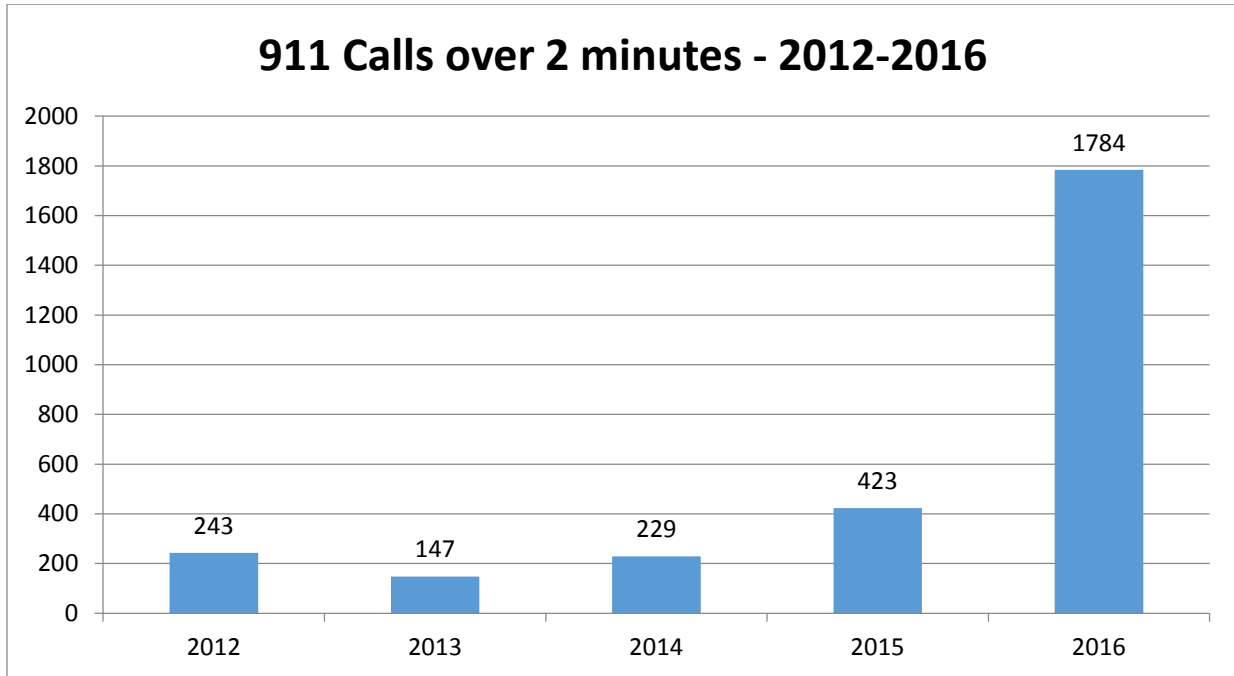


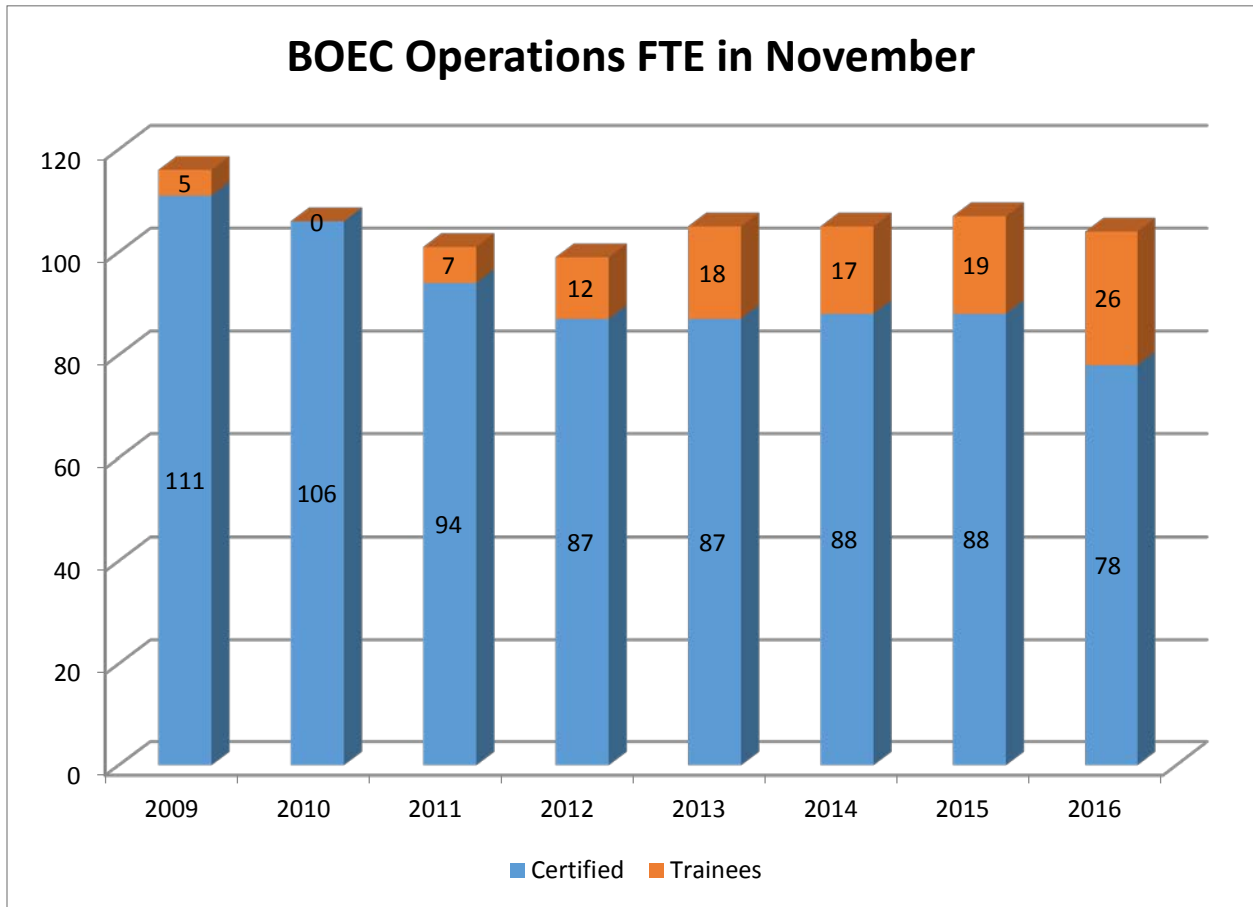
The Problem:

Currently, BOEC is working to increase staff in order to reduce long hold times for people trying to connect with 9-1-1 to report emergencies. As seen in the graph below, the number of calls that wait over the threshold of 2 minutes is increasing dramatically.



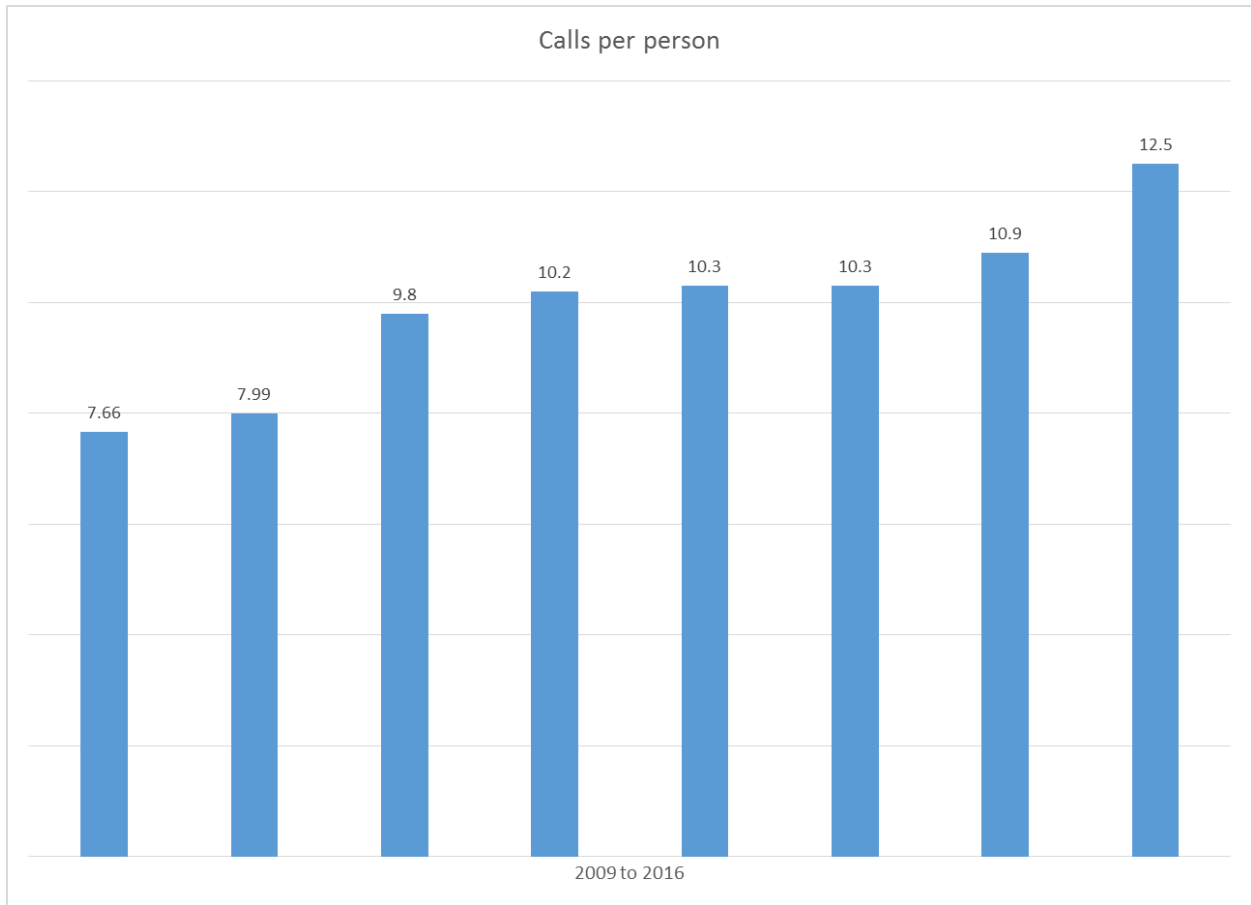
This difference is due to a number of factors. First, new technology now allows us to capture even better information about the life of a call from receipt at the 9-1-1 center through completion of the call; this has improved our understanding of the entire call cycle. Second, we are spending significantly more time with some of our callers. This is the result of modifying procedures on some calls (medical, mental health related, and homelessness). Finally, the increase in call wait times is because of ongoing staffing issues, and the extremely large numbers of trainees we have at this time. Hiring and retaining trainees is definitely the way out of the currently low staffing dilemma, but having trainees also has its downside. The reality is that, for a portion of their training cycle, trainees actually increase time spent processing calls, rather than reduce it.

The Staffing Situation:



This chart depicts the staffing situation at BOEC over the years. In 2009 and 2010 we increased our recruitment efforts in order to build our numbers up in anticipation of the CAD implementation. Basically, we did not want to train brand new staff at the same time we were training the current staff for the new software. We restarted hiring efforts in September 2011 and have seen progressively more trainees come through our program since then. However, we see larger numbers of employees leaving the Bureau year-after-year. Despite a number of factors contributing to this, we constantly work to improve our numbers. In response to this drastic drop in staff numbers, we have increased our number of new hires and need to maintain a constant stream of trainees into our workforce. This could potentially mean an increase from 2 to 3 academies, roughly 18 to 27 new employees each year. What we see is not just a Portland phenomenon, but something that is playing out all over the country. We hope to learn lessons from other centers across the country and have success in better retention.

The Workload:



As depicted in the graph above, the number of calls handled per person per day has increased significantly since 2009, with a substantial jump from 2015 to 2016. Basically, we are in the middle of a perfect storm of more calls, fewer calltakers, and higher expectations around each call – which all lead to longer call times, longer wait times for callers, and not enough time between calls for calltakers to decompress. This constant state of being in high gear shift after shift, month after month, is leading to increased burnout of employees – and higher turnover.

The Final Result:

This final chart shows the problem we face right now.

	T	F	S	S	M	T	W
100	-1	0	-2	-2	-1	0	-1
300	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-2	-3
500	-2	-2	-4	-3	-3	-2	-2
700	-3	-2	-4	-2	-2	-3	-3
900	-3	-1	-4	-2	-3	-4	-4
1100	-2	0	-3	-1	-2	-2	-2
1300	-2	0	-3	-1	-3	-2	-2
1500	-4	-3	-3	-2	-3	-4	-4
1700	-3	-3	-3	-3	-4	-4	-4
1900	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
2100	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	-2	-2
2300	2	3	3	3	3	1	1

The white blocks are periods of time during a week where BOEC has the **minimum** recommended staff on duty. The yellow blocks depict time periods where we are short in our coverage by 1, 2, or 3 employees. The red blocks show periods of time where we are 4 or more people short.

Typically, this means that we will have fewer people assigned to calltaking duties, which will result in even longer hold times on 9-1-1; and could ultimately result in our having to close the capacity for answering the non-emergency line all together. An additional response is for us to close one or more of our public safety dispatch positions – moving that workload to someone else (already operating at high capacity); or closing the talkgroup for a period of time.

As much as possible we hire overtime to alleviate the worst of these problems. That response is a short-term solution at best as it drives costs up significantly, and more importantly, significantly impacts the health and well-being of our staff – which leads to even more employees leaving the workforce.

We will provide additional information about *the results, and implications, of the Council-mandated staffing study* during the Council presentation on March 16th.