

Pine River Fire Department
Annual Report
2023



2023 Calls for Service

1. 1-10-23 Responded to a report of a crash with possible injury, no injuries found, two units responded, time of call 8:07 PM, location: State Rd 64/Balsam Rd, Town of Pine River
2. 1-16-23 Paged for mutual aid, change of quarters to Tomahawk Fire Station due to MABAS alarm, took a pass due to manpower concerns, time of incident: 5:16 AM
3. 1-27-23 Responded to a single vehicle rollover on US Hwy 51 near Center Rd, arrived on scene and provided traffic control for about 1.5 hours while vehicle was removed and scene cleared, one unit responded, time of incident 11:06 AM
4. 1-29-23 Paged for mutual aid, Langlade County Town of Summit, this is the primary response area for Russell FD, we responded with a tanker for a structure fire. Crews were hampered by below zero temps. Location: W4815 County Rd J, Gleason, time of call: 6:26 PM
5. 1-30-23 Paged for mutual aid to the Town of Birch to assist with a structure fire, was a fire that started in the chimney and spread to the upper level of the home, we responded with our rescue unit and manpower, crews were once again hampered by temps at -30, location: W4815 County Rd J, Irma, time of call: 7:16 PM
6. 1-31-23 Responded to a residence for a report of a gas leak, prior to arrival caller phoned back to report the issue was actually a sewer that was backing up, furnace repairman was on the scene and also confirmed, location: W3245 County Rd G, Town of Pine River, time of call: 8:54 AM
7. 2-13-23 Responded to a report of a male trapped underneath a vehicle, EMS and first responders used equipment on scene to remove victim prior to our arrival, victim died from his injuries which happened hours before discovery, location: N1037 County Rd W, Town of Pine River, time of call: 8:14 PM
8. 3-19-23 Responded to a report of a one vehicle rollover with one person trapped, road conditions were extremely icy that day causing delays in response, first responders removed the patient prior to arrival, location: State Rd 64 // County Rd X, time of call: 9:49 AM
9. 3-19-23 Paged for mutual aid with the Town of Hewitt for a structure fire, responded with engine and tender truck as part of auto aid, prior to arrival Hewitt canceled all units, location: 241600 Star Rd, Wausau, time of call: 2:25 PM
10. 4-7-23 Responded to a report of a motorcycle vs semi-truck crash, prior to responding law enforcement arrived on the scene and cancelled all responding units as there were no injuries, incident location: State Rd 17//State Rd 64, Town of Pine River, time of page: 2:12 PM

11. 4-13-23 Paged for mutual aid for a large scale response to Fort McCoy, Monroe County WI, we were requested as part of a strike time under MABAS for an inter-divisional strike team to assist with a large scale wildland fire. Pine River sent two firefighters with Merrill's engine in order to have one engine company. Upon arrival firefighters were assigned to an overnight detail where they would respond for any potential structure fires during the night. The crews returned the next day after spending about 24 hours on the road or deployed.
12. 4-17-23 Responded to a report of a one vehicle rollover on US Hwy 51 at State Rd 64, law enforcement arrived on the scene and cancelled all units prior to our responding, driver denied injury, Town of Pine River, time of page: 7:03 AM
13. 4-17-23 Paged for mutual aid with the Town of Crescent Fire Department for two missing juveniles. This incident was first reported to law enforcement on 4-16-23 at 12:47 PM, however we were not called to assist until 4-17-23 at 1:00 PM, two firefighters responded with the brush truck and six wheeler, assisted at command post as requested until released at 5:40 PM. Location of incident, N10286 State Rd 17, Gleason, town of Harrison.
14. 4-17-23 Responded to a one vehicle rollover with entrapment, arrived on the scene to find two people trapped inside of a pickup truck that had lost control on the icy roadway and overturned pinning them inside. Used jaws unit to remove roof of the truck, extricated both patients with Merrill EMS, location County Rd G // Oak Ridge Rd, Town of Pine River, time of page: 1:40 PM
15. 4-19-23 Responded to a report of a two vehicle crash, law enforcement cancelled fire department prior to our responding, location: County Rd W // Center Rd Town of Pine River, time of page: 10:42 AM
16. 4-28-23 Responded for a report of a vegetation fire in a field, not threatening any buildings, responded with DNR and worked for two hours to put out fire and hot spots, location: W2389 Town Line Rd, Town of Pine River, time of page: : 5:34 PM
17. 5-4-23 Responded to a report of a two vehicle crash with injury, first responder arrived on scene first and reported no injuries and no entrapment, rescue truck responded and assisted with traffic and clean up, location: State Rd 64 // Poplar Rd, Town of Pine River, time of page: 12:20 PM
18. 5-4-23 Responded for a medical emergency, two first responders who were responding to the original crash call on State Rd 64 diverted to this medical emergency with our engine 2, which is fully equipped with EMS equipment including EMS jump pack, 02 and AED. Upon arrival assisted the med crew in loading and removing the patient from the home, incident location State Rd 64, Town of Pine River, time of page: 12:27 PM
19. 5-4-23 Responded for a reported vegetation fire in the ditch line potentially spreading to a pole, DNR responded as well with two units and quickly put the fire out, upon arrival with

brush truck assisted the DNR units with hot spots and investigation, location N2512 State Rd 64, Town of Pine River, time of page: 1:31 PM

20. 5-11-23 Responded for a car vs motorcycle crash with a report of the driver being ejected, arrived on the scene and assisted with traffic and clean up, location: State Rd 17 // County Rd G, Town of Pine River, time of page: 3:56 PM
21. 5-13-23 Responded for a report of a golf cart that caught fire and spread into vegetation, upon arrival found grass, golf cart and small shed in flames, put fires with minimum damage with assistance from the DNR. Location N1829 Range Line Rd, Town of Pine River, time of page: 1:21 PM
22. 5-27-23 Responded to a reported gas leak, found the homeowner was doing landscaping work when they struck a gas line, was able to turn off the gas and stood by until WPS arrived and repaired the line. Location: N850 Center Rd, Town of Pine River, time of page 4:14 PM
23. 6-3-23 Paged for mutual aid in the Town of Merrill for a possible structure fire. Original page was for a home struck by lightning, Merrill Fire requested and engine from Pine River, prior to responding MFD canceled the request within 6 minutes. Location: N2389 Snowflake Ln, Town of Merrill, time of page: 5:44 PM
24. 6-4-23 Responded for a crash with injuries, deputy arrived on the scene as we were being paged and told dispatch to cancel fire. Two first responders were already there, they assisted on the scene and quickly cleared, location: State Rd 64 at US Hwy 51 Town of Pine River, time of page: 12:44 PM
25. 6-26-23 Responded for a report of a vehicle fire, arrived on the scene and found a disabled vehicle with no fire, investigation showed a minor electrical fire had started but had gone out on its own. Location: County Rd W // Alpine Ave Town of Pine River, time of page: 6:32 PM
26. 6-29-23 Responded for a vehicle fire from possible a crash, right after dispatch a cancel page was sent as the incident was actually in Marathon County, location US Hwy 51 south of County Rd Q Town of Maine, time of page: 2:30 PM
27. 7-2-23 Responded for a report of a farm implement on fire in a field. Upon arrival found a hay baler engulfed in flames. Fire was extinguished quickly, however the equipment was a total loss. Location W2303 Town Line Rd, Town of Pine River, time of page: 3:58 PM
28. 7-3-23 Paged for mutual aid to MABAS Division 147 – Langlade County for a structure fire. Pine River was requested for a water tender. Responded with Tender 1 and provided two tanks of water, or 6,000. Location is N3928 Popple Rd, Antigo, time of page 10:47 PM
29. 7-6-23 Responded for a motor vehicle crash with injuries. Upon arrival first responders determined two minor and one serious injury. First responders assisted with patient extrication and triage of other parties. Provided traffic control and cleaned up fluids and

other debris once patients were removed. Location: US Hwy 51 // State Rd 64, time of page: 2:10 PM

30. 7-21-23 Responded to a single motor vehicle crash with injury. Upon arrival found where a vehicle had left the roadway and struck a culvert. Driver was out of vehicle and denied any injury. Provided traffic control and clean up as needed, location State Rd 64 // County Rd X Town of Pine River, time of page: 4:26 AM
31. 8-8-23 Paged to assist Merrill Fire Department with a structure fire in the city, five minutes after the page was sent we were canceled prior to responding. Location 1208 E Main St, City of Merrill, time of page: 10:21 AM
32. 8-10-23 Responded to a report of a motorcycle vs deer crash, first responders found a male patient who struck a deer while traveling at a high rate of speed. Assisted on the scene with traffic control. Location: Range Line Rd // Center Rd Town of Pine River, Time of page: 7:42 AM
33. 8-25-23 Paged to assist Merrill Fire Department with a structure fire in the City of Merrill, requested an engine and a chief. Upon arrival found the fire was knocked down by home owner with MFD putting out hot spots. Provided back up crew while MFD checked for hot spots and did overhaul. Location: 1910 Water St, City of Merrill, time of page: 7:25 PM
34. 8-31-23 Paged to assist Town of Russell Fire Department with a structure fire, requested for water and manpower, responded with tender truck and rescue and assisted on the scene for a house fire that was fully engulfed when RFD arrived. Location of incident: N6165 McCloud Rd, Gleason, Langlade County Town of Summit, Time of page: 5:50 PM
35. 9-9-23 Paged for a motor vehicle crash on US Hwy 51. While units were responding it was determined the crash was outside of our response area in the Town of Merrill, we canceled our response as MFD had units responding, location US Hwy 51 // County Rd K, Town of Merrill, time of page: 5:12 PM
36. 9-11-23 Responded to a home for a report of a CO2 alarm sounding and the resident feeling ill. Upon arrival did a check of the building with our multi gas/hazard detection device and found nothing wrong. Location W3391 County Rd P, Town of Pine River, time of page: 5:16 AM
37. 9-13-23 Responded to a report of a motor vehicle crash with injury, while responding, Pine River Chief was on the scene and canceled fire response due to the minor nature of the crash, location: County Rd X//Barker Ave Town of Pine River, Time of page: 7:33 PM
38. 9-21-23 Responded for a medical emergency, youth had fallen from a horse and was injured off the roadway into the woods. off road rescue vehicle was requested to assist first responders, location of incident: N1198 Liberty Rd, Town of Pine River, time of page: 7:11 PM

39. 10-7-23 Responded for a report of a car fire, upon arrival found a vehicle with an active fire, extinguished the fire with no injuries, location of incident: W4165 State Rd 64, Pine River School, Town of Pine River, time of page: 4:20 PM
40. 10-26-23 Responded for a report of a structure fire, while responding we requested mutual aid from Texas and Hewitt Fire Departments as part of our auto aid agreement, deputies arrived on the scene and found no active fire, caller was a passerby who might have mistaken a flickering light in a window as an active fire, all units canceled while responding, location of incident: W792 Spring Brook Rd, Town of Pine River, time of page: 7:26 AM
41. 10-27-23 Responded for a report of a motor vehicle crash with injury, upon arrival found a Dodge Ram truck which struck a large deer causing severe damage and fluid leak. Mitigated leaking fluid, cleaned up a large debris spill and provided traffic control. Location State Rd 64 // Deer Run Ave, Town of Pine River, time of page: 6:14 PM
42. 10-30-23 Paged to assist Merrill Fire Department for a structure fire, responded with an engine and a chief officer. Upon arrival found a home that was engulfed in flames. Provided on the scene assistance with fire suppression and overhaul of the fire until released by the incident commander. Location of incident: 1103 Jefferson St, City of Merrill, time of page: 8:15 PM
43. 11-2-23 Paged to assist Tomahawk Fire Department with a structure fire. As part of the MABAS box cards for Tomahawk Fire Department, if they deplete their resources for a structure fire they will call on us to provide an engine to backfill their station in the event of another alarm. For this incident it was a structure fire in a commercial building downtown that quickly spread to an adjoining building. PRFD responded with an engine, however shortly after going enroute, we were asked to respond directly to the scene to provide fire suppression support. Our engine was utilized to provide water to hand lines and an aerial stream, in total we pumped 60,000 gallons of water to assist in extinguishing this fire. In total over 15 departments responded to this incident which used resources from three different MABAS divisions. Incident location: 22 W Wisconsin Ave, City of Tomahawk, time of page: 6:33 AM
44. 11-18-23 Paged to assist the Merrill Fire Department with a structure fire in the city of Merrill. Provided a chief officer for command. Location of incident: 500 East St, City of Merrill, time of page: 12:38 PM
45. 11-22-23 Paged to assist the Hewitt Fire Department with a structure fire as part our auto aid agreement, provided a water tender and rescue truck with manpower. Location of incident: 241900 Sawmill Rd, Wausau, Town of Hewitt, time of page: 11:27 AM
46. 12-4-23 Paged to assist the Merrill Fire Department with a structure fire. Responded with an engine and chief officer. Upon arrival found the home was located in a narrow area with no real place to stage equipment resulting in our engine being left down the road and

firefighters walking in. Provided suppression efforts as needed until released by command.

Location of incident: W4093 Ackerman Rd, Town of Merrill, time of page: 9:55 AM

47. 12-5-23 Paged to assist Merrill Fire Department with a structure fire. Homeowner returned to property day after fire listed above and found the remainder of the home had burned to the ground. We were requested for an engine to respond, prior to a unit responding MFD arrived on the scene and discovered the home was destroyed and canceled all incoming units. Location of incident: W4093 Ackerman Rd, Town of Merrill, time of page: 10:00 AM

EMS Calls:

In 2023 the Pine River First Responders were dispatched to a total of 103 calls for service. Of those calls, with some calls having more than one responder, a total of 75% of the calls were answered, with 115 actual call responses between the eight first responders.

Breakdown of calls:

Total calls: 103

Total calls responded to: 77

Response percentage: 75%

Most common day of the week for an EMS call: Monday with 18

Most common hours of the day for an EMS call: 12 Noon with 10

Least likely time for a call: 10 PM to 3AM with 6 total calls for the year

Most common reason for an EMS call: Fall

Number of responses in the township for someone not breathing: 7

Mutual Aid requests: 0

Mutual Aid provided: 0

Response by unit:



Engine 2 = 13 calls



Engine 1 - 6 calls



Rescue 1 -15 calls



Utility 1 – 1 call



Brush 1 - 6 calls



Tender 1 - 6 calls



Tender 2 - 5 calls

Note: Not all calls had a vehicle roll; some calls were canceled prior to responding.

Calls by Day of Week:

Monday: 11

Tuesday: 4

Wednesday: 3

Thursday: 12

Friday: 6

Saturday: 6

Sunday: 5

Busiest Hour of Day: 12 noon – 5 calls

Busiest Month of year: April - 8 calls

Calls by Township:

Pine River: 28

Town of Merrill: 4

City of Merrill: 4

Hewitt: 2

Summit: 2

Tomahawk: 2

Harrison: 1

Ackley: 1

Birch: 1

Maine: 1

Monroe County: 1

Mutual Aid Requests by Department:

Merrill Fire Department – 8

Town of Russell – 3

Tomahawk Fire – 2

Town of Hewitt – 2

Rural Fire Control – 1

Crescent – 2

Maine – 2

Monroe County - 1

Cost of Mutual Aid:

At times, we still hear rumblings that we charge, or others charge our township when we provide or receive mutual aid. **This is completely false.**

As we are a part of MABAS, or Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, as is EVERY department around us, we cannot charge for mutual aid, nor can they charge us.

It seems the amount of times we call for mutual goes up and down, in other years such as 2023 that number is down. The best news we can give to our residents each year is we did not call for mutual aid this year from anyone. That means we likely had no structure fires and or what calls we did have, we handled on our own. Believe or not, we do not want calls for service. We go through great lengths every year educating the public on fire prevention, conducting fire inspections, working with other entities such as the county and state to improve safety on our roads, and training, all in hopes that our township and its residents are safe from harm.

Donations

In December, Cindee Kufahl donated the funds to purchase a new AED in memory of her husband Mike. This unit, which cost over \$2,000 was purchased from the same company we have using since the first responder program began, this is to have consistent equipment. This AED was immediately placed into service with a new first responder who is centrally located off of County Rd W.



In July, the family of Larry Langbecker donated a bench which now sits outside of the fire station. Larry was a founding member of our department and a strong supporter in his role as a member of the Town Board. We were very grateful to the family for remembering us and are proud that Larry will now be watching over us as we roll out to the unknown.



In November, the Merrill Virginia Falls Masons Lodge donated a FST fire suppression unit. This hand held device is as about as big as a football and is intended to be thrown into a structure fire by first arriving units in order to knock the fire down while hand lines are being readied for an attack. The Masons have equipped many law enforcement vehicles with these devices and we are proud to say they chose us for the first fire department donation.



In May, the Tavern League of Lincoln County donated \$250 to our department for equipment; this grant was matched by the Tavern League of Wisconsin for a \$500 total donation.



Recognition

At their annual award banquet in October, the Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce recognized Pine River Fire Department for being a runner up for the 2023 Non-Profit Business of the Year. It was very humbling to even be considered for this honor and we salute the winner in 2023, the O'Tannenbaum Tour.



Public Education: As we do every year, members of PRFD went to the Pine River School for Young Learners and taught the students about fire prevention during Fire Prevention Week. The students are taught both in the class room and with hands on demonstration outside.



Outside Training: Members of MABAS Wisconsin came to Lincoln County and did a classroom and hands on training with firefighters and dispatch staff for the implementation of the MABAS system in Lincoln County.



In June, Tomahawk Fire Department hosted members of our department as we did hands on training for LP gas emergencies.



In house training: In 2023, firefighter Kevin Georgenson became our training officer. He works with other department members to conduct training each month. Topics include landing zone training, pumping, drafting, ladders, and communication. In 2023 a total of 16 trainings were offered to members of our department along with other outside agencies.

Pool Fills: Our department remains as one of the few that still fills pools in the spring in our township. Besides being a public service we use this to provide training for our members and to produce a modest income for our department. Firefighters who go out on pool fills refresh their knowledge of driving, pumping, hose lays, and using a fixed water source for filling. This training also allows us to get up close with homes in the town and often we discuss strategy of “what if’s”, for instance if a fire broke out at this residence tomorrow, how would you set up the engine? Where would the tenders line up, what is the nearest water source? All those tactical decisions are taught in the classroom, however when it is 2:00 AM they sometimes can be hard to remember. It should also be noted; we have two tanker or water tender trucks. We never let both trucks go empty. It is not unusual on a nice day to run both tankers filling up pools, however one is always filled and ready to respond in case of an emergency.

Grants



Although they were generous when we first began in 2005, the federal government has not provided us with much funding since then, at least not in the way of an AFG, or Assistance for Firefighters Grant. However, our behind the scenes tireless member and secret weapon in the grant process, Wendy Savage kept pursuing. For those of you who do not know Wendy, she is a resident of the town and is retired from NTC where she spent the majority of her career working on grants. She has been an asset to our department and we estimate she has been able to help us procure over \$500,000 in federal funding since she began helping us many years ago.

The AFG grant was announced in January of 2023. It was essential in our mind that we receive an award in this year as we were at the end of the life cycle for some of our essential personal protective equipment, and without assistance the town would need to come up with a considerable amount of money. When we began in 2005 we knew this equipment as an expiration date in the eyes of DIHLR, and it was the hope that funding would be available in 2023 as we were literally living on borrowed time.

The good news is we received a considerable amount of money to help replaced this equipment with our grant. The bad news was the cost of everything had shot up beyond anyone's estimation and we soon realized this grant would be a godsend and cause much heartache financially. One way we thought of to get around this steep increase in prices is to reduce the number of turnout gear we purchased from the 28 we asked for, to 23 in order to make up for the shortfall. The government quickly reminded us they do not make up for prices increases and we needed to purchase just as we had specified in the grant, or they would just revoke all funds.

In the end, the head to toe turn out gear, air bottles, cascade system – which is what we use to refill the bottles along with all the masks that went with the air packs, cost us \$253,061.95.

The funds were from the following sources:

AFG Grant: \$208,262.85

Our 5% matching contribution: \$10,413.15

Our fundraising money": \$9,799.10

Town contribution: \$35,000.

One could say this grant cost the town \$45,000. In reality this grant saved the town \$208,061.95. If the grant had not been received the town would have been required to come up with the total funds for this equipment replacement without it.

Thanks again to Wendy, the town board and the officers of the department who spent considerable amount of time working on this grant, researching and making the best purchases, and for putting up with sleepless nights that it caused worrying about funding. In the end, it worked out, and we are as always thankful to the town for investing in us.

DNR Grant

Captain Zettler receives the praise for his grant. He works with the DNR every year to procure this money for our department. The grant money in 2023 was used to purchase personal protective equipment, helmets, coats, pants and boots for half of the department. A grant is

being pursued for 2024 which should outfit the rest of the department. Asst. Chief Tony Hartwig and Lt. Brad Hartwig also worked hard on this grant and thanks to their efforts we were glad all of our boots are Thorogood Boots from Merrill's own Weinbrenner Shoe Company.



Annual Open House

The one group that does not get enough praise in our department is our fundraising committee. You will see many volunteer departments that hold multiple fundraisers per year. They do them

well, they work hard, but the members get a little burned out by constantly having to come up with new ideas to raise funds.

Our department does one fundraiser per year, and they do it very, very well. The group decided to switch our date permanently to the first Saturday in October. This year the weather held out and we were able to hold a very successful event. In total over 50 local businesses provide prizes or cash towards or prizes. We enjoyed visits from the Wisconsin State Patrol, Rod's Wrecker and LifeLink III helicopter. As usual local and state politicians wander through, we appreciate this as it allows us time to discuss with them the important items that affect how we do business here, it also shows how they recognize this as a major community event which is a must attend for them.

In the end we are overwhelmed to report the 2023 fundraiser hit an all-time high with over \$33,000 netted in one day.

And one last tip of the helmet goes to the fireworks team. Their work is like the crown at the end of the night and the crowds have never been larger.



2023 Arcadia Wildfire

Around mid-April of 2023, weather conditions in the western and southwest part of the state caused the DNR to issue what is known as red flag warnings meaning conditions were extreme

for potential wildfires. Soon a fire broke out in Monroe County near the border with Jackson County outside of Fort McCoy. This fire grew quickly and caused several homes to be destroyed along with over 3,000 acres of wildland. Many people were evacuated from their homes and placed in shelters as the fire continued to grow in size hourly. Local resources were soon exhausted not only by the size, but also by the duration of the incident. A call for strike teams from MABAS Divisions went out, but those requests were mostly answered by agencies in the north and the east. At the time people wondered, why are you calling in services from places like Oneida County when counties adjoining the area where the fire was were not responding at all? The answer was simple, that entire area was a tinder box, by pulling resources out of those stations it left them vulnerable if other wild fires broke out, which they did. In our area we were enjoying very low fire dangers, hence the reason why our division was one of the first called to assist.

Around noon time on April 13, 2023, a message was sent to PRFD members looking for volunteers to respond as part of the Division 155 strike team. Captain Zettler and FF/EMR Andrew Grawien quickly volunteered, knowing not only would their assignment be dangerous, it would take them out of the area for over 24 hours.

A few hours later the pair made up a four person engine company and responded in Merrill's spare engine to the staging area in Monroe County. Overnight the pair was assigned to oversee a geographical area making sure additional fires did not break out and threaten the homes they were guarding.

Just over 24 hours our firefighters, along with other area firefighters returned home with much knowledge gained from this massive response.





Captain Zettler and FF/EMR Grawien during their deployment, note they are wearing their new wildland firefighter gear which we had just received from the DNR on a grant.

Keep the Wreath Green

Once again our friends at Fritz's Mountain and Katie Podgorski donated an oversized wreath that we hung outside the station from Thanksgiving into the New Year, hoping that it stays green without any red bulbs through the holidays. The purpose of the program is reminding residents of the increase of fire danger during the holidays and asking them to remain vigilant for fire safety. At the end of the season we were happy to report once again, our wreath stayed green this year. Thanks to Lt. Doug Sann for always organizing and hanging our wreath.



Santa in the Firehouse

One of our new favorite Christmas time traditions is a program we started in 2019 called Santa in the Firehouse. The purposes of this program are many, with the main one being we want the youth of our community to realize that the fire station is a pretty cool place to be at and hopefully someday they hang around more and become volunteers out here, or at their hometown fire station. Another reason for the event is to give back to our community who supports us so well throughout the year. Children who come out not only get their pictures taken with Santa, they also take home a bag with tasty treats and fire safety material, and they can sign up for two bikes which parents usually collect in secret and place under the tree come Christmas. The small amount of money we invest in this day comes entirely from our fund raising account. We continue to see this program growing every year and we were happy to see nearly 200 children come through this past year.



2024 Goals:

As officers, we strive to be fully educated and able to respond using the new county wide MABAS response system. Although we have been a part of MABAS for many years, it was not until January of 2024 that the Lincoln County dispatch center has agreed to recognize and utilize the system for dispatching. We as officers need to make sure we are familiar with each of the box cards and are prepared to start making proper requests, and fulfilling requests as they are received.

As department members we all strive to do more training, especially when it comes to our equipment. The good news is, we don't have many fires, the bad news is your skills get rusty when you don't train enough. We started that in 2023, and we hope to bolster that in 2024.

Mapping: As part of MABAS we need to make sure our mapping is up to date both internally and at the county GIS office, we also need to check our remote water fill sites and make sure they are properly mapped and marked. We do not use these often and it is a good year to make sure they are not overgrown and are accessible.

Driveway and house numbers are a concern, some driveways are overgrown with trees or brush and our fire numbers are starting to fade or fall down. We cannot help you if we can't find you and we can't get to you if your driveway is overgrown with trees.

WILL A FIRE TRUCK FIT DOWN YOUR DRIVEWAY?

In the event of a wildfire in your area, firefighters may need to reach your home. If firefighters cannot safely access your home, they will find an alternative way to get to you that may take longer – and when fighting fire, every second counts.

Help Firefighters Reach You

To enable firefighters and other emergency vehicles to locate and reach your home quickly it's important to establish a safe route with adequate driveway access.

Here are a few steps to prepare your driveway for emergency access that could make all the difference in reducing damage to your property during a wildfire or other emergency event.

Step 1: Position your address sign to be visible from the road from either direction.



Photo credit: Wisconsin DNR



Photo credit: Wisconsin DNR

Step 2: Make your home visible from the road so firefighters can tell if it's safe to enter.

Step 3: Clear trees, branches or brush from your driveway so it is at least 12 feet wide and that there is at least 13.5 feet of clearance to allow fire trucks access.



Photo credit: Wisconsin DNR

Step 5: Check that your driveway is free of gates, fence posts or other obstructions that could restrict access.

Step 6: Create a space at the end of your driveway with adequate room for an emergency vehicle to turn around once it reaches your home.

Step 4: Be sure your driveway's surface is firmly packed and is able to support the weight of emergency vehicles even in the spring when the ground is soft.



Photo credit: Wisconsin DNR

