

**2017 ANNUAL REPORT  
MARION FIRE AUXILIARY, INC.**



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## FOREWORD

Please, join us in a look-back at the progress we made together this past year. 2017 made its mark in a history that dates to 1999 when a small group of people dedicated to this community created the Marion Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary (MVFDA), as well as an impressive legacy that the Marion Fire Auxiliary, Inc. (MFA) strives to continue and build each day forward.



This year's annual report is dedicated in loving memory to Sandra "Sandy" Skinner. Sandy was MFA's founding president and the MVFDA's last president. She passed away in July 2017. We miss her. MFA will always appreciate, and be grateful for, Sandy's tenacity, compassionate leadership, and unflagging dedication to MFA's mission and our community's volunteer firefighters. A mountain ash tree was planted in front of Marion's main fire station as a tribute to Sandy on October 2, 2017.

## WHO WE ARE

Marion Fire Auxiliary, Inc. (MFA) is a Montana “nonprofit corporation with members.” It is recognized by the US Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) public charity with a mission to **support the Marion Fire District** in Flathead County, Montana. It is the successor to the Marion Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary (MVFDA), an unincorporated association that formally dissolved in June 2017 after transferring its assets to MFA.



Each donor, member, special event volunteer and sponsor who supports MFA is inspired by the vision that **together we can prevent loss of life in our community**. MFA has two primary goals:

- 1) Ensure our community's first responders have the gear, training, and equipment to do their jobs safely and effectively.
- 2) Strengthen the ties that bind our community and fire department to promote recruitment and retention of volunteer first responders in the Marion Fire District.

## WHAT WE DO

MFA directly solicits the public for charitable contributions and conducts special event fundraisers to finance grants it provides to the Marion Fire District. It also generates additional revenue, in the forms of bank interest and rental fees it collects from individuals and organizations renting the Marion Community Center, which is attached to Marion's main fire station.

## WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

You, our gracious donors, members, special event volunteers and sponsors, have helped make our achievements possible. We're grateful to have your support, as well as the time, talent, and treasure you contributed. It is thanks to you that our community's first responders can do their jobs more safely and effectively.

Special thanks need be expressed to Marion Fire Chief Katie Mast and the following 2017 members who helped transition the Marion Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary into Marion Fire Auxiliary, Inc.: Bruce and Pirjo Appling, Wanda Bissell, Lily Brower, Carolyn & Gerry Hurst, Craig Kempthorne, Janine Presson, Joyce Ratka, James Roets, Matt Sampley, Chris & Sam Sampley, Kymberli Stone, Bonita Welch, Kim & Victoria Williams, Mike & Vargie Williams.

## WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

Regarding our goal to ensure fire department personnel have what they need to do their jobs safely and effectively, the MFA made an impressive "big ticket" grant and other smaller ones.



MFA granted the fire department \$23,893 to purchase and install an air compressor—fill station for our firefighters' self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) tanks.



MFA spent approximately \$570 on groceries and meal tabs at local restaurants for Marion Fire District volunteer first responders, if they were on operations or in lengthy training sessions.



Thank you, Donors! MFA received \$2,894 in gifts towards the purchase of two sets of turnouts for new volunteer firefighters. Turnouts (firefighter personal protective outerwear) cost an average of \$2,500 per firefighter.

## FUNDRAISING

Our members and special event volunteers conducted the following three fundraisers: a raffle, a flea market–barbecue–silent auction, and a community holiday crafts bazaar. They also helped fire and rescue volunteers with community events sponsored by the fire district, such as a 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade, pancake breakfasts, Halloween Haunted House, pie auction, and community dinner.

### ANNUAL RAFFLE

The raffle tickets we sold in 2017 **netted \$11,495**. We did our best to mail tickets and a newsletter to each Marion Fire District resident and property owner. MFA and fire department volunteers sold tickets at the ice fishing derby—an event that the **Lodge at McGregor Lake** holds each February. MFA also sold tickets at the annual **Sportsman Expo** at the Flathead County Fairgrounds; we were set up in a prime spot next to the audience area for the show *Predators of the Heart*. MFA plans to return to each event to sell tickets for its 2018 raffle.

MFA is also grateful to **Super1** Foods, **Snappy's** Sports Senter, and **Murdoch's** Ranch & Home Supply in Kalispell for graciously allowing MFA volunteers to sell raffle tickets in their stores to their shoppers.

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## AUCTION WINNERS

The winners of and prizes for 2017's auction were:

1. **Bert Butler** — \$1,000 (Bert, who lives in Kalispell, claimed he'd never won anything before!)
2. **Floyd Jones** — a Savage rifle with scope & ammunition
3. **Hubert Turner** — a guided fly-fishing trip for two that was generously donated by the owner of [Lakestream Fly Shop](#) out in Whitefish.

## FLEA MARKET-BARBECUE-SILENT AUCTION



We lucked out with beautiful weather on June 24, 2017; it was a postcard picture perfect day. Thirty (30) vendors leased flea market space. Members also sold gently-used items donated to MVFDA to sell. The flea market netted \$1,305. A barbecue lunch that volunteers cooked and served to vendors, shoppers, and auction-bidders brought in \$774.

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## SILENT AUCTION SPONSORS

Many individuals and businesses provided gifts to the MFA in the form of goods or services to make the silent auction successful. We are grateful to the following businesses that helped us raise more than \$3,000 from auction-goers; we hope you will **SHOP WITH THEM** to show your thanks for their support of our mission:

**Big John's**

**Buffalo Hills Golf**

**Cabela's**

**Chick-fil-A**

**Cislo's**

**City Brew**

**Coca Cola High  
Country**

**Dream Haven Guest  
Ranch**

**Famous Dave's BBQ**

**Flaming Arrow  
Archery**

**Franz Bakery**

**Gardener's RV &  
Trailer**

**Glacier Raft Co.**

**Hilltop Hitchin' Post**

**K.J. Hunt Photography**

**Kalispell Auto Parts  
(NAPA)**

**Kalispell Brewery**

**Kalispell Toyota**

**KrispyKreme  
Doughnuts**

**Lowe's Home  
Improvement**

**Lowitz Custom  
Upholstery**

**McKenzie River Pizza**

**Meadow Peak  
Skydiving**

**Montana Ace  
Hardware**

**Montana Emu Ranch**

**Montana Raft Co.**

**Montana Statewide  
Stone**

**Mountain Physical  
Therapy**

**Parsons Tractor**

**Pepsi-Cola of Kalispell**

**ProBuild**

**Rocky Mountain  
Outfitters**

**Rocky Mountain Raw  
Honey**

**Sears Hometown Store**

**Snappy's Sport Senter**

**Superl Foods**

**Western Building  
Center**

**Western Outdoor**

**Whitefish Mountain  
Resort**

**Wilderness Treatment  
Center**

## COMMUNITY HOLIDAY CRAFT SHOW

MFA partnered with the Marion School Parent Teacher Organization to host a Community Holiday Craft Show on November 4, 2017. It was poorly attended. Although we can always improve advertising, an unusually early winter storm in the days prior to the show apparently kept shoppers away.

The craft show only netted \$456; that revenue was mostly due to bowls of soups, as well as moose and elk chili, that MFA volunteers made and sold during the event.

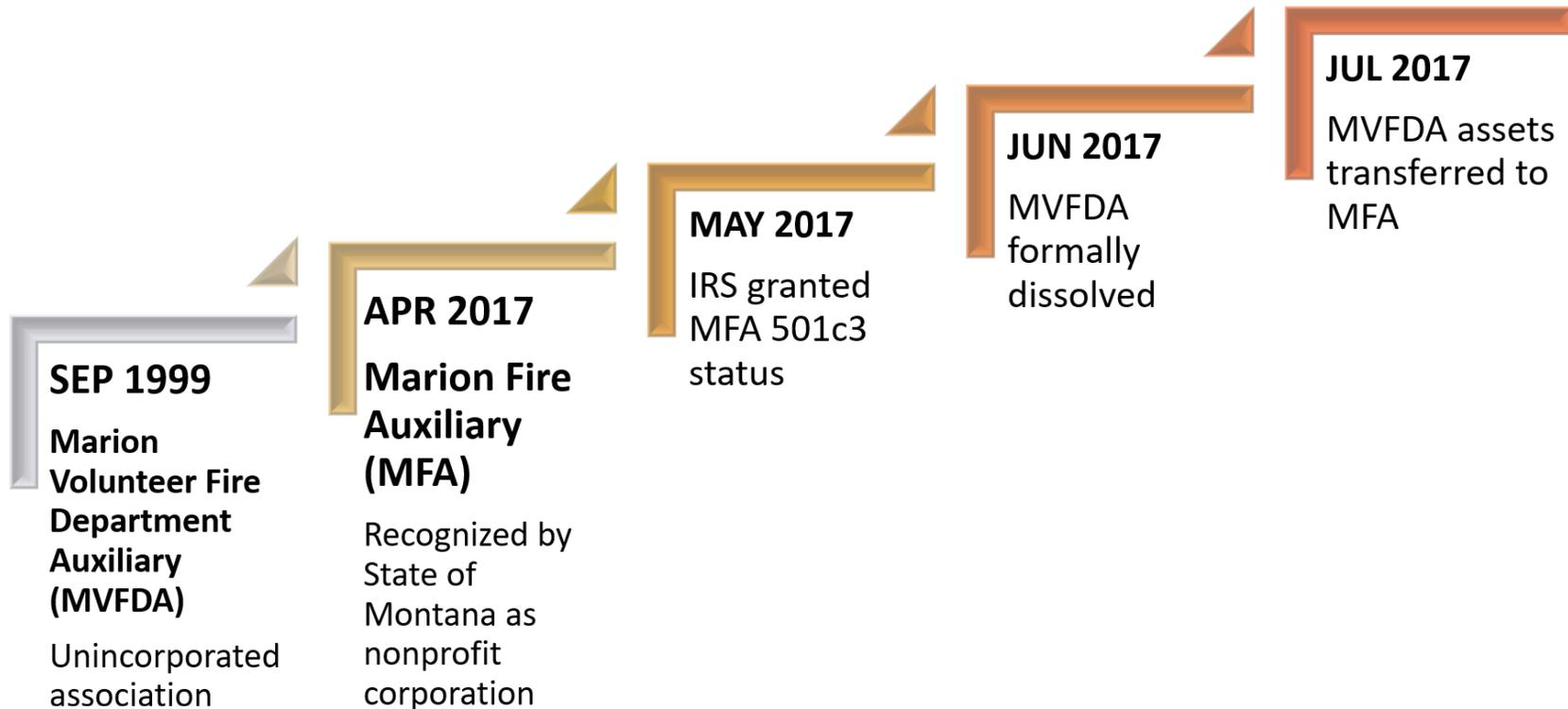


## GOVERNANCE

2017 was history-making for MFA. Despite stresses it created, MFA set itself up for long-term success by restructuring the organization to attract more members, donors, and sponsors.

## INCORPORATION

To gain limited liability protection for its directors and members, as well as fully comply with laws and regulations regarding public charities operating in Montana, MVFDA directors and members decided to incorporate and file annual business reports with the Montana Secretary of State.



As soon as MFA received notice that the Montana Secretary of State had certified MFA's articles of incorporation, paperwork requesting that MFA be recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization was submitted to the Internal Revenue Service. We were pleasantly surprised at how quickly the IRS approved MFA's request. The Montana Department of Revenue also responded quickly to grant tax-exemption.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MFA's directors are responsible for ensuring the organization effectively fulfills its mission, accomplishes its goals, and wisely manages its assets. Unfortunately, MFA had trouble retaining directors. Two, husband and wife James Roets and Dr. Kymberli Stone, resigned in June 2017. Then, MFA's founding president, Sandy Skinner, passed away in July 2017.

Thankfully, the vacant seats were filled quickly with members willing to lead. At the end of 2017 (and forward into 2018), the following four women serve as MFA directors and officers without receiving any form of financial compensation:

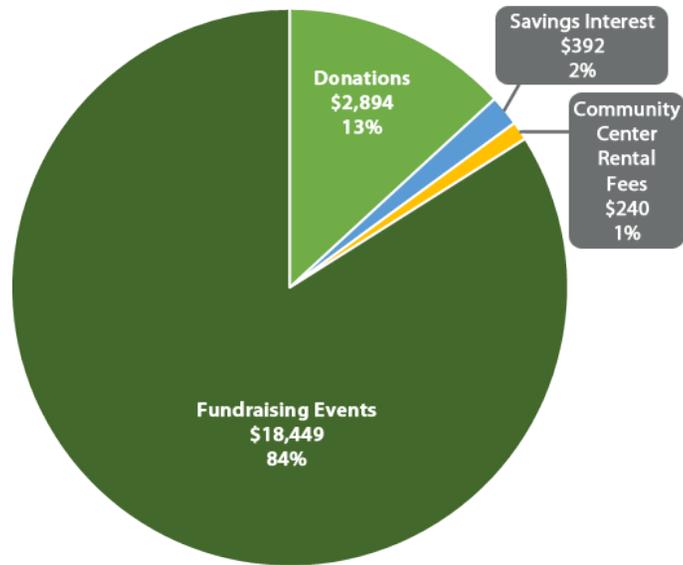
<i>President</i>	<i>Vice-President</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
<i>Lily Brower</i>	<i>Victoria Williams</i>	<i>Carolyn Hurst</i>	<i>Janine Presson</i>

Lily and Carolyn provide MFA with continuity and experience; each served as directors on MVFDA's governing board for many years. Lily is also the Chair of the Marion School Board. Carolyn is an MFA founding director.

Victoria recently moved to Marion from Boise, Idaho. She provides a fresh perspective and newcomer's energy to MFA deliberations and decisions.

Although Janine only joined the organization last year, she offers bookkeeping experience and a stakeholder's perspective. She is a former Marion Fire District trustee-treasurer, who also served two years as a volunteer emergency medical technician in Marion.

# FINANCIALS

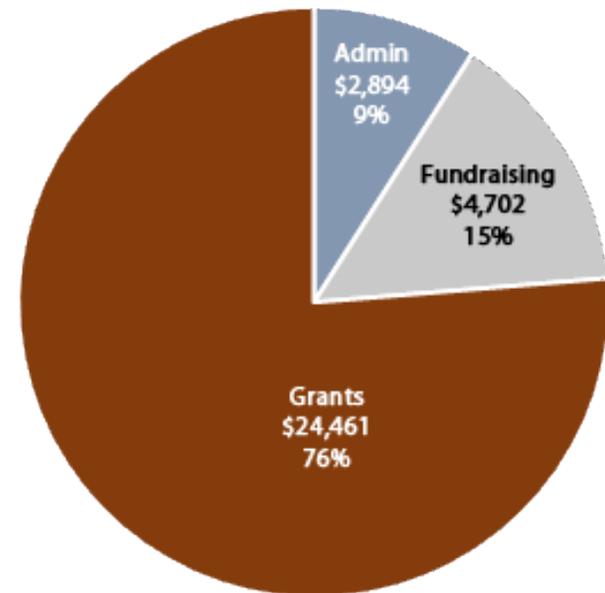


## 2017 TOTAL REVENUE

Gross receipts for MFA and MVFDA were \$21,975. Each revenue stream improved in comparison to the previous year. Income from fundraising events and community center rental fees increased modestly. However, compared to the previous year, donations increased more than four-fold, and savings interest revenue almost four-fold!

## 2017 TOTAL EXPENDITURES (MVFDA AND MFA) WERE \$31,857.

MFA and MVFDA operated in the “red” in 2017 with expenditures of \$31,857. Prior years’ savings financed the grant given to the Marion Fire District to purchase the SCBA fill station–air compressor.



## MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE

MFA uses the following two accountability indicators to monitor its financial performance and stewardship of resources:

## Overhead Ratio

Expressed as a percentage of total expenditure, this is the total amount we spent on anything that wasn't a grant to the Marion Fire District.

**2017 = 24%**

**2016 = 43%**

**2015 = 55%**

Despite widespread public belief that charities shouldn't have overhead ratios that exceed 23%, most charities spend close to 40% on overhead without being wasteful or hinky.

Organizations that are staffed solely by volunteers often look worse on paper than ones that pay wages and salaries to staff, because those expenses can be partially allocated to program investment expenditures. MFA has no paid staff and no director or member receives financial compensation for work they do on behalf of MFA.

Although we're happy to have overhead costs that more closely match what donors expect to see, MFA's overhead ratio went down primarily due to increased grant expenditures, which naturally reduced overhead ratio.

However, MFA did improve fundraising cost efficiencies in its direct mail campaign to sell raffle tickets and foresees more efficiency gains in 2018.

## Program Investment Ratio

This is the amount we spent on grants we gave to the Marion Fire District expressed as a percentage of total expenditure.

**2017 = 76%**

**2016 = 57%**

**2015 = 45%**

MFA's program investment ration increased compared to previous years, simply because the Marion Fire Chief asked for more money than was requested in the prior two years.

## FINANCE FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, MFA will continue to invest in fundraising. We will adopt an operating reserve for emergencies and a reserve to finance grants for high-cost capital improvements that the Marion Fire District's taxpayer-funded budget cannot cover completely. We look forward to a strong, sustainable future thanks to the frugal stewardship of past MVFDA members and YOUR continued generosity and support.

## CONCLUSION

Thanks again for your support. We hope you will help us in 2018, too. There are a few FUNdraising ideas being developed that look promising. Want to stay informed? Check out our website: [www.marion-auxiliary.org](http://www.marion-auxiliary.org) and our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/marionfireaux](https://www.facebook.com/marionfireaux)