.

Union County PEER Support Team:

Oversees and supports the Union County PEER Support Team, a resource to provide mental health and emotional support for fire department members.

These responsibilities ensure both the well-being of the personnel and the effective functioning of the department during operations.



**DIVISION CHIEF OF TRAINING
NICK STEFFLER**

TRAINING

HIGHLIGHTS

Total Training Hours:

31625.25 hours of total training completed.

New Firefighters:

6 Firefighters completed RC 24.

Promotions:

Captain: Captain Santonio Cunningham, Captain Jarrin Tucker.

Engineer: Engineer Hoke Carlan, Engineer Jeffrey Price.

Specialized Training:

Firefighter Recruit Hours:

428 hours per recruit.

Leadership Development:

Captain Graham D. McManus completed NC Fire Officer III.

Jason Easter completed Leadership Union.

Fire Marshal Training:

Fire Marshals completed NC FM101.

Fire Inspector Certification:

Captain Jason Easter and Captain Joe Uhl achieved Fire Inspector 2.

Training Infrastructure & Facilities:

Added two new training classrooms to the training grounds.

Added a new Vent Con ex Box to store materials for ventilation props.

Specialized Training Events:

Swift Water Training:

Conducted performance measures at the new Swift Water Training Center.

Hazmat Certification:

Hosted State Hazmat Tech and Chemistry Class, certifying 21 individuals.

Driver Operations:

Hosted Driver Ops Pumps and Aerials Class.

FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION



The Fire Marshal's Division is responsible for reducing fire risks and preventing life loss through a range of programs and processes.

This division oversees code enforcement, fire and life safety education, and fire investigations. It operates in accordance with the North Carolina State Building Code: Fire Prevention Code, NFPA Standards, the City of Monroe Code of Ordinances, and relevant North Carolina General Statutes.

In 2024, MFD conducted 1,954 inspections of businesses throughout Monroe. These inspections vary in frequency, ranging from every six months to every three years, depending on the type of business and its specific use.



*Division Chief Fire Marshal Kevin Philemon (Top Left)
Captain Assistant Fire Marshal Jason Easter (Bottom Right)*

FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION



The Monroe Fire Department (MFD) is committed to fostering strong community engagement through public education events held throughout the City of Monroe.

In 2024, MFD organized 402 events, reaching over 14,000 participants. Additionally, MFD's public safety messaging on Facebook and other platforms reached nearly 250,000 people.



*Captain Assistant Fire Marshal / Fire Life Safety Educator Katie Hinson (Top Left)
Captain Assistant Fire Marshal Joe Uhl (Bottom Right)*

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

Monroe Fire participated in the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal's Statewide Smoke Alarm Saturday. In 2024, we selected six areas to canvass, each located within the district of our stations. These areas were chosen based on structure fire data and the age of the homes. A total of 40 smoke alarms were installed, and over 60 homes were checked. Overall, in 2024, Monroe Fire installed 127 smoke alarms, 17 carbon monoxide alarms, and 117 batteries.



In 2024, Monroe Fire continued its partnership with Safe Kids Union County. Through this collaboration, we were able to host child passenger seat check events, which included a partnership with the Monroe Aquatic Center, an informational display at Target, and a seat check at the Union County Community Baby Shower Event. Overall, Monroe Fire installed 166 child passenger seats, 28 of which were given to caregivers. Captain Brian Eschenbaugh was awarded the 2024 Safe Kids Union County Child Passenger Safety Technician of the year.





EXPLORERS

The Fire Marshal Division continues to lead our Fire Explorer Program, which is designed for students ages 14 to 20 who are interested in exploring a career in the fire service. We recruited in person at Piedmont, Porter Ridge, and Monroe High Schools, as well as through our Facebook page.

In 2024, the Fire Explorers assisted with numerous community events, and we had around 25 participants enrolled in the program. Additionally, we have hired firefighters from our Explorer Program, further demonstrating its success and impact. This year we showcase the accomplishments of Explorer Tyler Easter. Below shows scholarships received by Tyler as he begins formal education for his fire service career.

Monroe Union Breakfast Rotary Club - \$2000 - These unique scholarships recognize students for their service to the community or environment; and do not consider academics, economics, or sports prowess, making them unique. Union County high school seniors, prepare a personal essay about their service to qualify. Club members select one student from each high school in Union County for a scholarship. Chosen students make an oral presentation to our club members. The club's scholarship committee decides the amount of each scholarship. Students receive recognition for their service and scholarships at a banquet with their families and school counselors.

(<https://www.monroebreakfastrotary.org/collegescholarships>)

Piedmont North Carolina Firefighter's Association Ted Armstrong Associates Degree Scholarship - \$2500 - The High School Graduate Associate's Scholarship application is open to any graduating high school senior, who is the dependent child of an active firefighter that is a member of the NCSFA, or a junior firefighter that is rostered on a NCSFA member fire department. The parent of the graduating high school student applicant or a junior firefighter scholarship applicant, must serve in a fire department that is located within the boundaries of the PNCFA voting district. Qualification points for the High School Graduate scholarships are based on the total number of Academic Points, Sports Points, Recognized Activities, and/or Fire Department Certification Activities you have completed or achieved. (<https://www.pncfa.org/scholarships>) - Fun fact...I grew up knowing Ted Armstrong at the Wayside Vol. Fire Dept. in Statesville! He and my dad served many years together.

MAB Foundation - \$2000 - The MAB Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, honors the life, work, and memory of Melissa Ann Bowman, 1968–2020. To celebrate Melissa's life and achievements, the MAB Foundation has adopted a simple mission: To help deserving CTE students receive financial assistance necessary to build successful, long-term careers in their chosen industry. The annual MAB4U Award provides funds to a graduating CTE student to either further their education or ease their transition from student to professional by covering some of the expenses associated with the early stages of their career. For more information, please visit <https://www.mabfoundation.com/>.

NC Association of Rescue & EMS - \$2000 - Awards shall be based upon the student's scholastic achievement, intellectual ability, financial need, character, and promise of future contribution to our State and Nation. The purpose of this fund is to award scholarships to children of members, deceased members, or retired members in good standing, for the purpose of attending a four year college or university, and for the purpose of attending a two year course of study at a community college or an accredited trade or technical school, any of which is located in the state of North Carolina.

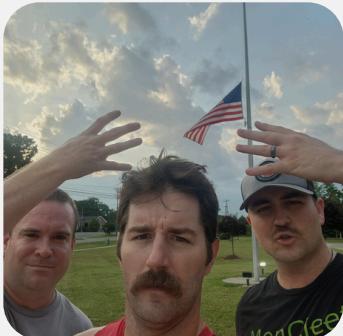
Continuation of the payment of educational benefits for children of active members shall be conditioned on the continuance of active membership in the Rescue or EMS service by the parent or parents. (<https://www.ncarems.org/scholarship/ruleschild.php>)

Monroe Relief Fund - \$750 - Provided for children of City of Monroe Fire employees. This scholarship is renewable while the student is in school.



Tyler Easter

LET'S GET SOCIAL



In 2024, the Monroe Fire Department used social media to give the community an inside look at the people, training, and moments that define our department. Throughout the year, we shared photos of members pushing themselves during the Murph Challenge, climbing in honor of fallen firefighters at the FDIC stair climb, and sharpening their skills through hands-on hazmat training. Our lighter moments connected just as strongly, from playing bingo with Sparky the Fire Dog at assisted living facilities to welcoming school groups on station tours and celebrating

Administrative Professionals Day. We highlighted the camaraderie of road trips to Buc-ee's, unforgettable moments meeting celebrities, visits from therapy dogs, and the delicious meals that fuel our crews. Fire Prevention Week allowed us to focus on education and safety, reinforcing our commitment to the community we serve. The year wrapped up with our top-performing post—a festive Christmas feature of an Elf on a fire truck—which perfectly captured the spirit, humor, and heart of the Monroe Fire Department both on and off duty.



CAMP 1872



Camp returned for the summer of 2024, building on its successful start in 2019 with just 22 campers. In 2024, we hosted 52 campers, ages 11-14, for a week of hands-on learning about a career in fire service.

Throughout the camp, participants learned valuable skills such as hands-only CPR, stop the bleed techniques, fire extinguisher training, firefighter hose advancement, extrication, and team-building activities. On Family Day, we proudly showcased the campers' achievements and what they had learned during the week. We also made a special announcement during the closing ceremony of the Camp 1872 name change to Camp 1884. The history committee research provided information through historical documentation that the accurate establishment of Monroe Fire Department was the year 1884.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all of our sponsors who help make this camp possible.



RETIREMENTS

Retiring from any job is a significant milestone, but retiring from the Monroe Fire Department (MFD) holds a deeper meaning. It's a moment of reflection on years of dedicated service, the strong bonds of family and camaraderie, and an unwavering commitment to public safety. This journey, marked by challenges, triumphs, and a sense of purpose, is one that stays with you long after the last call.



*Captain Lori Hyatt
30 Years of Service
1994-2024*

RETIREMENTS



*Engineer Clint "Pearl" Oster
25 Years of Service
2000-2024*



*Engineer Rick Cauthen
2006-2024*

PROMOTION TO CAPTAIN



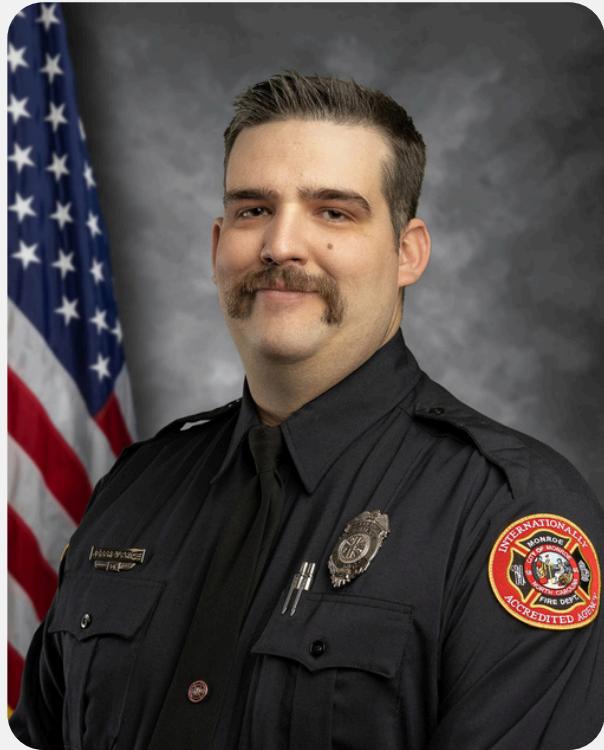
Captain Santonio Cunningham

Captain Jarrin Tucker



Achieving the rank of Captain in the fire service is a milestone that comes with a great sense of pride and responsibility. It's a recognition of years of hard work, dedication, and commitment to the safety of the community, as well as to the growth and development of fellow firefighters. Becoming a Captain is not only about being a leader on the scene, but also about guiding and mentoring those who will one day follow in your footsteps.

PROMOTION TO ENGINEER



Engineer Jeffrey Price

Engineer Hoke Carlan



Achieving the rank of Engineer in the fire service is a proud and significant accomplishment. It reflects years of dedication, technical proficiency, and the ability to perform under pressure. As an Engineer, you are entrusted with not only maintaining and operating the fire apparatus, but also ensuring that all equipment functions at its highest capacity during critical moments.

RECRUIT CLASS 24

ANYTHING WORTH HAVING
TAKES TIME.



From left to right: Andrew Schulz, Matthew Belk, David Sanchez, Kyle Phillips, Aiden Hinson, Clifton Daugherty, Unionville VFD Bayden Parker

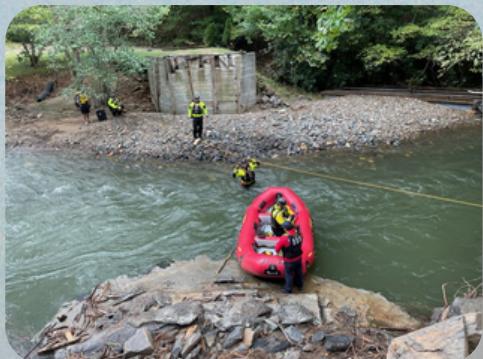
"I believe our time in recruit class was a major stepping stone into becoming who we are today. Through all of the skills including mayday and fire control drills we went through it definitely brought us closer together than we ever thought when we first started. From chopping wood to finishing triumph night I believe we all learned a lot of what it means to be a Monroe firefighter".

Class President Aiden Hinson

In the fire service, recruits are the foundation of tomorrow's leaders. They enter the academy with a desire to learn and a drive to serve, understanding the immense responsibility that comes with the badge. From mastering the technical skills of firefighting to learning how to lead under pressure, recruits face every challenge with courage, perseverance, and a deep respect for tradition.



HURRICANE HELENE



On September 26, a Type III Swift Water Rescue Team from the Monroe Fire Department (MFD) was requested and deployed, sending Swiftwater Team 1 to Jackson and Mitchell counties in North Carolina. The following day, September 27, Swiftwater Team 2 from MFD was requested and deployed to Ashe County, North Carolina. Both teams conducted numerous rescues and provided critical support to local fire departments as they responded to the devastating impact of the storm. Their efforts were vital in assisting the communities during this tragic time in Western North Carolina.

PIEDMONT NORTH CAROLINA FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION



Chief Blythe was sworn in January 22, 2025 by Chief Ron Fowler (past president) at Hemby Bridge Fire Department. Chief Blythe will represent the Piedmont NC Firefighters Association as President.



Chief Johnny Blythe
Hemby Bridge Fire Department
Piedmont President



The pride and ownership in the fire service, rooted in tradition, have shaped every aspect of this career. These values not only define who we are as firefighters but also serve as a legacy we pass on to the next generation of responders.



FIRE ADMINISTRATION CONTACTS

FIRE CHIEF RON FOWLER 704-282-4702
RFOWLER@MONROENC.ORG

DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS GREG COLLINS 704-282-4739
GCOLLINS@MONROENC.ORG

DEPUTY CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION BRYAN KINDLEY 704-282-4740
BKINDLEY@MONROENC.ORG

DIVISION CHIEF OF TRAINING NICHOLAS STEFFLER 704-282-4746
NSTEFFLER@MONROENC.ORG

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT II ALICE WILLIAMS 704-282-4726
AWILLIAMS@MONROENC.ORG

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPTAIN GRAHAM D. MCMANUS 704-282-4795
GMCMANUS@MONROENC.ORG

DIVISION CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL KEVIN PHILEMON 704-282-4706
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CAPTAIN / ASST. FIRE MARSHAL JASON EASTER 704-282-4713
JEASTER@MONROENC.ORG

CAPTAIN / ASST. FIRE MARSHAL JOE UHL 704-282-4741
JUHL@MONROENC.ORG

CAPTAIN / ASST. FIRE MARSHAL KATIE HINSON 704-282-4734
FIRE & LIFE SAFETY EDUCATOR
KAHINSON@MONROENC.ORG