SHAES:
30 Years of Doing More

A look at where we came from, where we are today, and where we are going.

Brandon Hinz | Executive Director

What is SHAES?

One organization. Four communities. A shared responsibility.

1996	97	3	ALS
Authority formed	square miles	stations	transport EMS

- Created by the City of South Haven, South Haven Township, Casco Township and Geneva Township.
- An Authority — not a City department — with shared governance and shared resources.
- Fire protection, rescue and Advanced Life Support ambulance transport under one roof.

Why the Authority Model Works

4 → 1
shared organization

97
square miles

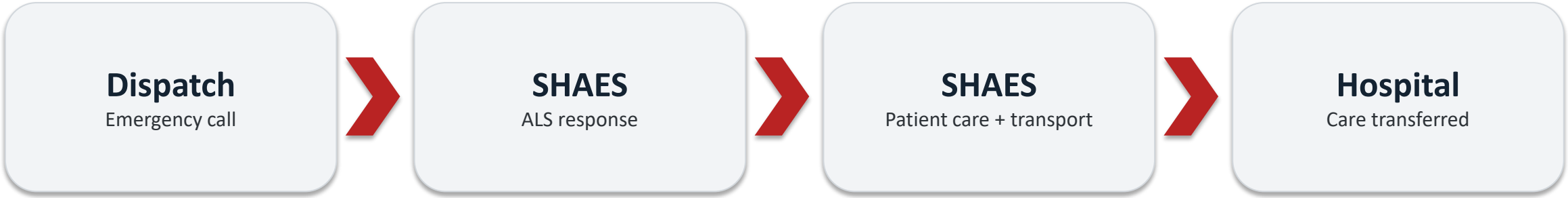
3
stations

1
integrated system

- Personnel can be deployed where they are needed instead of being duplicated across four departments.
- Apparatus and facilities are shared rather than purchased and staffed separately.
- The communities receive a higher level of service than many could reasonably provide independently.
- The model has been working for 30 years, not as a theory, but as an operating organization.

What Makes SHAES Different?

We don't just provide EMS first response. We transport.



- ALS transport requires more training, higher licensing standards, additional equipment and more personnel.
- Our crews remain responsible for the patient from arrival on scene through arrival at the hospital.
- That is a more difficult model to operate, but it is a better model for our communities.

30 Years: What We've Built

The original decision has aged well.

- 1996: four communities create South Haven Area Emergency Services.
- Three stations and a nearly 100-square-mile response area.
- Integrated fire protection, rescue and ALS ambulance transport.
- A combination workforce of career and Paid on Call members.
- Specialized capabilities have grown: dive, rope rescue, technical rescue and water response.
- Prevention has grown alongside response: inspections, pre-plans, smoke/CO alarm installation and public education.

Recent Accomplishments

The last few years have been about building capability while protecting the core service.

4
new career members in 2025

3
new grass trucks

423
smoke/CO alarms installed

440
fire pre-plans

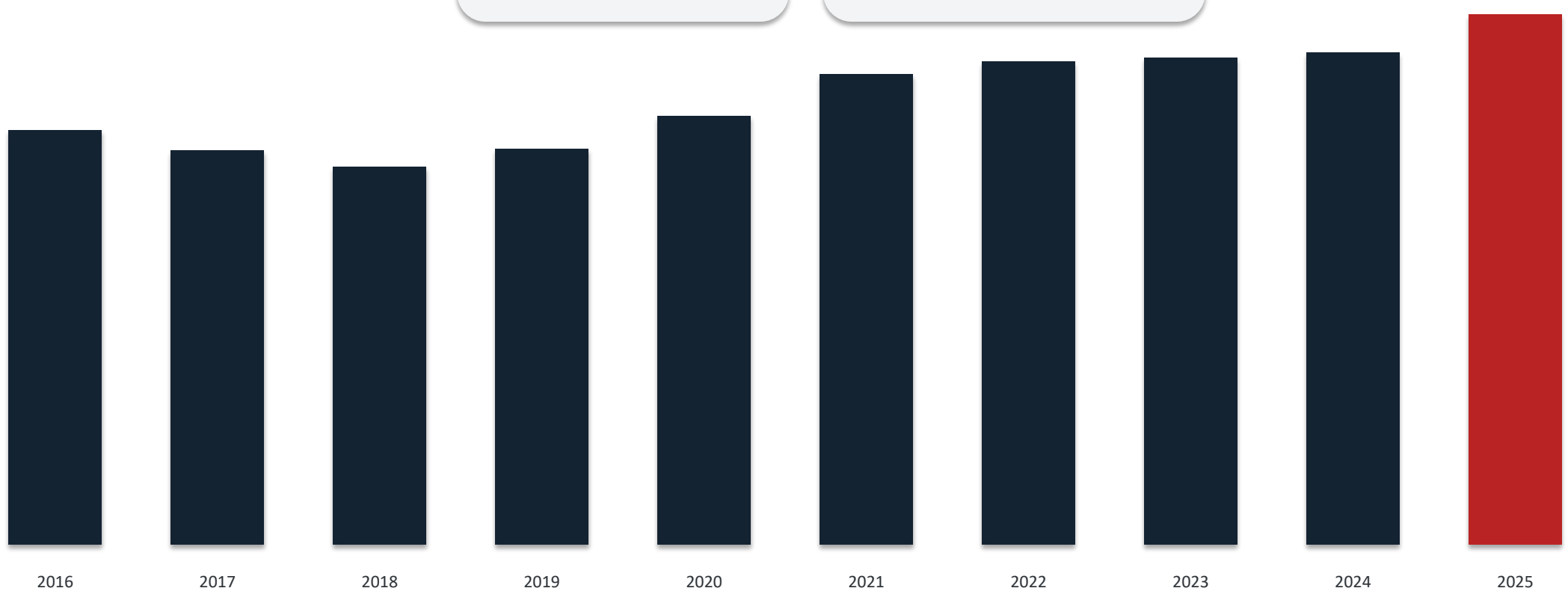
- New battery-powered extrication equipment and other donated equipment improved safety and efficiency.
- West Side Rope Rescue Team established; Dive Team participation continued to grow.
- Record inspection, site-plan, smoke-alarm and rental-inspection activity.
- 2025: 1,100+ schoolchildren reached and 300+ attended Fire Safety Fun Night/Fair.

The Calls Keep Coming

2025 was a record year — and 2026 is already running ahead of that pace.

2,214
2026 calls for service

2,099
2025 comparison figure provided



2025 annual report: 2,920 total incidents and a 24% increase over the prior ten years.

What 2,920 Calls Looked Like in 2025

The workload is broader than the total number suggests.

2,021
EMS incidents

899
fire incidents

41%
of all calls in SH City

5:48
overall avg response

- EMS accounted for roughly two-thirds of total incidents.
- The City generated 1,204 total incidents; South Haven Township 815; Casco 470; Geneva 378; mutual aid 53.
- The annual report's average response time was 4:07 in the City and 5:48 overall across the Authority.
- This workload occurs across 97 square miles with simultaneous and overlapping calls.

Staffing: The Challenge Behind the Numbers

51
members

20
operational career positions

27
Paid on Call

4
career administrative

- Current operational staffing is in transition as two of the 20 operational positions complete onboarding.
- Paid on Call availability has become less predictable, particularly because fewer members live within the response area.
- Minimum staffing of three is not sustainable as the sole strategy for a department approaching 3,000 calls.
- About 40% of dispatches occur before the prior dispatch is completed — the system is being asked to do multiple things at once.

Why We Still Need the Combination Model

Career staffing + Paid on Call = capability and fiscal responsibility

- Career personnel provide the dependable core staffing needed every day.
- Paid on Call members expand the response force when they are available.
- The model preserves a pathway for firefighters to develop into future career personnel.
- Moving to an all-career model for the same level of service would require substantially more full-time staffing and cost.

Career

- 24/7 dependable coverage
- ALS / fire / rescue core
- Training and leadership

Paid on Call

- Surge capacity
- Local knowledge
- Feeder / development program

CARES Data: The Community Response Matters

Early action + high-quality CPR + rapid ALS = better outcomes

50%
AED applied before EMS arrival in Van Buren County

29%
national comparison cited

↑
sustained ROSC vs. state & national comparisons

- Van Buren County's Utstein outcome performance is described in our CARES notes as among the stronger results in Michigan.
- Community AED use, rapid defibrillation, high-quality CPR and rapid ALS response work together.
- SHAES contributes to that system by bringing ALS capability directly to the patient and transporting the patient ourselves.

Service Happens Before the Siren

Prevention, inspections and education are part of the job.

440
fire pre-plans

440
fire code inspections

423
smoke detector installations

738
SH City STR inspections

- Record inspection, site-plan, smoke-alarm and rental-inspection activity in 2025.
- More than 1,100 students reached through school fire-prevention visits.
- 423 smoke/CO alarms were installed through the community program described in the annual report.
- These efforts reduce risk before an emergency occurs.

The Financial Model: We Do More to Rely Less on Local Tax Dollars

~40%
of operating revenue tied to EMS billing + county ambulance millage

~$3M
municipal contributions annually

0.23%
municipal contribution / taxable value in comparison cited

- Because SHAES transports, the Authority receives transport reimbursement in addition to the ambulance millage.
- Those revenues help fund the same people, equipment and facilities that respond to fire and rescue calls.
- Eliminate transport and the calls remain, but a major funding stream disappears with them.
- The result would be higher local cost, lower service, or both.

What If SHAES Stopped Transporting?

The calls would not disappear.

Same calls
Fire + EMS response still required

Less revenue
Transport billing + county millage lost

Higher local burden
Replacement funding would be needed

- Option A: first-response-only fire/EMS model, lower transport capability and potentially longer ambulance waits.
- Option B: dedicated private ambulance coverage, the comparison analysis estimated about $1M annually per dedicated ambulance, with roughly three needed to approach today's coverage.
- Neither option recreates the SHAES model at a lower cost.

Where We Are Going

The goal is sustainable service — not simply surviving the next year.

- Add 4 career personnel and move toward 24 operational career members.
- Transition to a 42-hour work week / 24-on, 72-off schedule.
- Add part-time staffing assistance to strengthen daily coverage.
- Reduce dependence on overtime and unpredictable POC availability.
- Continue capital planning: finance major apparatus, purchase smaller vehicles outright and refurbish where it makes financial sense.
- Maintain capital replacement funding through 2050 while keeping municipal millage rates at or below current levels.

What Success Looks Like

The objective is simple: keep doing the right thing, sustainably.

Fast
response

ALS
transport

Ready
staffing

Modern
equipment

Strong
prevention

Sound
finances

30 years ago, four communities chose to work together.

Today, SHAES still does more —
and does it together.

Fire protection. Rescue. ALS transport.
97 square miles. One organization.

Contact

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Visit our website at www.shaes.org
Visit and follow SHAES' FB page

SHAES New Website!!!!!

South Haven Area Emergency Services Authority

Dial 911 For All Emergencies

CALLING 911 BURN PERMITS BEACH SAFETY PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES FACILITIES
RECENT RESPONSES NEWS YEAR IN REVIEW HISTORY CONTACT WEATHER

The Mission of the South Haven (Michigan) Area Emergency Services (SHAES) is to preserve life, limb and property through aggressive fire prevention, education and fire suppression. To provide the highest quality of emergency medical care with skill and compassion. To serve our communities with pride, integrity and courage.

Calling 911

SHAES receives emergency calls through both Allegan and Van Buren county 911 centers. More info ›

Services Provided by SHAES

Fire Suppression – Emergency Medical Services – Vehicle Extrication – Confined Space Rescue – Public Education – Water Rescue – Mutual Aid – Honor Guard – Community Service – Recent Responses ›

Burn Permits

A burn permit for properties outside the City of South Haven may be acquired by calling: (269) 639-FIRE. More info ›

South Haven Commemorates 9-11

Drive-thru Flu Shot Clinic

Many of you have enjoyed our unique SHAES drive-thru pancake breakfasts. Now you can have the same convenience by getting your flu vaccination. SHAES, in cooperation with Corewell Health, will host a drive-thru Flu Shot Clinic at our Blue Star station on Wednesday, Sept. 23 from noon to 5 p.m. No appointments needed. Flu shots...

Community to Commemorate 25th Anniversary of 911

Follow us on Facebook!!!!

SHAES Weekly Update!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Want up to date information on what we have going on?!

Add your email to our Weekly Update email list.

Every Saturday morning SHAES most recent events

And a Fun Fact!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Questions & Discussion

Upcoming events:

Drive-thru flu shot clinic 9/23 12P-5P
SHAES Station 3 – 90 Bluestar Hwy.

Touch a Truck 10/7 3:30P-5:30P
SH City Huron St. Pavilion

Fire Safety Fun Night 10/8
SHAES Station 3 – 90 Bluestar Hwy.

Questions & Discussion

Thank you.

Questions?