

**Fire Team 4
Volunteer Fire Association
PO Box 41
Skull Valley, AZ 86338
March 2025**



We're pleased to provide the annual Skull Valley Fire Team 4's (SVFD) newsletter and 2025 membership drive. With the \$100 annual membership fee for 2024/5 we had a membership increase to 130 property owners and businesses, which represents a little over half of the full-time resident property owners within our service area. Thank you!

The annual membership for 2025/6 remains at \$100 and the membership form is included with this newsletter. All paid members for last year should have received a specially designed patch as a token of our appreciation for your support. If for some reason you did not receive a patch, please reach out to us at 928-442-3487 or via email at svfireteam4@gmail.com. We still have several available and additional ones can be purchased for \$6.

SVFD would like to extend our gratitude to Southern Yavapai Fire Dept (SYFD - Wilhoit), Williamson Valley Fire Dept (WVFD), Skull Valley Historical Society, MSA Products, Queen Creek Fire Dept, Fort Irwin Fire Dept and Freeport-McMoRan (Bagdad mine) for their direct support in both materials and dollars. Their generosity enabled our annual operating budget to be cash neutral and provided needed equipment and training. This is an important achievement as there was an expensive Structure Fire engine E43 pump overhaul carried out over the last 6 months, which became complicated when we encountered an unrepairable, cracked pump housing. Our service readiness was maintained through the loan of SYFD's Structure Fire engine while the SVFD pump was overhauled.

The first responders continue to train through weekly classes. WVFD kindly donated some expensive, unused Fire I and II training manuals that a number of our first responders have completed. MSA Products, Queen Creek Fire Dept, and Fort Irwin Fire Dept provided a much needed upgrade to our Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and turn-out personnel equipment. Regular station workdays have and will continue to be conducted to test and maintain SVFD equipment. An absolute priority is to ensure that when we are called to an incident, our equipment is fully functional. Although SVFD is the smallest fire department in our region, we were able to assist our nearby communities on a number of occasions in 2024.

Last year we purchased an upgraded Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) that will replace the current unit on our Wildland Fire E40 engine in the coming months. The AED device that SVFD purchased for the community in 2023 remains available in The Forge coffee shop thanks to new owners Claire and Troy Eckard. The air compressor equipment donated by the Yarnell Fire Department was commissioned last summer and is now certified to fill the SCBA cylinders needed for fire fighting. As well as helping with some community water transporting duties, and supporting controlled burns, we were delighted to be part of Skull Valley's Elementary School Halloween event.



Oct 19, 2024 Car Show



SCBA Training



Oct 31, 2024 Halloween

Early last year we switched over to paid dispatch services provided by Mainstay (Rural Metro) in Glendale AZ, the same dispatch system used by all surrounding fire departments. This service also provides the incident reports. SVFD had 81

calls for the full year and is charged on a per-call-basis. As part of this service SVFD were required to join the transmitting radio tower system provided by WVFD. This system improved the reliability of dispatching for SVFD and response times. However, like all things in life one thing is certain and that is change! All but one of the neighboring fire departments will be changing dispatch services to the locally based Prescott Regional Communication Center (PRCC) effective July 1, 2025. SVFD will also be making this change to ensure we continue the dispatch reliability we achieved last year. This will be a seamless transition to those who require emergency services. A number of SVFD representatives met with PRCC representatives, the Prescott Fire Chief and Prescott Police Chief, and were provided a tour of the PRCC call center. Rarely does improved service come at a reduced cost and this change is no exception. The dispatch per-call-cost will increase and we have to budget accordingly.

If you experience an emergency, always call 911. Your 911 call goes to Yavapai County Sheriff's Office (YSCO) who determines the location and engages PRCC. Alerts from PRCC go to the nearest fire department's first responders, AND, if a medical emergency, they dispatch a LifeLine or AMR ambulance from Prescott. Based on 2024 reports, this results in SVFD being on-scene about 15 minutes before the ambulance arrives from Prescott. The majority of ambulances dispatched from Prescott will have a paramedic on board, and crucially, are licensed to transport a patient to the hospital if required.

If you are NOT experiencing an emergency, please call our local Skull Valley fire department number, which is 928-442-3487, or email us at svfireteam4@gmail.com. For example, a snake bite is an emergency whereas a snake removal request is most likely not an emergency. If in doubt call 911. Your membership also includes SVFD oversight of a controlled burn, when allowed and upon request. If you plan to burn slash piles, please call the non-emergency SVFD telephone line at 928-442-3487 and provide the contact and burn location details.

I also want to make sure everyone is aware there is a Yavapai County Emergency Notification System mobile phone app, called *alertYAVAPAI*. More information and instructions for signing up are on the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office website (ycso.gov). The notification system provides up-to-date information about wildfires, evacuations, floods, and missing persons by ZIP code.

SVFD has opportunities for volunteer first responders, EMTs, and board members. Being part of the board is a great way for a younger, career minded-person to bolster their leadership experience. Mentoring and support is available! If you sign up to be a SVFD first responder and are interested in the National EMT certification, SVFD will reimburse you for the training upon successful completion of EMT certification (~\$1500). If you would like to give back to the Skull Valley community, please consider joining Fire Team 4. And if you have trade experience in electrical, plumbing, building maintenance, etc. please consider volunteering your time. Many others help support your volunteer fire department and we thank everyone for their continued support. The current SVFD board members and first responders are as follows:

Board Members:

Vacant – President
Mike Haberern – Vice President
Jesse Garnee – Secretary
Gary Ralston – Treasurer
Vacant – Director at large 1
Vacant – Director at large 2
George Schaffer – Director at large 3

First Responders:

Dan Arnold (Training Officer)
Nick Colombo (EMT)
Robert Frias (EMT)
Willy Pleitgen (Chief)
Shane Floyd (EMT)
Sierra Fortner (EMT)
Morgan Floyd (EMT in training)
Caleb Schaffer
Gareth Schaffer
Wesley Schaffer
Jon Sheskey (Asst. Chief, EMT)
Jaden Schaffer

The SVFD is funded by membership donations, fundraisers, and grants. Membership donation is \$100 for residents and \$200 for businesses. See Figure 1 for a breakdown of the 2024 income sources and Figure 2 for a breakdown of the 2024

expenditures. I respectfully encourage you to consider supporting your local volunteer fire department as without you we may not be adequately funded to provide emergency services.

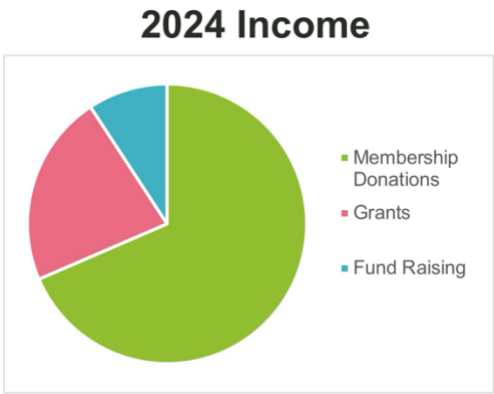


Figure 1: 2024 Income by Source

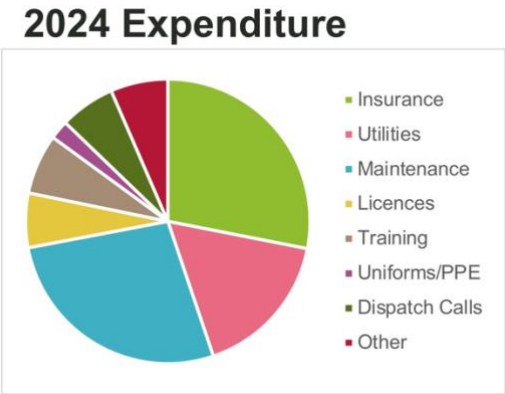


Figure 2: 2024 Expenditures by Category.

The funding from membership donations is vital to keep the SVFD equipment properly maintained and functioning. Funds are also allocated to upgrading equipment where needed. There are a number of projects we have identified and we will create cost-estimates for prioritization. Grants will be applied for to help bring some of these projects to fruition.

The 8th Annual Skull Valley Car Show on Saturday, October 19, 2024 was successful despite an early-morning rain shower that threatened to cancel the event. It turned out to be nearly perfect conditions once the early morning chill lifted. There were 79 paid entries with about 50 cars in attendance. A very respectable turn out considering there was snow on the Iron Springs pass at 5:00 am! The nearly \$3,000 in proceeds go to SVFD. Thanks for the support of many Skull Valley volunteers that help put on this event.

Please feel free to reach out to any board member or your Fire Chief with questions or concerns.

Your SVFD Board of Directors



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