

Ventura County Fire Protection District 2011 Annual Report



Message from the Fire Chief

Chief Bob Roper

The Ventura County Fire Protection District has a Vision Statement that says we will use teamwork to deliver the highest levels of service to the public. We believe this and live it every day. But really, the most important element of a Vision Statement is the word "vision."

Vision implies looking forward, into the future, and that too, is something we do every day. To be successful as an organization, we always have to be looking forward. That is how we assure that we can continue providing professional, efficient service to the people we protect.

We do this in a number of ways. The first is firefighter training. Our firefighters train continuously to both maintain their skills and learn new ones. This keeps our firefighters on the leading edge of technology and techniques, and that helps to save both lives and property.

To perform at their peak, firefighters need more than training, they also need up-to-date equipment, apparatus and facilities. Our Fiscal Bureau carefully manages our budget to allow us to purchase necessary equipment and allocate funds to be used for future projects.

This fiscal management allowed us to place 13 new first-run fire engines and one ladder truck into service in 2011, complete the construction of one new fire station and start construction on another. But training, facilities and apparatus are only parts of our overall vision for the future.

Our entire organization is committed to finding new ways to improve our service. This can be as simple as reorganizing our business units to the introduction of new technology. One example of this is a pilot program we have started to improve patient care at emergency medical calls by electronically capturing patient information that can be transmitted to the ambulance and hospital.

But the real future of our fire department is in the hands of our firefighters. That's why we strive to hire only the best and the brightest and that's why the competition to join the Ventura County Fire Protection District is so intense. In 2011, we had 10 firefighters retire, a loss of more than 343 years of service. But we also hired or promoted 31 new firefighters, with 17 completing their academy in July and the other 14 starting their academy in November. We expect to hold another academy sometime in 2012.

All of this means, at a time when other jurisdictions are laying off firefighters or closing fire stations, we have been able to build new fire stations, purchase updated equipment, hire and train new firefighters and leverage technology to better serve the people of Ventura County.

At the Ventura County Fire Protection District we are realizing our vision of the future, and the future is bright.

Board of Directors

The Ventura County Fire Protection District (Fire Department) is a dependent special district within the county that was created by a special election, held in 1928, to provide fire protection for the unincorporated areas of the county. Over time, the protection was expanded to include six cities in the county – Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, Port Hueneme and Ojai.

The County of Ventura Board of Supervisors acts as the Fire District's Board of Directors. One supervisor is elected from each of the five supervisorial districts within the county. These five supervisors appoint the fire chief to provide fire protection services for the District.

Currently, the Ventura County Fire Protection District Board of Directors is comprised of:



District 1 – Supervisor Steve Bennett

He represents the communities of San Buenaventura, Montalvo, Saticoy, Oxnard Shores, Mandalay Bay, north-west Oxnard, north Ventura Ave., Foster Park, Casitas Springs, Oak View, Miramonte, Meiners Oaks, the City of Ojai, the eastern Ojai Valley and Upper Ojai, and the North Coast.



District 2 – Supervisor Linda Parks

She represents the cities and areas of Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park, Westlake Village, Lynn Ranch, Oak Park, Santa Rosa Valley, Bell Canyon, Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Malibu-Yerba Buena, portions of the Oxnard plain, Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu and the South coast.



District 3 – Supervisor Kathy Long

She represents the communities of Camarillo, California State University-Channel islands, Port Hueneme, south-east Oxnard, the eastern Oxnard plain, Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, Lockwood Valley and the eastern portion of Naval Base Ventura County Port Hueneme.



District 4 – Supervisor Peter C. Foy

He represents the communities of Simi Valley, Moorpark, Somis, Las Posas Valley, Santa Susana Knolls, Box Canyon, Chatsworth Peak, Home Acres, Sinaloa Lake and the Tierra Rejada Valley.



District 5 – Supervisor John Zaragoza

He represents the communities of Oxnard, Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach, Hollywood-by-the-Sea, Channel Islands Harbor, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, the Del Norte area, Oxnard College, portions of the Oxnard plain and the western portion of Naval Base Ventura County Port Hueneme.



Ventura County Fire Department

165 Durley Avenue • Camarillo, CA 93010

805-389-9710 • Fax: 805-388-4364

<http://fire.countyofventura.org> • <http://vcreadyssetgo.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/venturacountyfire>

Firefighter Promotions

Promoted to Division Chief:

Ted Smith

Promoted to Battalion Chief:

Fred Burris

Chad Cook

Scott Zeller

Promoted to Fire Captain:

Dan Arnold

Octavio Armendariz

Philip Corsi

Eugene Fong

Robert Schaper

Brian Sullivan

Joseph D. Williams

Jeremy Bower

Israel Gutierrez

Michael Weisenberg

Promoted to Firefighter Trainee:

Spencer Burris

David Cabrido

Nicholas Derby

Jason Lafferty

Russell Perkinson

Brett Reynolds

Mitchell Doler

Sean Driscoll

Michael Kennedy

Zachary Trottier

Joshua Varnum

Promoted to Senior Fire Control Worker:

Keith Leonard

Gregory Peters

Civilian Promotions:

Ryan Kraai was promoted to Fire Prevention Officer.

David Ahrens was promoted to Sr. Fire Inspector.

Orville Brixey was promoted to Fire Equipment Mechanic I.

Kitty Turnbull was promoted to Accounting Officer II.

Mark Komins was promoted to Program Administrator III.

Robin Shedlosky was promoted to Sr. Program Administrator.

Promoted to Public Safety Dispatcher II:

Jennifer Nix

Adam Price

Promoted to Engineer:

Kevin Bart

Marshall Hatch

Brian Heath

Gregory Henderson

Anthony McHale

John Muhilly

Mark Pina

Christian Quagliata

Mark Villaseñor

Joseph E. Williams

Firefighter Retirements

Captain Wayne Maynard

Captain Kerry Ellison

Captain Richard Lajoie

Deputy Chief Kevin Nestor

Captain Mark Taillon

Firefighter Glen Renner

Captain Gary Desgagnes

Engineer John Uribe

Battalion Chief James Arledge

Engineer Steven Richter



Chief Roper leads the retiring firefighters in a retirement "pledge."

Department Profile

The Ventura County Fire Protection District response area covers 848 square miles, an area about half the size of the state of Rhode Island. The county has 42 miles of coastline and ranges in elevation from sea level to 8,831 feet at Mount Pinos in the Los Padres National Forest. The District provides fire, emergency medical and rescue services in areas as diverse as urban centers, the coastline, farmlands and wildlands.

In 2011, District firefighters responded to 33,564 calls for service – an average of 92 every day – under an adopted operating budget of just over \$128.3 million. Currently, the District serves about 57 percent of the population of Ventura County, more than 480,000 people in six cities and the unincorporated areas of the county.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PROFILE

PERSONNEL

Safety: (firefighters, battalion chiefs, etc.)	395
Non-Safety: (fire prevention, fleet maintenance, administration, etc.)	158
Total Allocated Positions:	574
Fire Stations: (plus one under construction)	31
Administration and Support Facilities:	4

APPARATUS

First-Run Fire Engines:	30
First-Run Quint Apparatus:	1
Ladder Trucks (incl. 1 reserve):	4
Paramedic Squad Vehicles:	4
Wildland Fire Engines:	11
Crash Truck:	1
Crew Transports:	3
USAR Vehicles:	2
Reserve Fire Engines:	15
Fire Boat and Water Rescue Craft:	5
Command Vehicles:	14
Heavy Equipment: (bulldozers, loaders, backhoes, etc.)	9
Other Emergency Response Vehicles:	33

2011 Highlights

New Fire Stations and Apparatus

In 2011, the Fire District demonstrated its commitment to its firefighters and the communities they serve by continuing to upgrade equipment and facilities around the county. Careful fiscal planning allowed the District to complete the construction of one new fire station, start construction on another, purchase 13 new fire engines and one new ladder truck.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held in May to start the construction of Station 47 on Erringer Road in Simi Valley. The station is being built in response to additional development in the Big Sky area and other safety needs in the central part of the city. The station's central location on the north side of the 118 freeway will improve response times in the Big Sky community and surrounding areas and increase operational effectiveness by giving firefighters easy access to the freeway for responses into other areas of the city.

And in October, the District dedicated the new Station 43 on East Los Angeles Avenue at the eastern end of Simi Valley. The station replaced the Santa Susana Knolls station on Cypress Street that had served the area for more than 50 years. The old station was small and no longer met the District's operational needs or modern code requirements. Featuring two pass-through engine bays, an office space and living quarters for six firefighters, a separate garage building and a training building with a community meeting room, the new station offers improved facilities for the firefighters, their equipment and the community at large.

It varies a little bit with the amount of wear and tear they receive, but the District's fire engines are generally in service for about 20 years. In 2011, the District took delivery of 13 new American LaFrance fire engines at a cost of \$435,000 each, and one new American LaFrance ladder truck at a cost of \$951,000.

All of the new vehicles have the latest safety features and firefighting technology. The engines were distributed among all five District battalions according to need.

"The new stations and apparatus are good examples of the forward-thinking financial and operational planning we're doing at the Fire District," said Fire Chief Bob Roper. "These are uncertain times fiscally, so in all of our budgeting, we're looking to the future to make sure we can always meet the fire protection needs of the people we serve."

CPR Saves

Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) is a proven lifesaving technique. There are 20 Ventura County residents who are living proof. Ventura County Fire Protection District firefighters, EMD dispatchers and their ambulance and medical partners successfully performed CPR and advanced life support procedures on 20 patients in 2011. Without this care, these patients would not have survived. This year's results continue a very successful trend. In 2010 there were 21 CPR saves and in 2009, there were 24.

Four-legged Weed Abatement

In May, the District used an unusual approach with the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley to enhance their defensible space and better protect the facility from a wildfire. A herd of more than 400 goats were used to help manage vegetation and provide an extra layer of protection outside of the required weed abatement limits.

The goat herd is very carefully managed to prevent over-grazing. Moveable fences were erected around the facility to create well-defined grazing areas. The goats were moved from area to area as they consumed the vegetation down to the desired levels. This environmentally friendly approach was very successful and well-received by both the Reagan Library and the public. In fact, the Library plans to increase the use of the goats for the 2012 fire season.



Station 43, East Los Angeles Avenue, Simi Valley



Station 47, Erringer Road, Simi Valley



Goats graze below the Air Force One Pavilion at the Reagan Library.

2011 Highlights

The Electronic Patient Care Record Program

In November, the District launched a pilot program designed to dramatically improve patient care by electronically capturing important medical information while at the patient's side at the scene of an emergency.

The Electronic Patient Care Record (ePCR) allows field responders to document patient information and then transmit it electronically to the ambulance and hospital in one report. The ePCR is designed to improve patient care by delivering a report to the hospital before the patient even arrives. This early information will help the hospital staff to understand the patient's needs and begin focused treatment immediately upon the patient's arrival.

Image Trend, Inc. developed the software for the program. It is designed to follow the typical work flow of an advanced life support or basic life support response in the field. This means first responders won't have to significantly alter their existing protocols in order to enter data into the system. The Internet-based system allows both mobile and desktop access for first responders, administrators and quality assurance managers to enter, review and comment on pre-hospital patient care records.

The pilot program was rolled out in the greater Ojai Valley from stations 21, 22, 23 and 25. All five Ventura City fire stations also participated in the program, along with American Medical Response, Lifeline Medical Transport, Ventura County Medical Center, Ojai Valley Community Hospital and Community Memorial Hospital.

All District engines were equipped with the devices by the end of January, 2012.



ePCR Motion Tablet



47th Fire Academy

Academies

In 2011, the District held one fire academy and started a second. Combined, these academies will graduate 31 new firefighters for the District and seven for other agencies. During their 18-week academy, trainees learn everything from the history of the District to hose evolutions, ladders and rescue techniques.

The Tenth Anniversary of September 11

More than 1,500 people assembled in front of the Fallen Firefighters Memorial at the Ventura County Government Center to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, at the Pentagon and in the skies above Pennsylvania. The event was a multi-agency affair sponsored by the Ventura County Emergency Planning Council. Participants included representatives from every fire, law enforcement and military branch in Ventura County.

Colonel Lou Danner of the Air National Guard served as the master of ceremonies. Both he and his wife were on duty in the Pentagon when it was attacked. Fire Chief Bob Roper and Sheriff Geoff Dean spoke at the event, and Linda Parks, chair of the Board of Supervisors and of the Emergency Planning Council at the time read the traditional Firefighter's Bell Ceremony to honor the fallen.

A total of 456 chairs had been set up for public seating at the ceremony. Each of those chairs represented a firefighter, peace officer or active military member who died in the attacks. Of that number, 343 honored fallen firefighters.

The ceremony featured a flag raising, military band, bagpiper, two buglers and a 21-gun salute. At the Memorial for fallen peace officers, a piece of steel from the World Trade Centers and a flag that had flown over the field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania were on display. After the ceremony, hundreds of people stopped to touch the piece of steel and reflect on the events of that day a decade earlier.



Firefighters raise a memorial flag.



More than 1,500 attended the ceremony.

Bureaus

The Fire District is divided into six functional bureaus and divisions. Each performs specific tasks either to directly serve the public, or to support the District's mission of public service.

The Bureau of Emergency Services fulfills the core function of the Fire District. The bureau is responsible for all fire suppression and rescue activities, the delivery of emergency medical care, regional dispatching, and specialized responses such as hazardous materials incidents (HazMat), urban search and rescue (USAR) and water rescues.

The Fire District maintains 31 stations across the county, staffed 24-hours a day, for responding to emergencies. The fire apparatus at these stations are equipped to handle fires, provide emergency medical care and perform rescue operations. As a regional dispatch center, Public Safety Dispatchers at the Fire Communications Center direct responses from the Ventura County Fire Department and most of the other fire agencies and all of the ambulance services in the county.

In 2011, all of the District's firefighters were provided with enhanced Rapid Intervention Crew training. District personnel also participated in a three-day, multi-agency Medical Shelter and Mass Casualty Incident drill, continued the development of the District's back-up dispatch center in Moorpark and fully integrated a new simulcast radio system.

The Bureau of Support Services consists of the Fleet Maintenance division, the Wildland/Aviation division and the Supply division.

Fleet Maintenance is responsible for keeping the District's fleet of vehicles in service and available for response. This past year, the following new equipment was delivered: 13 fire engines, one tractor-drawn 100-foot aerial, one Hazardous Materials trailer, one paramedic squad, and numerous light fleet vehicles.

The Wildland Fire and Aviation Division responds to wildfires with hand crews and dozers to create firebreaks, conduct backfiring operations and assist in firefighting operations. It also coordinates the use of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department fleet of helicopters for Fire District missions. In 2011, the division spent considerable time gaining approvals and using heavy equipment to create the Matilija Temporary Refuge Area for the residents of Matilija Canyon in the event they are trapped by a brush fire. The refuge area is also for use by firefighters in the event they need protection.

The Supply division receives and distributes all goods and materials for the Fire District. Most recently, staff distributed updated wildland PPE to the entire department and new structural turnouts to over 100 firefighters. The dedicated staff continues to provide pick-up and delivery to all fire stations and administrative sites.

The Bureau of Fire Prevention is organized in geographical units to provide the best possible service to the communities each serves. Each unit is responsible for three functions that are both interrelated and mutually supportive. They are: Planning and New Construction; Code Enforcement and Licensed Care; and Engineering and Fire Protection Systems. Fire Hazard Reduction (weed abatement), Community Education and Filming, and Public Information are handled on a countywide basis with support from the geographical units. Through its processes and programs, the bureau works to make Ventura County safer by educating and informing the public on how to prevent fires and prepare for disasters.

In 2011, the bureau continued its effort to streamline the discretionary permit process, made technological enhancements to the Fire Hazard Reduction Program and continued its participation and support of the Logistics and Planning functions of the Incident Command System during major incidents.

The Bureau of Planning and Technology consists of the Training, Public Records, Computer-Aided Dispatch, Geographic Information and Mapping, Emergency Medical Services, Information Technology, Pre-Emergency Planning and Investigations, and Telecommunication units. The technology-based units provide the District with the radio, computing and telephone services it requires to deliver its services to the public and operate its non-emergency business functions.

The Regional Training Center is responsible for fire, rescue and emergency medical training for the District's members. In 2011, regularly scheduled Wednesday training sessions were approved and implemented. The 47th Training Academy graduated in June, and the 48th Training Academy began in November.

The Pre-Emergency Planning and Arson/Fire Investigation unit aids the District by preparing plans for District actions in the event of a major emergency or disaster, and investigating the causes of fires. During the year, requests for Fire District records increased by 40 percent. The District investigated 30 arson cases and, along with law enforcement partners, made arrests in 13 of those cases. The bureau is also responsible for training Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members.

The successful launch of the simulcast radio system was the result of a tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work. Because of this effort, radio communication between ground units and the Fire Communications Center has been vastly improved. The geography of Ventura County, with its many hills and valleys, created many areas where radio communications were difficult. The simulcast repeater system not only improved communication inside the valleys, it allowed unit to unit communication between valleys, greatly improving firefighter safety and fireground operations.

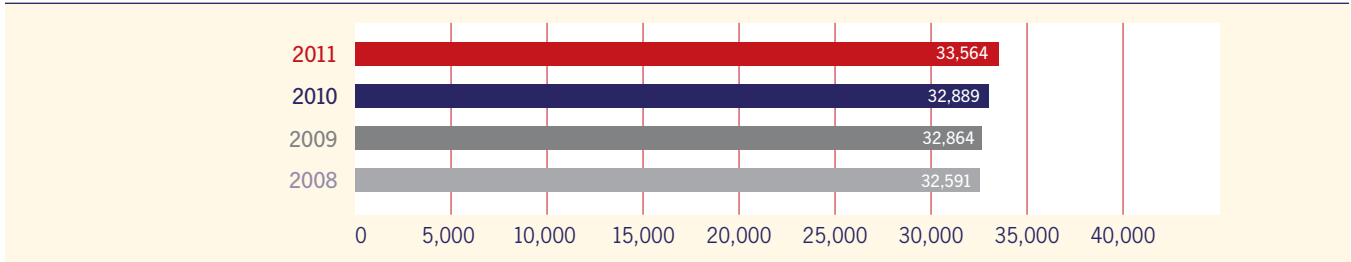
The Human Resources Division handles the recruitment, hiring and administration of the District's employees. It staffs the fire stations, coordinates insurance and other benefits, conducts testing for promotional opportunities and performs risk assessment for the department. Industrial accidents and injuries are also under the supervision of Human Resources.

In 2011, the Human Resources Division recruited firefighters for the two training academies, fire safety workers for the hand crew and a number of administrative positions. It also administered promotional processes for the positions of Division Chief, Battalion Chief, Fire Captain and Fire Engineer.

The Bureau of Administrative and Fiscal Services is responsible for the financial management of the Fire District. Its functions include payroll, accounts payable, purchasing, budgets, financial analysis and facilities management.

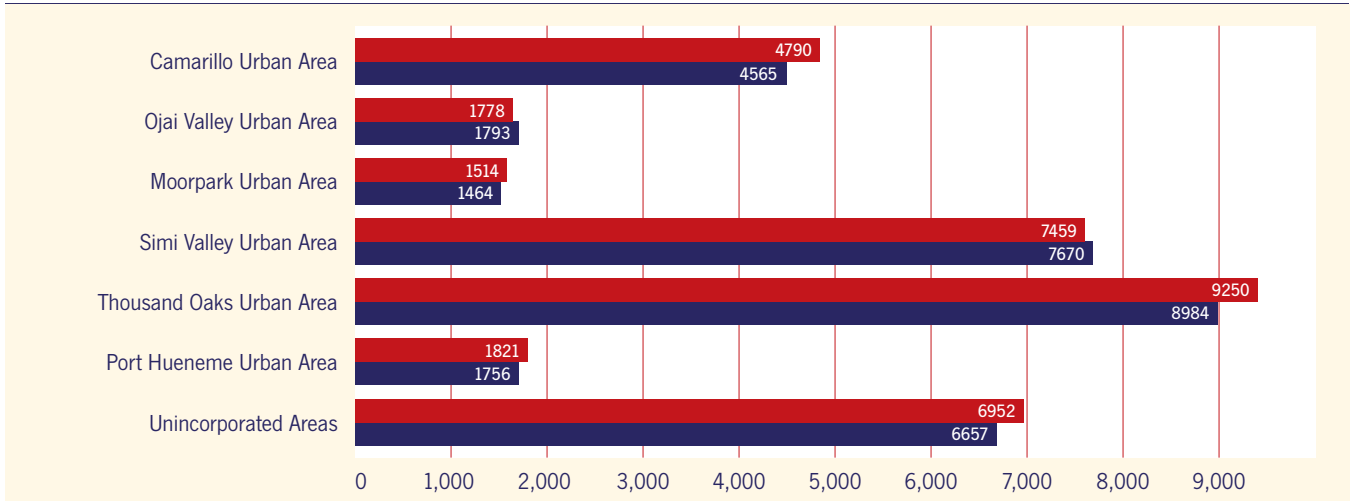
In 2011, the new Station 43 was opened on E. Los Angeles Avenue in Simi Valley, replacing an obsolete station in the Santa Susana Knolls area, and construction was begun on a new fire station on Erringer Road in Simi Valley. This station will be designated as Station 47 when it is opened in late spring 2012. The bureau also implemented a new timekeeping system, an asset management system, and developed a comprehensive cost recovery plan.

Annual Calls for Service



Calls for Service by Community

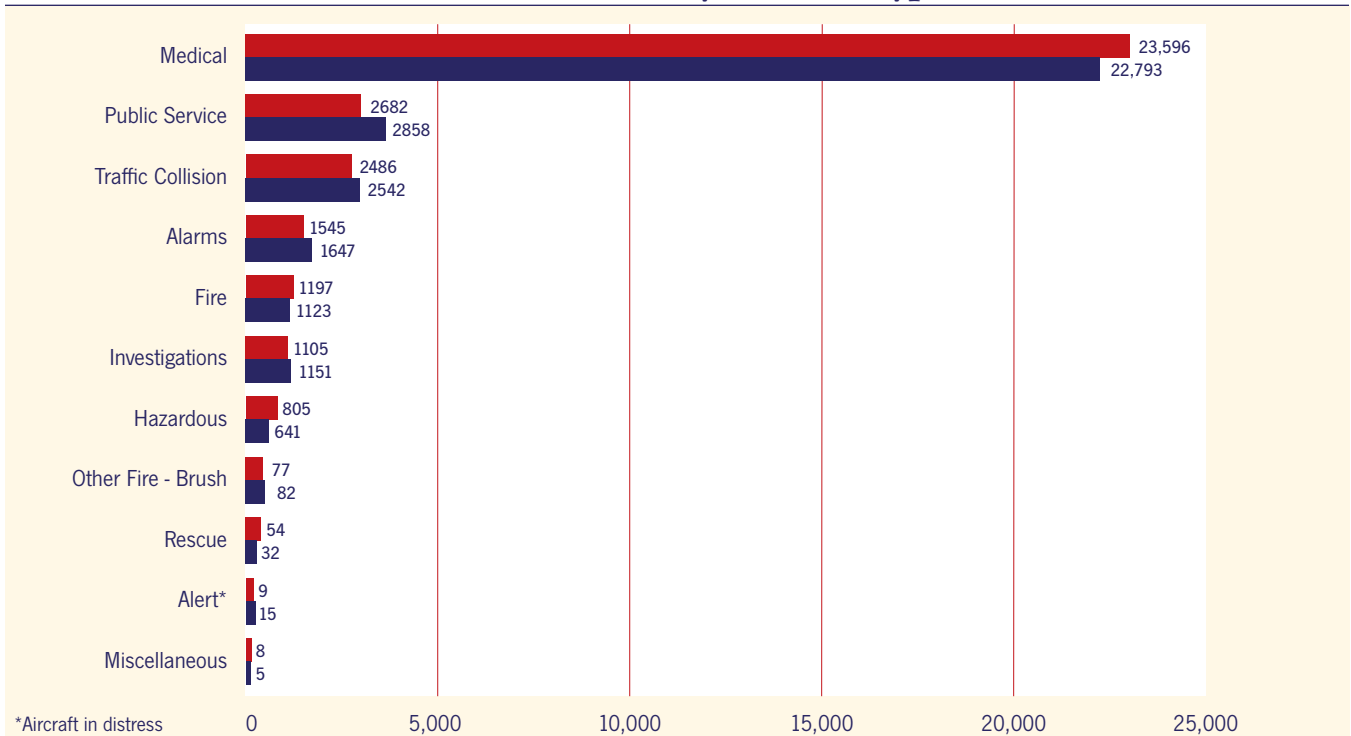
2011: 33,564 2010: 32,889



The statistics shown in this graph are generated from the District's Computer-Aided Dispatch system. The CAD system dispatches the closest resource to a call without regard to city boundaries. As a result, the statistics are shown by area, not city. Some results for 2010 have been restated in this publication due to changes in reporting methods. The Ojai Urban Area includes Oak View. The unincorporated areas include brush areas, the Camarillo and Oxnard Plains, portions of Malibu, and the communities of Oak Park, Casitas Springs, El Rio and Piru.

Calls for Service by Incident Type

2011: 33,564 2010: 32,889



*Aircraft in distress

