



Mesa County Fire Authority Fire Chief's Report

July 28, 2026

Prepared By: Charles K. Balke, Fire Chief

Comments from the Fire Chief

I continue to work with the staff on improvements within the organization. There has been a lot of confusion and uncertainty surrounding the Board's decision to pursue an agreement with Clifton Fire for administrative/operational and financial oversight for our organization. Despite this many of the members remain committed to trying to provide services to the community and several have made additional sacrifices to their full-time jobs to be more available to respond to calls.

Administrative Update

- The Land's End Hillclimb schedule for August has been cancelled. They were unable to secure their permit from the Forest Service. They stated they will try to reschedule for October of 2026.
- Working on creating a fleet fuel account at the Golden Gate in Whitewater. This will allow for closer location for refueling apparatus and support local business.
- Had a meeting with Chaparral West Inc. concerning potential changes to the ground truthing in relation to the Wildfire Resiliency code for the development off of 141 as it enters future phases.
- Working to coordinate travel/lodging to Illinois to pick up the new/used fire engine. This has been difficult due to confusion about when Clifton Fire Protection District would be taking over and when the Town of Palisade's responsibility would end. We have a tentative date of flying out August 7th and returning by August 9th. Waiting on confirmation from their agency that they have someone available to provide in-service training at that time.
- Working on a transition document to provide to Clifton Fire Protection District for when they take over

Personnel Update

- We have received three applications from State certified EMT's, two of which are certified firefighters.
- Aubri Wood from Palisade Fire Department is taking over as EMS Coordinator and has already proven to be very effective and active with communication/coordination with the Medical Director and MC EMS Coordinator.

Training Update

- Eight of the twelve members from the academy participated in the Live Fire and Firefighter I final practical testing. The remaining four were unavailable to test either due to injury, working or other personal obligations. An additional test date will be scheduled for these individuals. All members that completed the academy are qualified for offensive firefighting operations and are waiting for their certification. The current academy members will proceed to the Hazardous Materials course which is scheduled to start mid-August, which will be a 72-hour hybrid course. This will be followed by a formal Basic Wildland Firefighter course.
- Monthly EMS training consisted of heat related emergencies.

Apparatus/Equipment/Facility Update

- Engine 52 has been removed from service due to the estimate \$26,844.55 received supporting its replacement. I do not recommend investing funds into this apparatus due to the cost and the pending arrival of the new/used fire engine.

- We are trying to schedule a full mechanical assessment beyond the DOT inspection for Engine 51. Unfortunately, the only facility that works on CAT motors has not communicated a time in which we can get the unit in. We are currently pursuing other alternatives.
- The pump on Tender 51 is going to need some maintenance to replace the packing and fix small mechanical issues. This will not keep us from being able to use the apparatus.
- Station 53's bay continues to have lighting issues. We had Bemis Electric Co. do an assessment and provide a quote to fix the issue. Part of the issue is the current style of lighting is no longer accepted by the State forcing a conversion. One option is to replace what is burned out now for \$1,612.00 or to replace all the fixture now for a cost of \$3,020.00. Quotes and comments attached.
- A quote in the amount of \$850.00 is attached to perform outstanding electrical issues at Station 51 consisting of fixing 4 cord drops, installing strain relief on each, fix and strap existing conduits, and adding a fifth cord for ambulance charger.
- Brush 54 is operational after personnel performed in-house repairs and maintenance.
- Attached are two quotes for two levels of repair. The first is primarily to fill in the cracks at an estimated cost of \$3,318.60. The second quote from the same vendor is for the replacement of both the upper half and lower half of the pad at a combined cost of \$35,900.00. We have requested a second vendor quote that has not come back. Looking for Board Direction on which route, if any to take.
- CFS Inspections

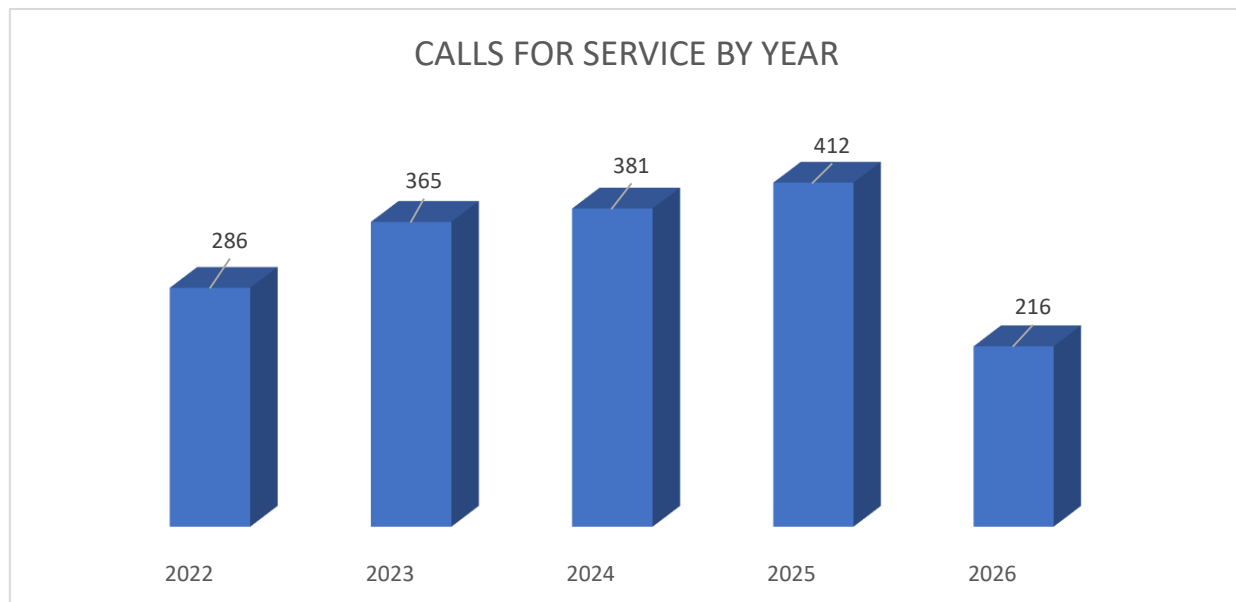
Miscellaneous

- I have submitted to be part of a SAFER Grant for Volunteer Recruitment and Retention. Based on how the organization progresses will have a direct impact on our participation authorization if approved.

Operations

- We have made some changes to individuals' areas of responsibility. These changes are based on members' background, experience and capability. We have separated out apparatus/equipment maintenance,
- For the month of July there were 33 incidents. This is a decrease of 5 calls compared to the same time last year. For the same period in 2026 there have been 216 incidents, a decrease of 15 calls for the same time last year.

Reports



Calls By Type - July 2026

