



From: Andy Smith Executive Director GCEMSSSD

Report to: EMS SSD Board

Subject: Update and report

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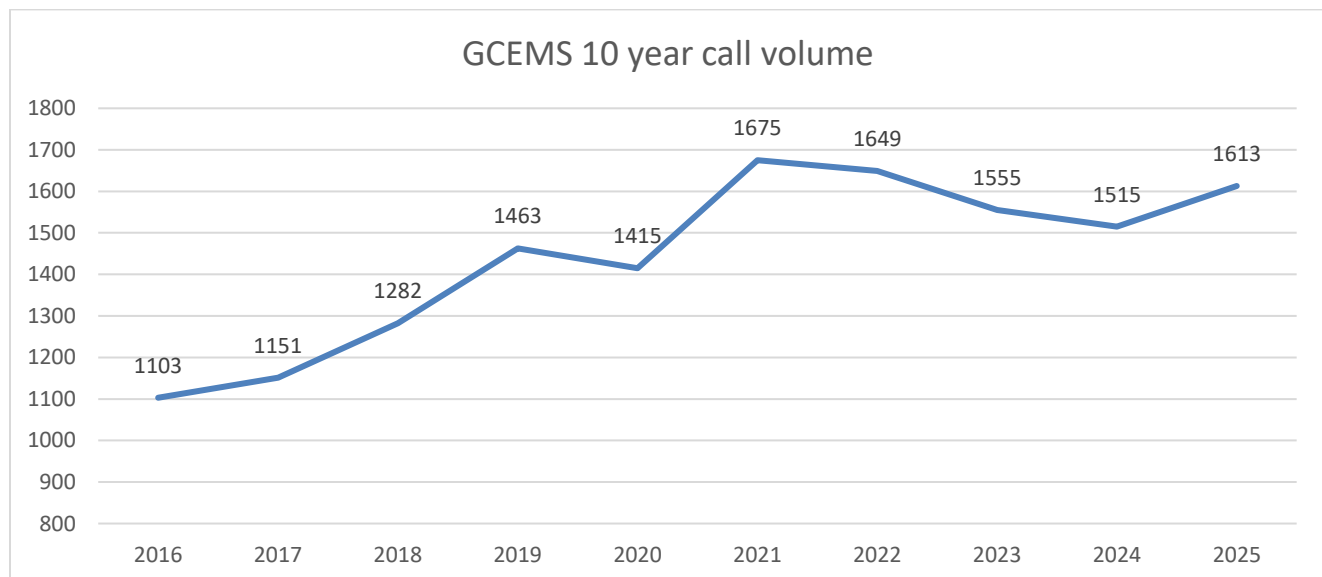
Call Volume Report

Overall call volume demand for 2025 finished 6% higher than 2024. Mid-year, call volume was trending 11% above 2024, however a significantly slower October reduced the year-end increase. October 2025 represented the lowest monthly call volume since 2018.

While overall call volume moderated late in the year, it is important to note that call complexity and time commitment per call continue to increase. As discussed previously, both interfacility transports and backcountry responses increased, placing a disproportionate operational burden on crews due to longer transport times, higher acuity, and increased staffing requirements per incident.

Interfacility transfers increased 18% over 2024, marking the highest transfer volume ever recorded, with a total of 295 transfers. Of those transfers, 68% were to St. Mary's, with the remainder primarily to facilities in Salt Lake City and Provo.

January 2026 has already started at a record pace, with month-to-date call volume surpassing the total number of calls for all of January 2025.



Equipment & Vehicles

All front-line vehicles are currently in service. Several budgeted vehicle replacements are scheduled for 2026, including a truck replacement that will likely come before the Board in March or May.

Last year, the Board approved the purchase of a replacement ambulance for the transfer unit. That ambulance has been ordered and is expected to arrive in 2027. At the time of replacement, the current transfer ambulance is projected to exceed **300,000 miles**, underscoring the importance of maintaining a long-term fleet replacement strategy.

Staffing, Recruitment, and Retention

We are finalizing staffing plans for the upcoming busy season, including fully staffing the third ambulance beginning April 1st.

Current Staffing Levels:

- 7 full-time administrative staff, including 5 licensed providers who also cover field shifts as needed
- 13 full-time field staff (budgeted for 15) assigned to 48/96 schedules
- 1 seasonal full-time employee on a 48/96 schedule for half the year
- 17 PRN staff who assist with shift coverage
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Recruitment and retention remain ongoing challenges statewide; however, GCEMS has maintained service levels through careful scheduling, cross-coverage, and continued investment in training and leadership development.

Education

In February, GCEMS will launch its first combined USU–GCEMS EMT class. This program will be coordinated by Anna Knight, Education Captain, and McKay Vowles. We are very excited about this partnership with Utah State University, which is designed to serve as the foundation of a broader “Destination EMS” training model.

The department continues to provide:

- Monthly Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions that include department updates, shared meals, and hands-on training
- Weekly shift training, which remains a critical component of our education program and covers both medical and operational topics

Strategic Plan Update

2026 represents the third year of our current three-year strategic plan. The administrative team has begun reviewing completed goals, partially completed initiatives, and areas requiring adjustment.

I am planning to bring Aaron Rheinhard (SafeTech Solutions) back to Moab for two days in March to facilitate development of the next three-year strategic plan.

Many goals from the prior plan were intentionally deprioritized during late 2024 and 2025 due to significant budget constraints and the need to focus organizational energy on Proposition 13 and long-term financial sustainability.

Legislative Update

The 2026 legislative session has begun. I anticipate this will be my final year representing REMSDAU and EMS on Capitol Hill.

REMSDAU conducted significant pre-session work throughout 2025 with our lobbyist and legislative partners, which should reduce the need for day-to-day involvement during the session. As a result, I expect to spend less time at the Capitol than in prior years, while still ensuring EMS interests are adequately represented.

Financial Update

I am currently working with Jennifer Williams to close out the 2025 budget year and align final numbers in preparation for audit. A full 2025 financial report will be presented to the Board at the March meeting.

2025 Accomplishments

Despite significant financial constraints, staffing challenges, and increasing service demands, Grand County EMS made meaningful progress in 2025. Key accomplishments include:

- Maintained uninterrupted 24/7 EMS coverage throughout one of the most financially challenging years in the district's history
- Successfully supported and implemented Proposition 13, securing a critical long-term funding mechanism for EMS sustainability
- Expanded interfacility transport capacity, managing record-high transfer volume without service disruption
- Advanced backcountry and remote EMS capabilities, including training emphasis and operational readiness
- Launched the foundation of a prehospital whole blood program, with operational rollout planned for early 2026

- Strengthened education and workforce development, including formal partnership with Utah State University and development of a Destination EMS training model
- Improved internal training, FTO processes, and leadership accountability, resulting in more consistent operations and clinical oversight
- Continued statewide EMS advocacy, including legislative engagement and leadership within REMSDAU
- Maintained strong public trust and organizational stability during a period of operational and financial stress

Upcoming for 2026

Looking ahead to 2026, Grand County EMS will focus on stabilizing recent gains, implementing several initiatives that were delayed during 2024–2025 due to budget constraints, and continuing to strengthen long-term sustainability, workforce development, and interagency coordination.

Key initiatives planned or underway for 2026 include:

- **Implementation of a REMS (Remote / Wildland EMS) Team**, in partnership with Moab Valley Fire District (MVFD). This team will focus on enhanced response capability for wildland incidents, remote rescues, and natural disasters, improving coordination and safety for responders operating in austere environments.
- **Operational rollout of the prehospital whole blood program**, including refinement of protocols, logistics, and training based on early implementation experience.
- **Expansion of the Destination EMS Training Program**, in partnership with Utah State University, with the goal of creating a sustainable pipeline for EMT, AEMT, and Paramedic recruitment that incorporates backcountry medicine, rescue skills, and rural EMS operations.
- **Continued focus on recruitment and retention**, including refinement of staffing models, advancement pathways, and leadership development.
- **Development of a more formal Critical Care Paramedic framework**, transitioning from concept to structured program design.
- **Progress on fleet and capital replacement planning**, including scheduled vehicle replacements and continued long-term forecasting to avoid deferred maintenance and service risk.
- **Completion of a new three-year strategic plan (2026–2029)**, facilitated by SafeTech Solutions, with clear priorities, timelines, and accountability measures.
- **Ongoing financial stabilization efforts**, including full implementation of Proposition 13 revenues, improved forecasting, and continued transparency with the Board.
- **Enhanced interagency coordination**, particularly in dispatch, communications, and QA/QI collaboration, to improve response efficiency and responder safety.