



# PORTAGE FIRE DEPT



MARCH 2024

NEWSLETTER

## Fire Chief's Report

Call Volume: 458 total calls. A small dip from January, but still almost 20% higher than February 2023. There were 340 EMS calls, also approx. 20% increase from February 2023. There were two structure fires, a car fire and 17 vehicle crashes.

This time last year we were at 19 mutual aid calls. This year we are at 12, three for the month of February.

We will have at least two more openings coming up from retirements. We received 48 applications with our last process. We are hoping to produce a robust hiring list. We also have multiple paramedics applying for this list.

**Assistance to Firefighter Federal Grant:** We submitted the Assistance to Firefighter Grant last week for bunker gear, for \$329,195.12 (\$29,926.83 is our match) and we should be hearing something in the fall.



# Welcome Alekszandr Rhody



# Fire Investigation Team



The Fire Investigation Team has diligently carried out two significant investigations in the early part of this year, contributing valuable insights into fire origins and safety protocols.

Our first case involved a trailer fire located on the north side of the city. After a thorough examination of the scene and evidence, the team concluded that the incident was accidental. This investigation not only helped in understanding the cause but also in reinforcing the importance of fire safety measures in similar settings.

The second case addressed a semi cab fire within the premises of a local towing company. Initially suspected to be of suspicious origin, our comprehensive investigative process revealed that this, too, was an accidental fire. Such findings are instrumental in dispelling concerns of foul play and focusing on preventive strategies.

Furthermore, the team currently has a vacancy and is looking forward to welcoming new talent. We will soon be inviting applications from those within the department who have a keen interest in fire investigation.

# Dive Team Report

## Training Initiatives:

In February, members from both the Dive and Water Rescue Teams participated in a joint training session at the MAAC Utilizing a 2500-gallon tank adapted for dive training, the session focused on equipment checks, weight adjustments in drysuits, and fostering cooperation between divers, boat operators, and line tenders. This intensive training effort resulted in a total of 96 man-hours dedicated to honing our skills and ensuring operational readiness.

## Equipment Servicing and Enhancements:

During the same month, all dive bottles were meticulously serviced to guarantee their reliability. Additionally, our capabilities were bolstered by the acquisition of four new Zeagle Rapid Diver setups. An initial orientation for these setups was conducted, with further training scheduled to fully integrate this new equipment into our operations.

## Team Expansion and Development:

The Water Rescue Team welcomed four new members in December, enhancing our response capabilities with the addition of two divers, Zack Swets and Billy Lundy, and two boat operators, Tim Fercik and James Snyder. January was dedicated to integrating these new team members, ensuring they were fully equipped and aligned with our operational standards and expectations.

## Marine 1 Preparations:

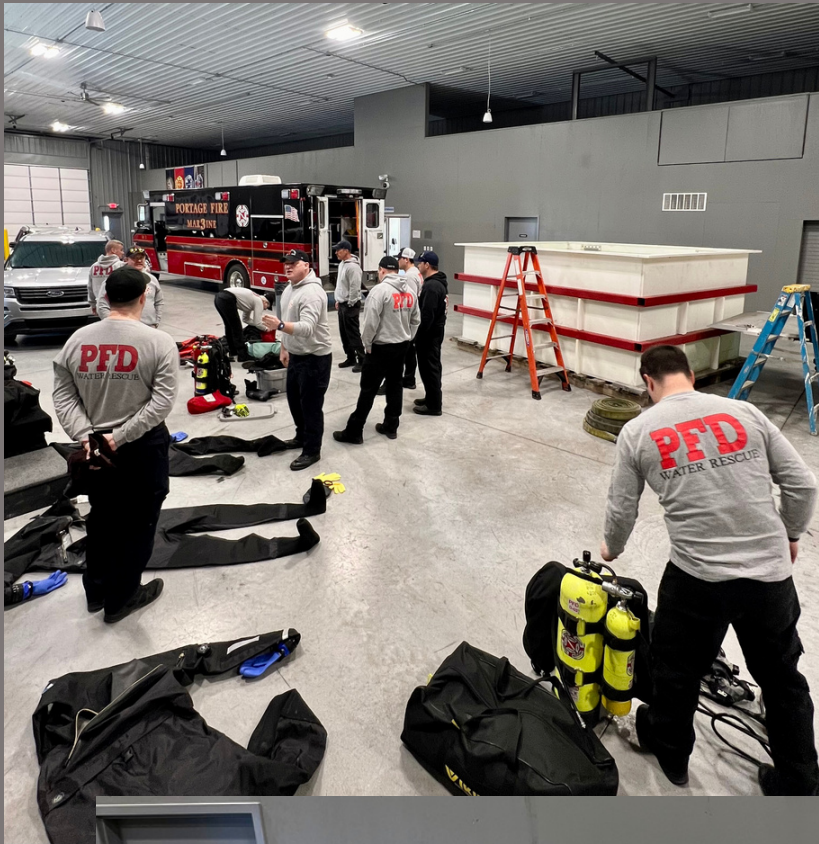
Looking ahead, Marine 1 is slated for comprehensive servicing in March to ensure its readiness for the upcoming busy season. With a projected return to service by March 25, this maintenance is crucial for our spring and summer operations.

## Strategic Enhancements and Collaborations:

Our leadership is actively pursuing a Port Security Grant through FEMA, aimed at upgrading Marine 1's engines, sonar, radar, and communication systems. This initiative, led by myself and Lt. Alexander, is focused on enhancing our efficiency and safety during missions on Lake Michigan.

Furthermore, we're engaging with the US Coast Guard station in Michigan City to discuss their summer coverage plans on Lake Michigan. This collaboration is essential for our strategic planning, given the expected limitations in CG assistance and potential for increased response times.

# Dive Team training at the MAAC



# EMS NOTES

OUR RECENT COLLABORATION WITH ACCUMED HAS BROUGHT TO LIGHT A NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENT: A 4% INCREASE IN AMBULANCE BILLING RETURNS SINCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR SIGNATURE TRAINING.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING NECESSARY SIGNATURES FROM PATIENTS AND HOSPITAL STAFF CAN SOMETIMES BE DAUNTING. HOWEVER, YOUR STEADFAST DEDICATION AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL ARE PROVING TO BE INCREDIBLY VALUABLE, NOT ONLY TO OUR OPERATIONS BUT ALSO TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY WE SERVE.

THIS POSITIVE TREND IS A CLEAR INDICATOR THAT OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS ARE MAKING A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. MOREOVER, WITH 10% OF THESE GROSS REVENUES FEEDING INTO OUR EMS NON-REVERTING FUND, WE'RE IN A STRONGER POSITION TO ENHANCE OUR EMS CAPABILITIES AND EQUIPMENT. THIS PROGRESS IS A TESTAMENT TO YOUR HARD WORK, AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT IT IS DEEPLY APPRECIATED.



Strong Work with the  
consumption test!

# Tactical Medics

This past month, we welcomed Steve Wise to the team. Steve brings previous armed security and firearms experience to the team. Steve is also a very experienced Paramedic and instructor.

This past month, we participated in firearms qualifying and training in which we all passed. We also had a second training at the MAAC in which we trained residence entry with force on force simulation. During the training, we also incorporated "man down" extrication. This included any team member that was "hit," to be properly removed from the hot zone and moved to a warm zone while using multiple different carries. This included basic man drags, drag straps and also packaging using a SKED.

## MSA Team

The MSA Maintenance Team is pleased to report the successful completion of our yearly flow testing for all SCBA equipment, including air packs, masks, and RIT (Rapid Intervention Team) bags, by the end of December. This comprehensive evaluation ensures that all our breathing apparatus are functioning optimally, reinforcing our commitment to safety and preparedness.

In January, we welcomed a new member to our team, Conner Ruckulos, who stepped in to fill the vacancy left by BC (Battalion Chief) Ross Steffel following his promotion. We are currently in the process of arranging for Conner to attend an MSA CARE training program, which will equip him with the necessary skills to perform repairs and maintenance on our SCBA units.

Looking ahead, the first week of March marks the beginning of our annual fit testing for every department member.

# March Birthday's

John Grandados 3/2

Chris Kender 3/4

John Jordan 3/5

Mark Vittetoe 3/11

Chris Crail 3/25

Brandon Collins 3/28

Ricky Medelin 3/29



# Work Anniversary

Randy Wilkening 30 years on 3/6

Vic Mercaldo 25 years on 3/15

John Novath 25 years on 3/15

Randy DeYoung 18 years on 3/20

Mike Laney 12 years on 3/26

Grant Hunsley 3 years on 3/15




A blue logo featuring a caduceus (a staff with two snakes) and the word "PARAMEDIC" in a stylized font.

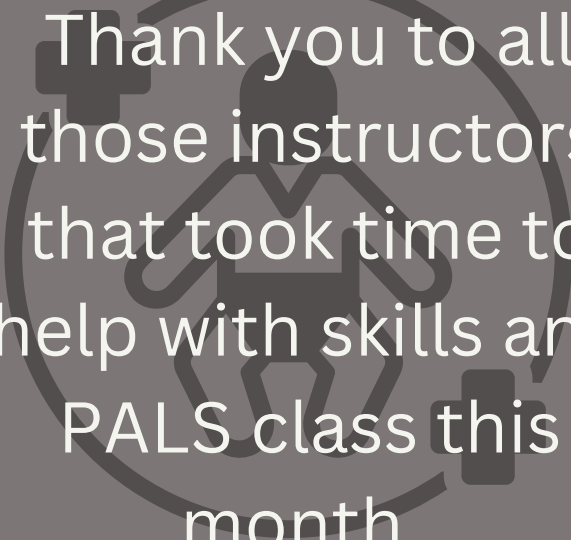
Recertification: Those of you who recertify in March you should already have your books submitted.

A large red heart with a white ECG line running across it.


Turn 3 station 1 Crew had a Cardiac arrest save on Feb 5.

A green four-leaf shamrock with a stem and leaves.

Happy St.Patrick's day! Reminder the SOP changed: green shirts can be worn up and including St.Patrick's day

A circular icon showing a person sitting in a chair, with a plus sign and a cross, representing a PALS class.

Thank you to all those instructors that took time to help with skills and PALS class this month.

A black silhouette of a computer monitor.

Plans are still moving forward with ESO reporting software

A black silhouette of a paintbrush with a wooden handle.

Thank you for all the hard work painting the hard work repainting the station.