THIS IS

Black Mountain CERT

Presentation to Town Council

February 9, 2026

Black Mountain, North Carolina

Community Emergency Response Team



OUR MISSION



BM CERT provides **training, structure,** and **accountability** for citizen volunteers serving under Black Mountain's public safety agencies.

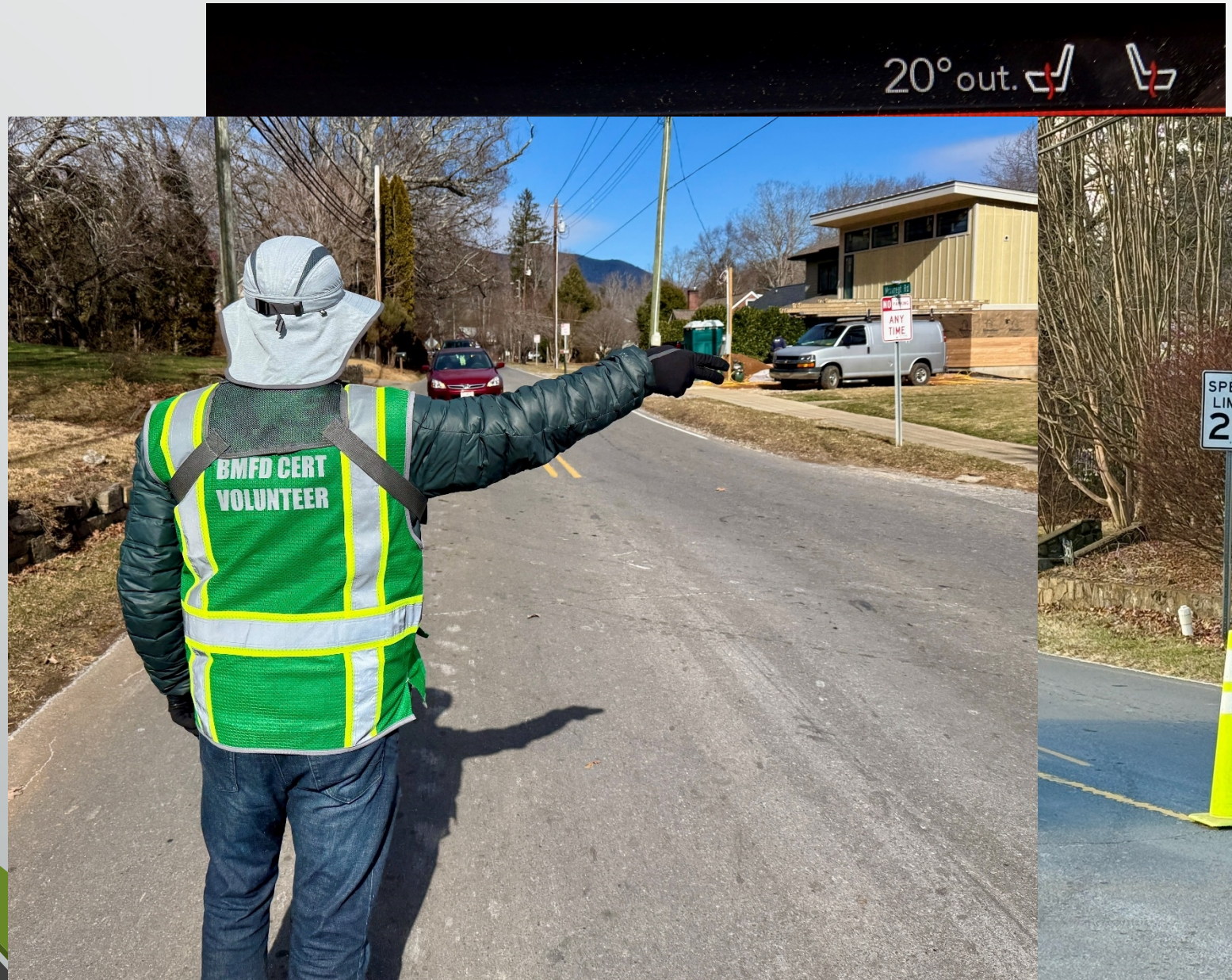
OUR MISSION

We promote individual and neighborhood **preparedness**

Assist first responders during emergencies and planned events, and

Strengthen community resilience through year-round **service** and **collaboration**.

Assist Fire & Police Departments





Planned Events



Halloween 2025
(Lost Parents)



Planned Events

Christmas Parade Safety 2025



Individual & Neighborhood Preparedness







40+ Hours
Each in 2025

Year-Round Service & Collaboration

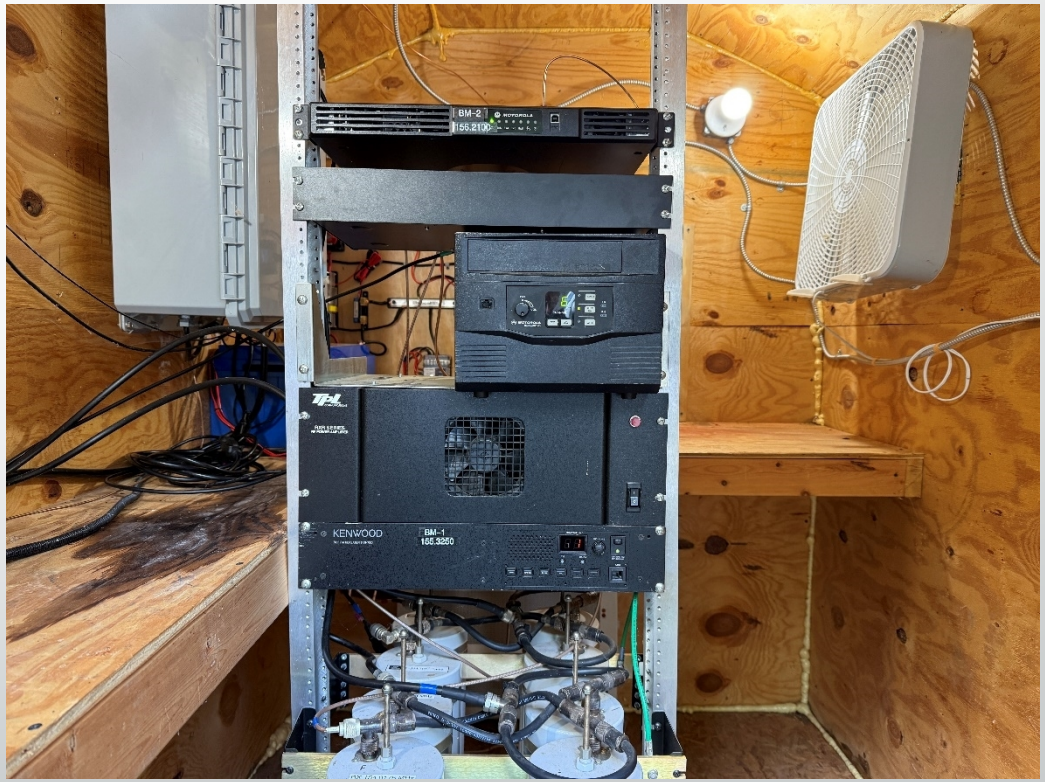






Year-Round Service & Collaboration





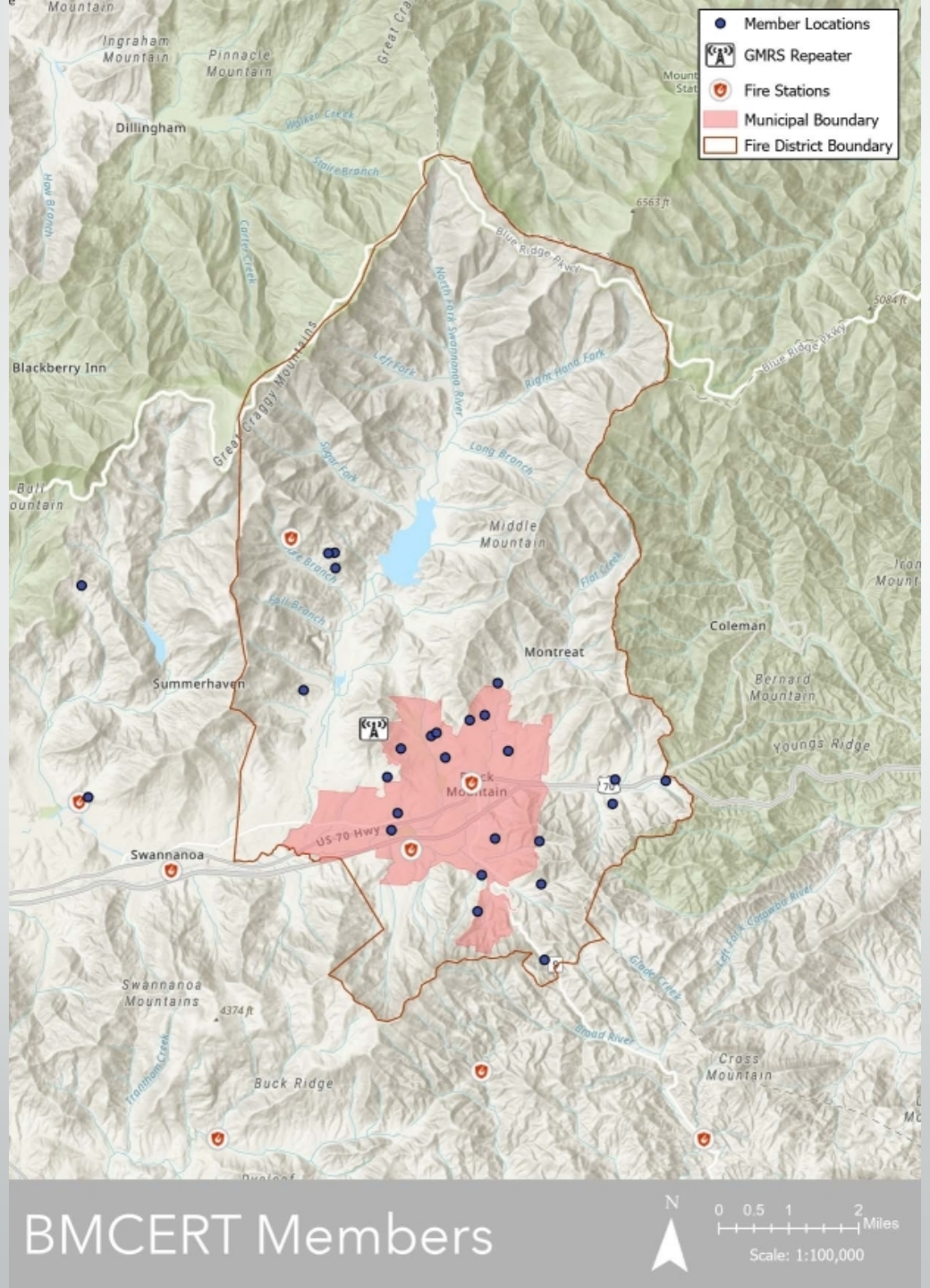
Year-Round Service & Collaboration





Radio Network Of Neighbors

(Police & Fire)



Does *not* Require Cellular or Internet

Or Duke Power

WHO ARE YOUR NEIGHBORS?

- Several former law enforcement, fire, & EMTs
- Retired U.S. Naval commander and a Navy SEAL
- Retired physician, nurse, PT, and a therapist
- Current and retired educators, gov staffers
- Computer and IT professionals, construction managers
- Outdoor enthusiasts and athletes
- Grandparents and parents

All worked in Helene to help others

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

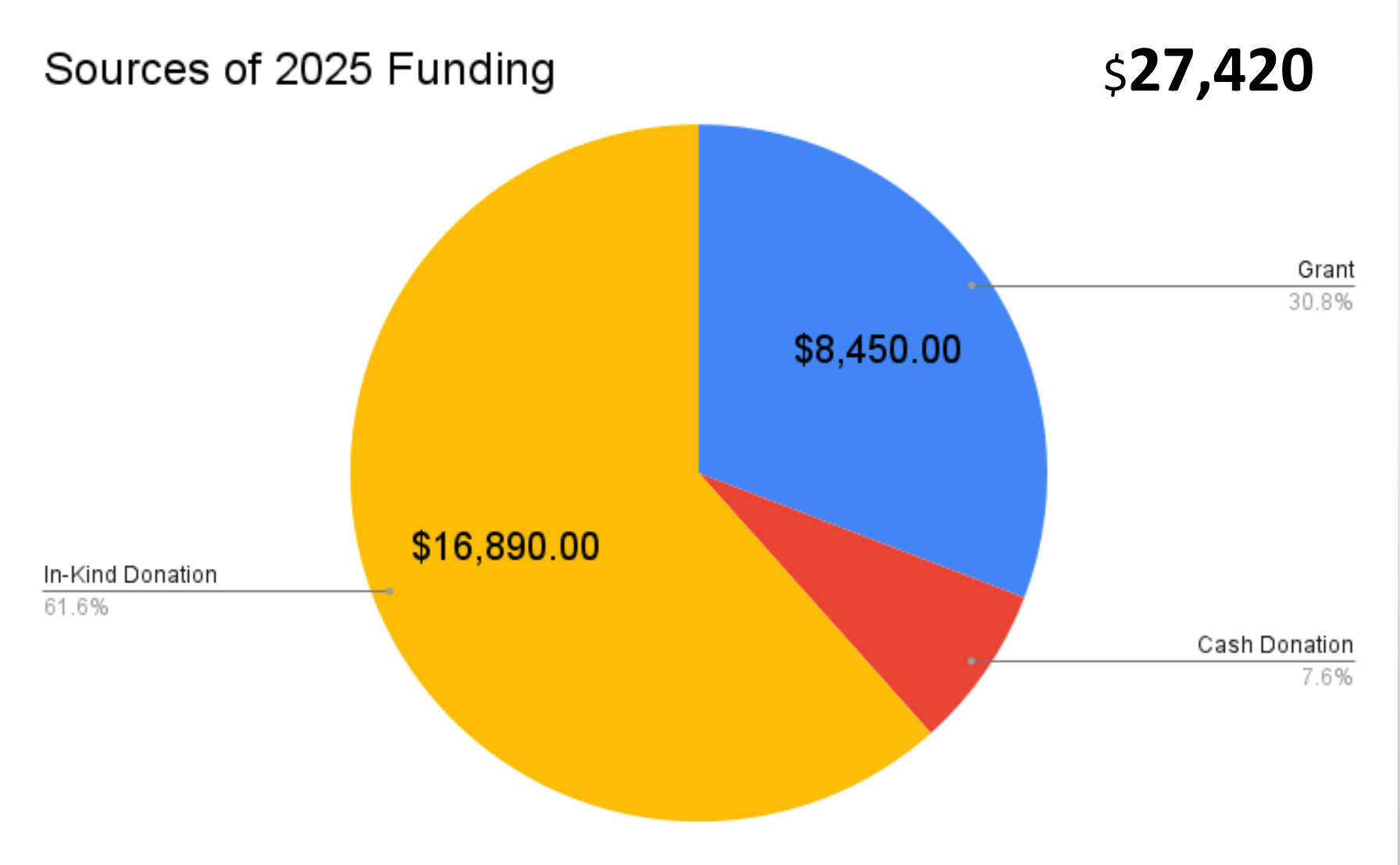
- **1986** Los Angeles Fire Dept recognizes civilians will be on their own for first 72 hours, forms CERT
- **1985 Mexico City: 700 lives saved by volunteers**

  But… 100 rescuer lives lost
- **1994** FEMA creates CERT modeled on LAFD
- **7,000+** CERT programs in the U.S. today
- We are the **first CERT program** in NC west of Hickory

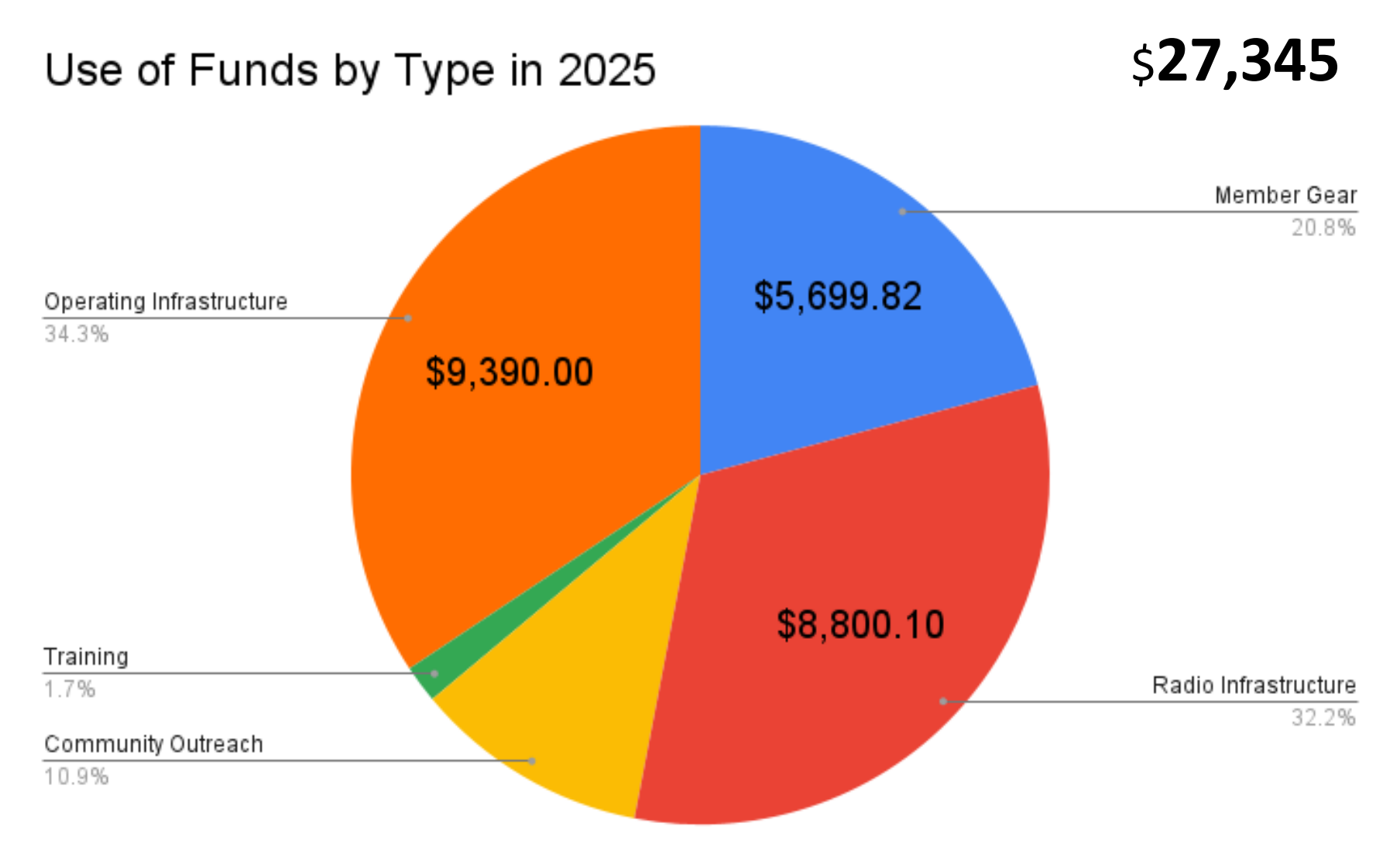
HOW THIS WORKS

- Everyone is a **volunteer** (1,500 hours+ in 2025)
- We have **3 levels** of membership
- **11** leaders with **27** active volunteers
- Our **fiscal agent** is the Black Mountain Volunteer Firefighters Association (501c3) which exists to support the Fire Department and its members.

FUNDRAISING



USE OF FUNDS

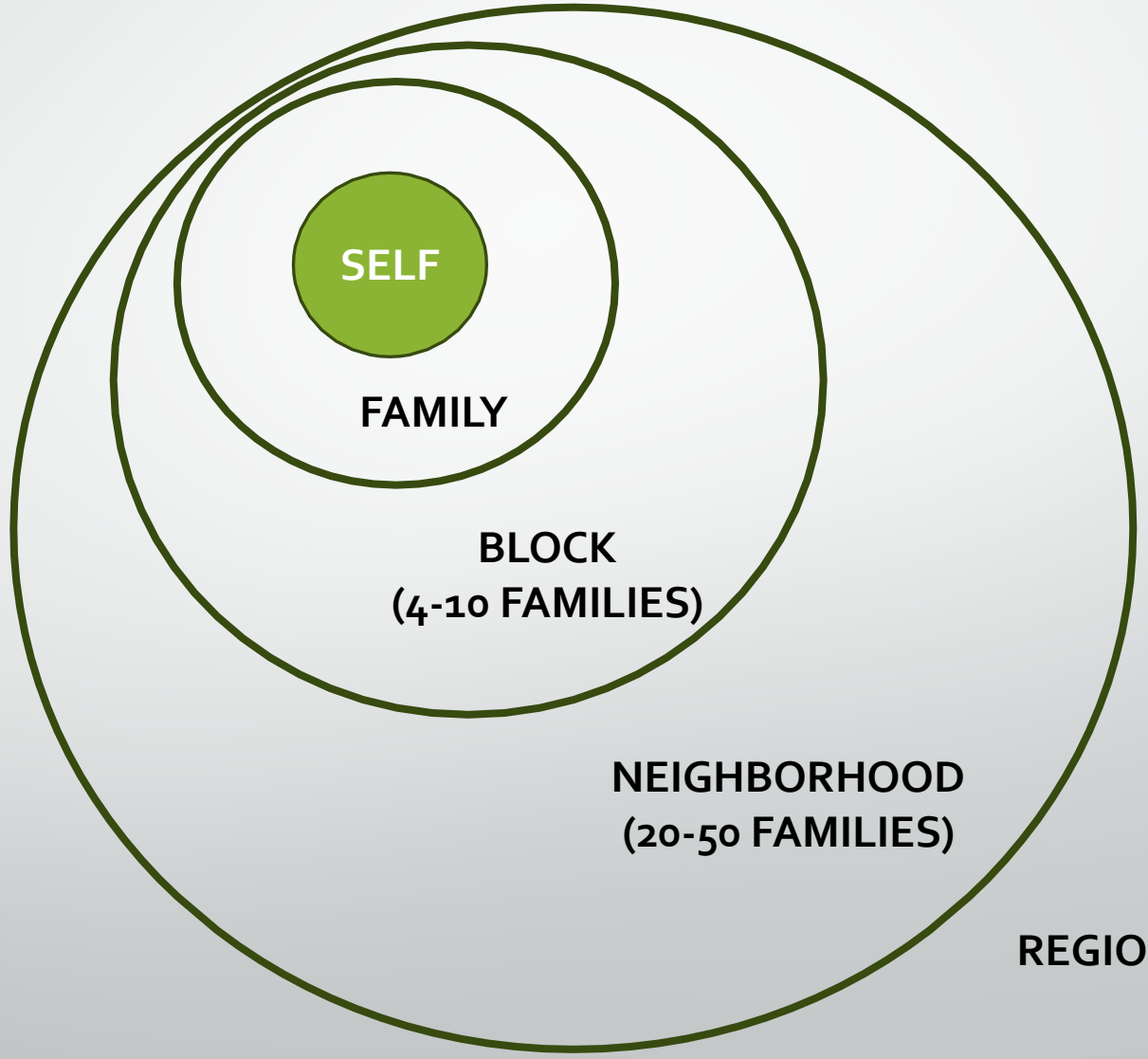

Use of Funds by Type in 2025
$27,345
Member Gear
20.8%
$5,699.82
Operating Infrastructure
34.3%
$9,390.00
Training
1.7%
Community Outreach
10.9%
$8,800.10
Radio Infrastructure
32.2%

GOVERNENCE & CHAIN OF COMMAND

- The team manages itself with a leadership cadre, and reports to the **Fire Chief via the BMFD Liaison Officer**
- When activated by The Town, members report **via chain of command** to BMFD or BMPD
- Every member signs a **Code of Ethics** (same as BMFD)
- Every member signs a **Liability & Membership Agreement**
- Members can be terminated for breaching the provisions of either document

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

- Self
- Family
- Block
- Neighborhood
- Town
- Region
- ~~State~~
- ~~National~~



OPERATIONAL SCOPE

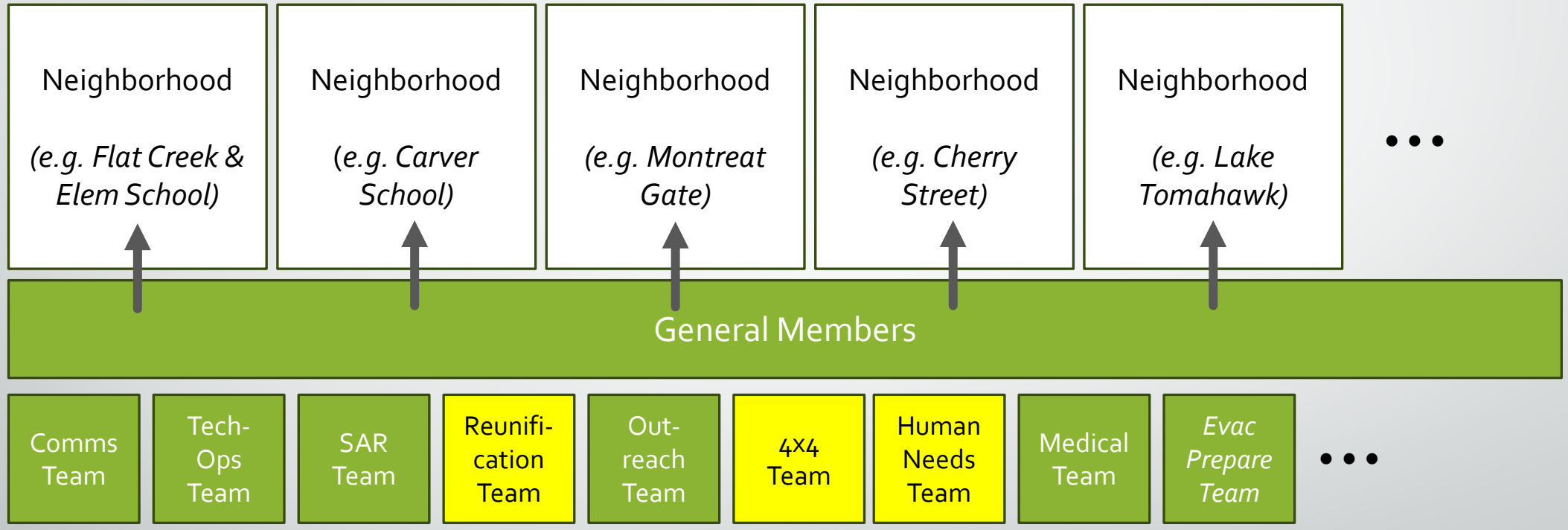
- Get to know your neighbors
- Prepare and educate the community
- Plan and collaborate to improve resilience
- Assist neighbors in emergencies
- Maintain neighborhood-to-fire-department radio communications when cell services are down

Upon activation by The Town, members backfill for first responders (within scope of training & certification) as BMFD volunteers

BEYOND SCOPE

- Suppress large fires
- Enter heavily-damaged structures
- Operate in hazardous material environments
- Technical rescue
- Advanced medical treatment
- Any response or deployment outside of the BMFD/BMPD chain of command

FOCUSED ON NEIGHBORHOODS



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

LIABILITY OF VOLUNTEERS

- Anyone can volunteer to help another person

  - Federal: ***Volunteer Protection Act of 1997***
  - State: ***North Carolina's Good Samaritan laws***
  - Generally: acting in good faith **within the scope of their training** or certification, **if not compensated** (volunteering)

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

FUTURE: PREPAREDNESS

- More specialized training for members
- Offer more classes to the community (Aug 26, Jan 27)
- More education of our neighbors and community
- Carefully adding more members, including groups

FUTURE: RESILIENCE

- More radio (and other) **communications backup**
- Backup radios for town vehicles
- Specialized equipment for the special teams
- Wildfire prevention with **FireWise**
- Collaborating with non-profits to create **'Community Hubs'** with Water, Food, Internet, Battery Re-charging
- Create a Warming Shelter for storm conditions



Prepared for the Next One

FOR MORE

Sign up for news and tips

Subscribe

Apply to join the team!

Volunteer for CERT

Register for our next class (August 2026)

CERT Class Signup

Contact me

David's VCard