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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Mayor Emily Larson and Duluth Fire Department Chief Shawn Krizaj provide 2022 DFD year-end summary report

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

Mayor Emily Larson and DFD Chief Shawn Krizaj provide 2022 DFD year-end summary report

[DULUTH, MN] In a news conference held today, April 19, at Duluth Fire Department’s headquarters, Mayor Emily Larson and DFD Chief Shawn Krizaj provided a 2022 annual summary of public safety responses, challenges, and outcomes.

“2022 was a record-breaking year for the Duluth Fire Department, both in number of calls and in number of staff retirements and hires,” said Duluth Fire Chief Shawn Krizaj, before diving into the departmental response statistics for 2022. “We’re just about where we need to be with staffing numbers, thankfully, but this was a big year for the department.”

The Duluth Fire Department ended 2022 with 22 new firefighters hired. The department went through 21,569 hours of training, and Deputy Chief Rob Morehouse led an effort to design and implement a comprehensive training plan for new recruits and ongoing education for firefighters.

Total runs for the department in 2022 were a record-breaking 15,281 (there were 14,803 in 2021). The runs were largely medical in nature. The total number of fires is down from 315 total fires in 2021 to 291 fires in 2022, and the number of water rescues is down from 39 in 2021 to just 18 in 2022—possibly in part because of an increased effort to provide the public with water safety education and consistent red flag beach warning communications during times of dangerous tides.

From an emergency management standpoint, the DFD’s HAZMAT team saw an increase in their hazardous materials responses—from 153 in 2021 to 175 in 2022, and Chief Krizaj submitted one disaster declaration in November following a destructive storm that damaged the shoreline significantly. Disaster declarations can assist in repair cost reimbursements to cities who receive significant damage to infrastructure following natural disasters.

The Life Safety Division, which oversees building and housing code enforcements, rental

licensing, as well as snow shoveling ordinance enforcement, saw an increase in casework across the board. Their code enforcement cases grew to 3825 (an increase of 292 cases). Inspections were up from 5851 in 2021 to 5986 in 2022. There were 132 new rental licenses in 2022. After a record snowfall winter, snow shoveling enforcement cases unsurprisingly skyrocketed from 257 in 2021 to 410 in 2022.

“As always, I am extremely proud of the work that our staff did this past year,” said Chief Krizaj about the department. “And with the nature of the job being such that some of our staff are at work for multiple days in a row without ever going home, I extend that pride to include the families of our Fire Department. They make some huge sacrifices, too, and we thank them for it.”

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