

Operating Years

2007-2012

Adopted by the Board of Commissioners, April 15, 2007

Strategic Plan & Administrative Objectives



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INTRODUCTION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Over the past 18 months, Cowlitz County Fire District 6 has undergone an internal audit and strategic planning process. This document represents the efforts of many and has been developed with involvement from all levels of the organization. Their insights were invaluable in this process.

Long term planning and the successful implementation of that planning is critical to the future of Fire District 6. This plan is as much a reflection of the district's philosophy and values as it is its goals. It reflects the fire district's commitment to the process of working together, and recognizing our dependence on our human resources.

SCOPE

This document examines a broad range of services, functional areas and associated issues; it is a composite of strategic planning and internal audit findings. The document examines detailed short-range, as well as long-range issues and essential strategies.

This strategic plan was somewhat weighted on the "strategic work plan format" found in the CFAI "self-assessment for International Accreditation", while NFPA 1500 and WAC 296-305 were the focus of the internal audit. Additional informal district wide evaluation of policies, programs, and services was conducted. Demographic and economic indicators were analyzed and are summarized herein based on information available at the time of publishing.

District programs, functions and services were categorized and analyzed to present background and analysis in each major area. Analysis of internal and external factors, trends, best practices and/or industry standards are considered.

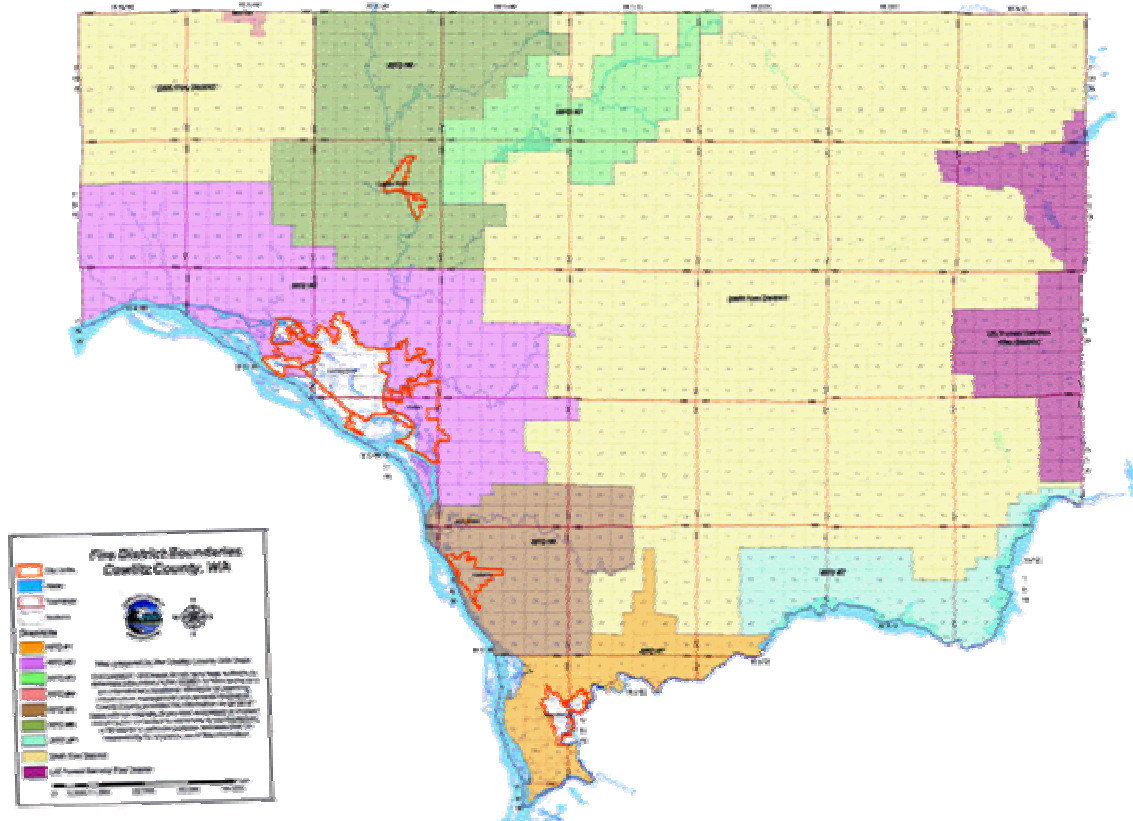
A tracking and control format is also built into the document. Lead personnel are/will be identified to carryout each goal, objective, or action. A timeline and status of each objective will be tracked and communicated as a means of control. At a minimum this document will be reviewed, modified and published on an annual basis.

PURPOSE

This strategic plan serves as a single source collector for results from various planning and administrative processes. The information contained within provides a clear and concise overview of the most recently adopted organizational goals, objectives, budgetary issues, mission and assessment of the organization's activities.

This document offers a set of concepts, procedures and strategies designed to assist the membership and management in exercising control, coping with change and developing a basis for decision making. Utilizing this plan will assist in fundamental decision-making and will define district actions that will shape and guide what the fire district is, what it does and why it does it.

A reasonable attempt has been made to effectively analyze internal and external factors; sometimes critically, however, it is neither an attempt to criticize nor, is it a goal to develop a document that avoids challenging analysis, aimless commentary, or establishes unrealizable goals. This document is however established as a means of providing continual district involvement.



EXECUTIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The fire district has entered into an ever challenging environment. The district's scope of services have evolved to respond to almost all local hazards; protecting the community's physical and human assets. Our already limited financial resources are declining through anti-tax initiatives, increased personnel costs, reduction in billable collection and reimbursement levels, and increased costs for goods and services. Simultaneously, a decrease in our volunteer workforce over the past decade is forcing the need for an increased part-paid and career staffing to maintain service levels.

State and Federal regulatory mandates establish insurmountable measures, requiring additional administrative and operational man-hours, and never before factored risks demand additional planning, training, human resources, and equipment.

As outlined in the "United States Fire Administration – Services Needs Assessment (2002)", it is clear that Fire District 6 is not alone. In fact, the challenges we face are repeated throughout this nation.

- *Nearly 21% of fire departments deliver fewer than 4 firefighters to a mid-day house fire. It is likely that most fail to deliver the minimum of 4 firefighters needed to safely initiate an interior fire attack.*
- *Roughly 15,500 fire stations (32% of the estimated 48,500 total fire stations) are estimated to be at least 40 years old, roughly 27,500 fire stations (57%) have no backup power, and nearly 38,000 fire stations (78%) are not equipped for exhaust emission control.*

The fire district's needs are clear and unmistakable:

- **Human Resources:** The fire district needs adequate numbers of well-trained personnel, both paid and volunteer, to do an effective job.
- **Physical Resources:** The fire district needs reliable well-maintained apparatus, equipment and facilities adequately distributed around the fire district to allow arrival on scene within a critical time interval.

In fact, it is clear that the challenges the fire service faced 20 years ago persist today. The report of the "National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control – America Burning (1974)" was a landmark document that focused attention on the Nation's fire problem and the needs of the fire services.

- *"The efforts of individuals and organizations in the fire service field have run against the twin tides of ignorance and indifference."*

- *“How can fire protection be improved? The easy answer is to augment the budgets of fire departments by 20, 30, or 40 percent so that more equipment can be bought and more firefighters hired.”*

While it is an admirable goal, it is impractical to expect to continue to deliver services without adequate funding. In the absence of additional funding or improved efficiency, those who follow us will face the same challenges or worse in the near future.

It is essential that we acknowledge our inability to effectively deploy necessary resources is not due to lack of knowledge, effort, leadership, or poor management, it is the result of increased scope of services, failure to secure appropriate funding, and a lack of effective marketing.



*Kurt Stich, 22nd Fire Chief
1998-2003*

It is evident, the district must establish a proactive customer-centered process that effectively communicates the district’s capabilities, or lack there of, and allows the customer to define and prioritize services they expect, thereby establishing the acceptable balance that must exist between the district and the community’s expectations. This planning process attempts to catalyze such a process by involving community members and personnel groups to analyze the conclusions we have made in this document as well as the objectives we purpose.

Establishing the methodology for defining levels of service is imperative. The fire district must begin to shift its service focus and observe that response time has a direct relationship to the critical time interval for fire and medical emergencies with respect to the degree of effectiveness as measured by outcome. Saving lives, reducing suffering and limiting property loss is directly attributed to emergency services being adequately spaced throughout our district, responding with reliable equipment with well trained personnel on board.



*Don Lansing, 21st Fire Chief
1994-1998*

Even in these challenging times, opportunities abound. As a result of recent tragedies (9/11/2001 terrorist attacks, 2005 hurricane Katrina) the fire services remains sharp in the public mind. Firefighters have never been more honored than they are today and our public has never been more aware of the fact that local services (fire & police) are their first line of defense. Americans increasingly feel the need to prepare for disaster, and increasingly want to get involved to make a difference, but are not aware of how.

The Federal Government has taken notice of the need for improving the Nation’s emergency services with over 10 billion dollars devoted to funding packages over the last 3 years. We have been lucky to have secured over \$242,000 in

equipment grants for our fire district during a three year period. However it is anticipated that due to new crisis's (war in Iraq, nuclear threat in Iran, petroleum prices), that Federal funding will soon be diverted away from local fire services like ours.

Limited opportunities also exist in the development of new non-taxed based revenue. The district must establish a proactive and flexible focus and continually explore new ways to serve our customers while deriving much needed revenue to support operations.

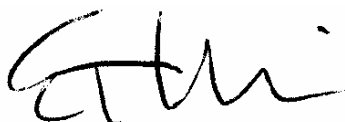
It is clear that the fire service as a whole has made its point well known but some communities, including ours, have missed the opportunity to convert citizens who are indifferent into citizens who are concerned. Citizens in our community have even asked "if it's not broken, why fix it", without realizing that our service is balancing on a razor's edge to maintain its services. Our district's continued survival will now be determined by our ability to identify customer needs, capture them as our own, effectively communicate our service, and capitalize on the opportunities.

What we do is noble; our customers require our services. We must individually establish the importance of marketing our services and good public relations by delivering distinguished service that begins well before, continues throughout, and goes well beyond an incident alarm.

It is no longer acceptable to operate this fire district on a "day to day" basis; problem solving on a "task to task" basis. Years of indifference and inaction have resulted in a fire district that now faces multiple threats to even the most basic services. Now is the time to act and to make commitments to change for the better.

We must create a selfless team of people that see beyond the challenges and that can instead visualize the opportunities. We must capture the commitment of our entire staff from the top of the organization to the bottom.

In closing and on a personal note, I am honored to serve as the Fire District's 23rd Fire Chief. This has been the most fulfilling post I have ever held in the fire service. I am very glad to be a part of the fire district during a time of tremendous growth and change. I am fortunate to be surrounded by a team of selfless, professional and dedicated board members, volunteers and employees. My team and I owe it to our community to carefully analyze and respond to the challenges that are identified in this plan in order to change the present course of Cowlitz County Fire District 6.



Chief Eric Koreis

MISSION, VISION, GOALS & VALUES

As of the publishing of the first draft of this document, the fire district has not identified a mission statement, vision statement, goals, or statement of its guiding principals.

Successful organizations worldwide have realized that every level of their staff from newly hired personnel to seasoned board members must agree and commit to fulfilling the stated mission of the organization. The mission statement should define who we are and what we do. In the absence of a stated mission and emphasis on such, organizations can become disillusioned, misdirected, and loose focus.

A vision statement identifies the general but major ways that the organization desires to improve upon itself to fulfill its mission.

Stated goals identify specific ways that the organization will act to move as a whole in the direction of their visions in support of their mission.

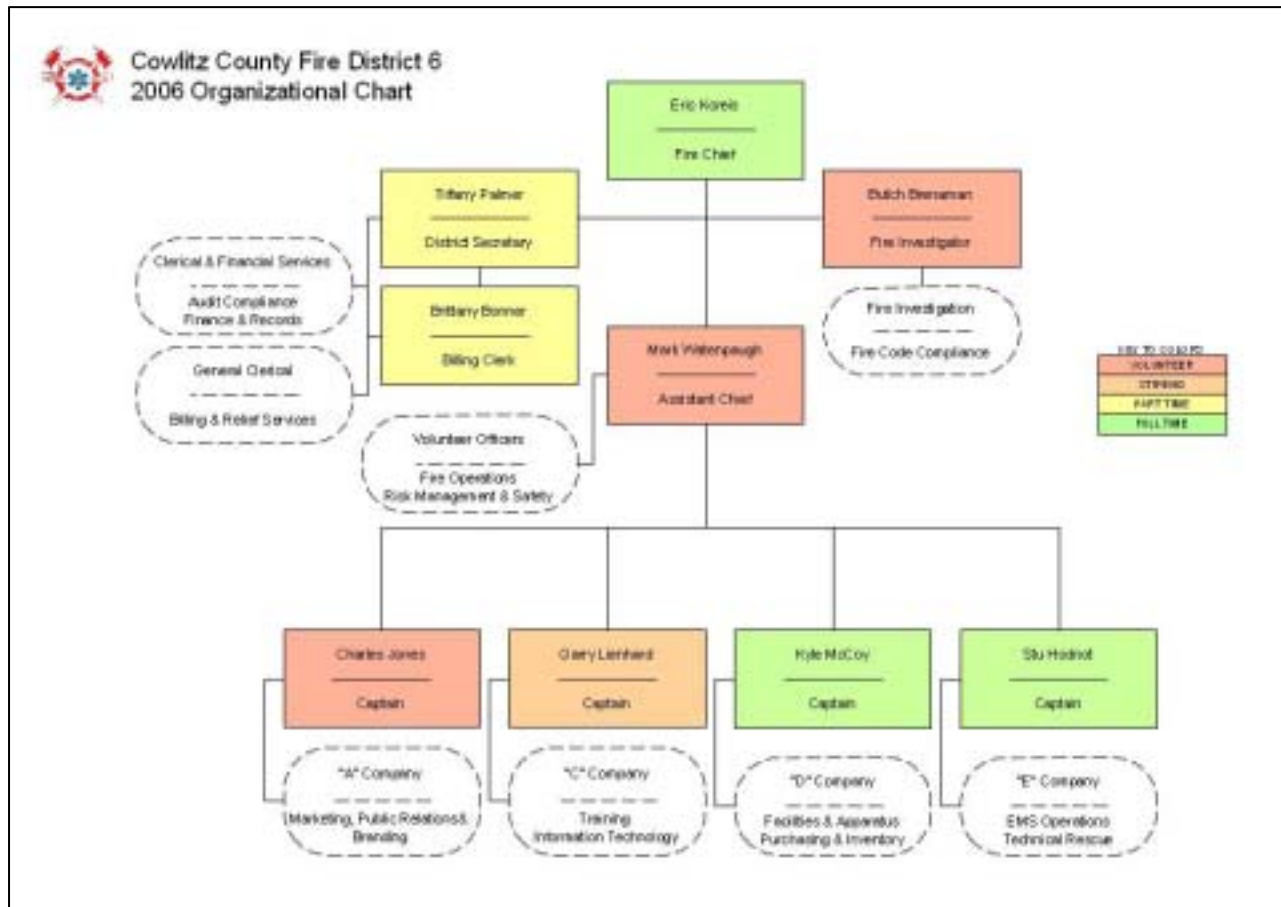
Values are guiding principals describe how the board, management, and staff will go about perusing its goals to meet the vision of the fire district for the purpose of serving our mission.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Establish work group to formulate draft mission, vision and value statements.	6/1/2007	Assistant Chief & All	
Submit draft statement for review of district staff and personnel, revise and publish final draft.	7/1/2007	Assistant Chief & All	
Submit to Board for review and approval of final statements.	8/1/2007	Chief & Board	

GOVERNANCE / ADMINISTRATION & ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Background & Analysis: The fire district is legally established and under the supervision of an elected Board of Fire Commissioners as provided under Title 52 Revised Code of Washington. Our board is made up of three elected Fire Commissioners who serve six year terms. The Fire Commissioners are tasked to reflect the public interest, protect the district from undesirable external interference, set policies, determine levels of service and interpret the district's activities to its constituency.

The Board of Fire Commissioners appoints a Fire Chief to act as the Chief Executive Officer of the District. The Board authorizes the Fire Chief establish, execute and enforce district policies and procedures. The Chief and his/her officers make up the administration of the fire district and they exercise responsibility for the quality of the district through planning, staffing, directing, coordinating and evaluating. The district administration is entrusted with the assets of the district and charged to uphold its mission and programs to ensure compliance with laws and regulations and to provide stability and continuity to the department.



The Board of Fire Commissioners and the fire district administration hold monthly public meetings. In addition, special meetings, workshops, and planning sessions are held as necessary.

Major Goal Statement(s)

Establish an administrative/organizational structure and environment to achieve the district’s objectives while demonstrating compliance with legal requirements of local, state, and federal governments.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Develop written administrative and operations personnel functions, roles, and responsibilities.	N/A	Chief	Complete, Approved by Board
Draft comprehensive district policy and procedures manual and review annually .	Annually	Board & Chief	Complete, Approved by Board
Draft comprehensive board policy manual.	N/A	Chief	Complete, Approved by Board
Implement policy and procedures training for all personnel.	N/A	Officers	Ongoing
Establish and adopt strategic plan	ASAP	Chief, Officers & Board	
Establish and adopt annual budget and long term funding based on strategic plan.	Workshop by September 30 & Board approval by October Annually	Chief & Officers Board	



PLANNING

DISTRICT PROFILE

Cowlitz County Fire District 6 encompasses a 100 square mile area in Northern Cowlitz County and serves a population of roughly 10,000 residents. The district is split apart into an East and West service area by the Cowlitz River. The City of Castle Rock is within the district's boundaries and includes residential subdivisions, multi-family dwellings, apartment complexes, assisted living facilities, and light commercial structures.

Residential development within the fire district is increasing. A 44 unit, three story apartment complex is scheduled for construction in Fall of 2006. A 70 home development is scheduled to break ground in 2007. Several smaller development sites are planned for construction in 2007 as well.

RESPONSE ANALYSIS

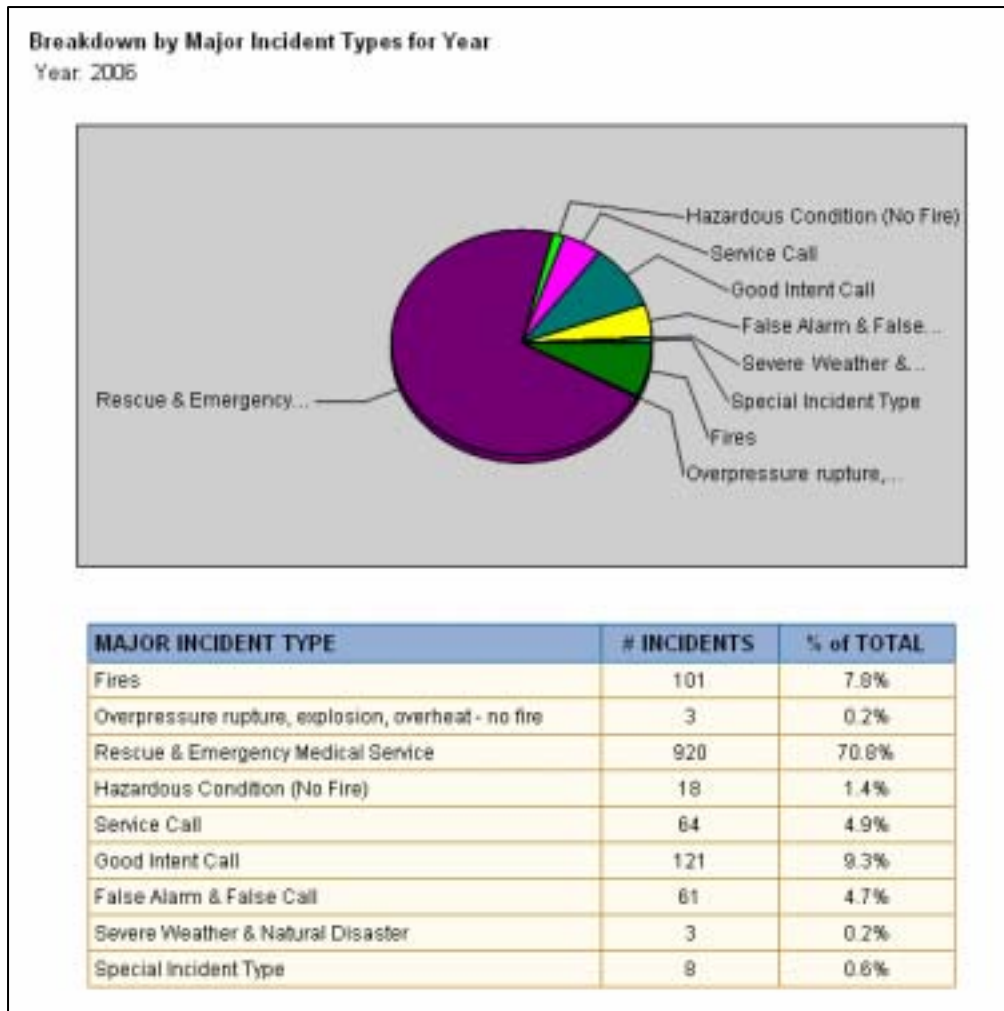
- In 2005 the fire district responded to 1,257 alarms and represents a 10.3% increase over our 2004 call volume of 1,139 alarms.

2005 STATISTICS

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS	%
ALS TRANSPORT	39	35	35	43	35	48	41	35	21	26	24	38	418	61.8%
BLS TRANSPORT	17	13	9	13	22	15	27	18	14	17	15	22	202	25.0%
ALS REFUSAL	6	0	3	5	3	9	5	2	6	7	2	2	50	6.2%
BLS REFUSAL	11	3	2	4	7	5	6	3	3	10	4	4	62	7.7%
TOT AMR	1	4	2	2	2	4	6	3	1	3	2	5	35	4.3%
TOT OTHER DIST	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0.2%
MICP CONSULT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
PUBLIC ASSIST	0	0	0	1	3	0	3	5	3	2	3	1	21	2.6%
TOT HELICOPTER	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	8	1.0%
CPR / DCA	3	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	1.2%
FIRE/RESCUE/OTHER	30	34	32	30	29	30	19	30	86	32	45	35	450	35.8%
TOTAL EMS	77	57	55	69	75	82	88	88	49	66	50	71	807	64.2%
TOTAL TRANSPORT	56	48	45	56	58	64	68	53	14	43	39	58	603	
TRANSPORT %	72.7%	84.2%	81.8%	81.2%	78.7%	78.0%	77.3%	77.8%	28.6%	65.2%	78.0%	81.7%	73.8%	
TOTAL REFUSAL	17	3	5	9	10	14	11	5	9	17	6	6	115	
REFUSAL %	22.1%	5.3%	9.1%	13.0%	13.3%	17.1%	12.5%	7.4%	18.4%	25.8%	12.0%	12.7%	14.0%	
TOTAL CALLS (MONTH)	107	91	87	89	104	121	107	107	135	98	95	106	1257	
TOTAL CALLS (YTD)	107	188	285	384	488	608	716	823	958	1056	1151	1257	1257	

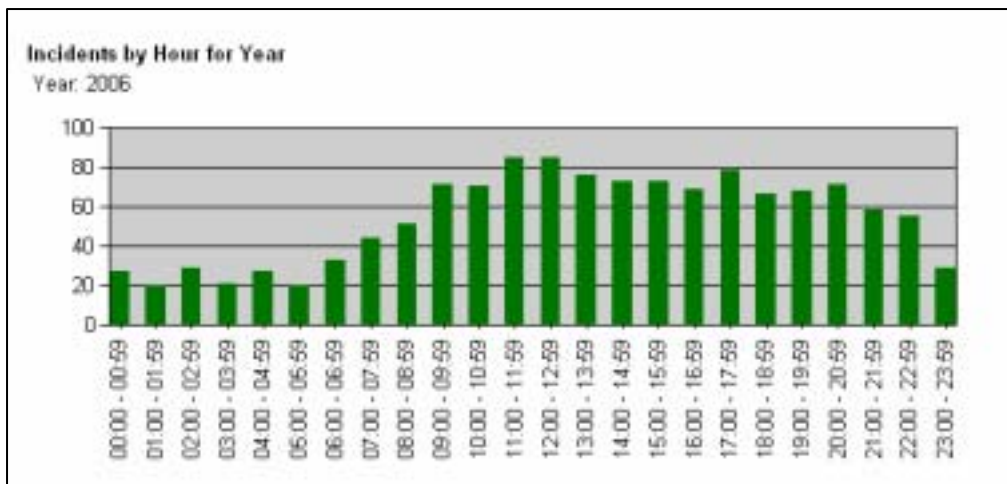
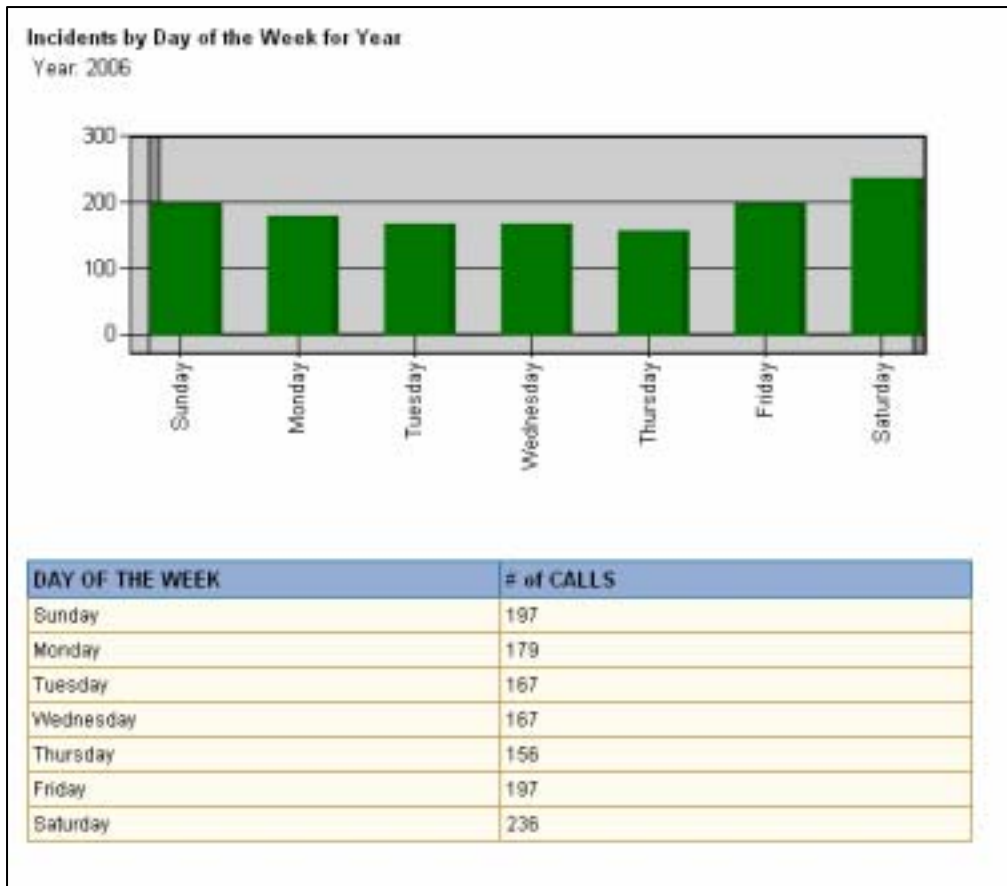
- Detailed response time statistics were not available for years preceding 2006 due to technology and reporting limitations.
- Ambulance transport to refusal rates have decreased from 19.5% in 2003 and 17.2% in 2004, to 14.0% in 2005.
- The overall percentage of fire/rescue to EMS only calls has also changed during the last three years from 72% EMS only responses in 2003 to 64.2% EMS only responses in 2005; this is despite an overall increase in fire district call volume.

- Response statistics for 2006 are represented in the tables below.



- Response time performance is tracked in the following zones. The average response times listed are year to date for 2006:
 - Zone 6I – Inside Castle Rock City Limits – Suburban: **5.55 Min.**
 - Zone 6U – Fire District 6 Outside City Limits – Rural: **10.99 Min.**
 - Zone 3 – Fire District 3 (ALS Responses): **13.44 Min.**
- Response time performance is also tracked by unit. The average response times listed are year to date for 2006 and include responses to all zones:
 - 601, 606, 609 (On Duty Officer/Paramedic): **8.06 Min.**
 - Medic 61 (Volunteer Ambulance Staffed 24/7): **9.21 Min.**
 - Engine 61 (Volunteer Fire Engine): **11.83 Min.**
 - Rescue 61 (Volunteer Rescue Vehicle): **11.33 Min.**
 - Tender 61 (Volunteer Water Tender): **17.35 Min.**
 - Chief 61 (On Duty Chief): **8.83 Min.**
- Responses are tracked both by days of the week and by hour of day. Call data listed below represents 2006 year to date.
 - The highest call volume is experienced on weekends.

- The highest call volume is experienced between the hours of 9 AM and 9 PM.



ASSESSMENT & PLANNING

The assessment and planning process is crucial in identifying the community's emergency services needs, goals and objectives. The process provides a means of evaluating the effectiveness of service delivery, while proper documentation of the findings will serve to establish the need for changes and/or improvements. This information is invaluable in establishing fire district need to the community. It is also invaluable that the general membership of the district understand "why" change and improvement is necessary so that they may effectively communicate this to our citizens.

STANDARD of RESPONSE COVERAGE (SRC)

Background & Analysis:

Response time has a direct relationship to the critical time interval for fire and medical emergencies with respect to the degree of effectiveness as measured by outcome. Saving lives, reducing suffering, and limiting property loss can be directly attributed to emergency services adequately located with proper equipment, and personnel necessary to accomplish the tasks.

One of the major issues the fire service has struggled with in the past decade is the methodology for defining levels of service. The development of the following data is intended to establish a basic methodology that the district uses to evaluate existing response coverage, and is based on several variables which interact to define the necessary service level.

Other than for EMS responses governed by the Southwest Region EMS and Trauma Care Plan, the district has never identified an overall standard response time goal. No assessment or planning process appears to have been previously documented to establish a standard; or such process is unknown. Staffing levels are tied to an overall standard response time goal. It is essential that the fire district establish such a goal.

A prevailing method used to evaluate the Standard of Response Coverage (SRC), analyzes distribution, concentration and staffing levels. These factors are established to define a service delivery goal. The overall goal is to get the appropriate physical and human resources to an incident in a timely manner to efficiently, effectively, and safely deliver services based on a typical "high frequency / low-moderate consequence" emergency response.

Fire District 6 measures response times as "averages". Average response times are calculated by taking the total response time of all incidents and then dividing by the total number of incidents. A much more accurate picture of response time is achieved by examining "fractal" measurements. Fractal response time measurements calculate response time based on a percentage of probability.

For example, a 90% fractal response time of 5 minutes would mean that units arrive on scene within 5 minutes for 9/10 responses.

Standard response coverage analysis consists of three key elements:

1. Distribution of fire stations located to assure rapid response deployment.
2. Concentration of resources (apparatus/equipment) arranged so that an initial “effective response force” can arrive on scene within sufficient time frames to mobilize and stop the escalation of an emergency.
3. Staffing levels are based on a typical incident type of the “high frequency / low-moderate consequence” category.

Other factors include population base, planning zones, scientific analysis; industry recognized standards, Federal, State and Local regulatory requirements.

Major Goal Statement(s)

- Develop and adopt a Standard of Response Coverage that establishes adequate distribution and concentration of physical (fixed/mobile) and human resources necessary to efficiently, effectively, and safely deliver emergency service goals and objectives defined by the district and its citizens.
- Develop a standard of response criteria utilizing scientifically based and industry recognized standards, Federal, State and Local regulatory requirements. (*“Time and Temperature Curve”* and *“Cardiac Arrest Survival”*, *National Fire Protection Association* and *296-305 Washington Administrative Code*)
- Track 90 percentile fractal response times by geographic zones based on transportation corridors and coordinate with the district’s staffing plan.



Standard of Response Coverage Criteria and Factors:

- NFPA 1710 and 1720
 - Requires by reference fire departments to identify minimum staffing and ensure that fire suppression capability includes sufficient personnel, equipment, and other resources to efficiently, effectively, and safely deploy fire suppression resources.
- Washington State Trauma Verification Requirement (EMS):
 - Requires by statute that licensed and verified EMS agencies respond within a set timeframe (see table).

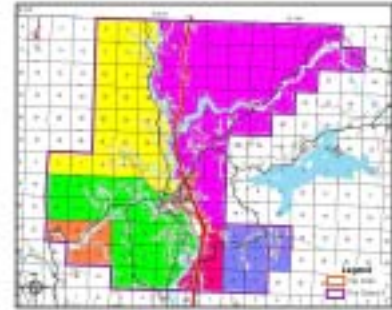
Classification	First Response (Min)	Ambulance Transport (Min)	Population
Urban	8	10	>30,000 total in jurisdiction; or >10,000 total and >2,000 per square mile
Suburban	15	20	10,000 to 29,999 total in jurisdiction; or 1-2,000 per square mile
Rural	45	45	<10,000 total in jurisdiction; or <1,000 per square mile
Wilderness	ASAP	ASAP	Any rural area not readily accessible.

- 296-305 Washington Administrative Code
 - Requires a minimum of three combat ready firefighters to be on scene prior to conducting a rescue in a dangerous atmosphere where a known life hazard exists; requires a minimum of four firefighters on scene prior to interior firefighting.
- Time and Temperature Curve
 - Studies indicate that since the mid 1950's there has been a significant reduction to fire flashover from 12-15 minutes to 3-7 minutes in the 1990's. Temperatures at ceiling level have significantly increased due to fire loading through the use of plastics and other polycarbonate materials to around 750-1100 degrees Celsius. These changes mean there is less time for people to escape and reduced time for rescue efforts.
- Time to Defibrillation
 - Response time has a direct relationship to the critical time interval necessary to improve chances of survival from sudden cardiac arrest. Without intervention, chances of survival are reduced 7-10% every minute after collapse.

PLANNING ZONES, RISK ASSESSMENT, and RESPONSE STRATEGY

Background & Analysis:

There exists in every community, whether specifically stated or not, a level of risk and corresponding loss accepted by the community. While an admirable goal, it is unrealistic to expect to curtail all fire/life loss. Neither is it economically feasible to over protect an emergency services zone for the sake of just a few occupancies or call types.



A primary responsibility of the district is to develop resources necessary to respond to the “typical” request for service (high frequency – low/moderate consequence). It is also necessary to assess the overall risk and establish response plans for catastrophic disasters (low frequency – high/extreme consequence).

Fire District 6 is broken into fire response zones for both planning and for deployment of resources. Response assignments have been established by zone, call type, and alarm level allowing the 911 center to dispatch the recommended response assignment within the zone. The criteria used to identify and revise the zones are population density, geography, and transportation. Each zone is analyzed to establish the priority need of improved standard of response coverage. A map of our established response zones is included.

Zone C1 City Limits of Castle Rock (High-Moderate Risk)

The center of our fire district contains the City Limits of Castle Rock and consists of residential subdivisions, multi-family dwellings and light commercial structures (high risk). There are also areas of suburban and rural residential dwellings (moderate risk). The I-5 corridor and main Seattle to Portland rail line bisects this zone. The zone is approximately 6 square miles. This zone along with a four mile area surrounding it has been proposed for inclusion in the Cowlitz County Urban Growth Management Area. The majority of this zone is classified as suburban due to population density.

This zone is serviced by the Fire district’s only fire station which is located in the center of the zone.

The majority of this zone is serviced by a municipal water system and is protected by fire hydrants.

Zone 6I Response Strategy	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Improve data collection including response time, call volume, and call type statistics for this zone.	Begin ASAP	Crews via ERS	Pending
Maintain standard of response coverage and prevent lapses in coverage.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Zone E East / Tower Road (Low Risk)

The Northeast section of the district includes the Tower Road corridor and Toutle River. The area is predominately rural with farms and low density residential parcels. The zone is approximately 25 square miles along a 10 mile section of Tower Road. The zone includes the infamous “Hollywood Gorge”, a rapid section of the Toutle River.

This zone is serviced by the Fire district’s only fire station which is located in downtown Castle Rock. The zone is also served by mutual aid resources from Fire Station 32 located on South Silver Lake Road. The majority of the zone is greater than 5 miles from any Class A fire station with 24/7/365 staffing.

It seems appropriate to consider that Station 32 is positioned close to the NE zone and that further consolidation with Fire District 3, including the possibility of future projects such as the joint staffing of Station 32.

The zone is not serviced by a municipal water system. Fire flows are achieved by shuttling of water by tenders.

Zone 6I Response Strategy	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Improve data collection including response time, call volume, and call type statistics for this zone.	Begin ASAP	Crews via ERS	Pending
Consider consolidation or joint staffing project(s) with Fire District 3 to utilize the placement of Station 32.	6/31/2007	Chief	Pending
Maintain standard of response coverage and prevent lapses in coverage.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Zone N North / Barnes Drive (Low Risk)

The North section of the district includes the Barnes Drive corridor. The area is predominately rural with farms, forestland and low density residential parcels. The zone is approximately 22 square miles along a 9 mile section of Barnes Drive.

This zone is serviced by the Fire district’s only fire station which is located in downtown Castle Rock. The zone is also served by mutual aid resources from Fire Station 32 located on South Silver Lake Road. The majority of the zone is greater than 5 miles from any Class A fire station with 24/7/365 staffing.

The zone is not serviced by a municipal water system. Fire flows are achieved by shuttling of water by tenders.

Development may be effected in this zone because of the lack of fire station coverage.

Zone 6I Response Strategy	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Improve data collection including response time, call volume, and call type statistics for this zone.	Begin ASAP	Crews via ERS	Pending
Consider a facilities study to improve 5 mile fire station coverage for this zone.	6/1/2007	Consultant	Pending
Maintain standard of response coverage and prevent lapses in coverage.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Zone NW Northwest / Westside Hwy (Low/Moderate)

The Northwest section of the district includes the Northern Westside Hwy corridor. The area is predominately rural with farms, low and medium density residential parcels and forestland. The zone is approximately 25 square miles along an 8 mile section of Westside Hwy. An 8 mile section of the Cowlitz River is also found in this zone.

This zone is serviced by the Fire district's only fire station which is located in downtown Castle Rock. The majority of the zone is greater than 5 miles from any Class A fire station with 24/7/365 staffing.

Development may be effected in the northern portion of this zone because of the lack of fire station coverage.

The zone is serviced partially by a municipal water system in "Green Acres" area. Most fire flows for this zone are achieved by shuttling of water by tenders.

Zone 6I Response Strategy	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Maintain standard of response coverage and prevent lapses in coverage.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Improve data collection including response time, call volume, and call type statistics for this zone.	Begin ASAP	Crews via ERS	Pending

Zone SW Southwest/ Westside Hwy (Low/Moderate)

The Southwest section of the district includes the Southern Westside Hwy corridor. The area is predominately rural with farms, low and medium density residential parcels and forestland. The zone is approximately 30 square miles along an 8 mile section of Westside Hwy. An 8 mile section of the Cowlitz River is also found in this zone.

This zone is serviced by the Fire district's only fire station which is located in downtown Castle Rock. The majority of the zone is greater than 5 miles from any Class A fire station with 24/7/365 staffing.

Development may be effected in the West and South portion of this zone because of the lack of fire station coverage.

It seems reasonable to move or place a station in a location for better coverage of this zone, especially if consolidation or joint projects with District 3 at Station 32 are realized.

The zone is serviced partially by a municipal water system in "Green Acres" area. Most fire flows for this zone are achieved by shuttling of water by tenders.

Zone 6I Response Strategy	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Maintain standard of response coverage and prevent lapses in coverage.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Consider capital station projects in this zone to provide better coverage.	N/A	Chief, Board & Consultant	N/A

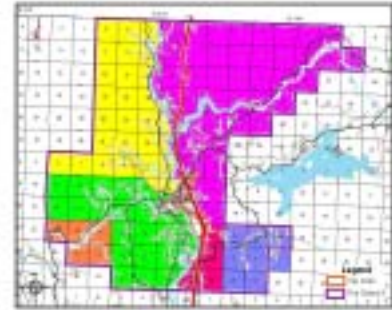


FINANCIAL RESOURCES

FINANCIAL PLANNING, BUDGETING & EXPENDITURE TRACKING

Background & Analysis:

After the annexation of the City of Castle Rock, the fire district was introduced to the concepts of financial planning and practices that adhere to general accounting practices. The fire district now develops an annual operating budget to estimate expenditures and financial resources necessary to provide the services for which it was created. Each expenditure is codified and assigned to a specific budget group according to the Washington State BARS system. Controls have been established which provide varying checks and balances for expenditures and for billing/collections services.



Budget preparation is the responsibility of the Fire Chief and District Secretary. Annually, the general staff of the fire district meets to establish a draft budget. This budget is based on expected revenues and anticipated expenses for the next fiscal year (January thru December). The draft budget is then forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for amendment and/or adoption.

The goal of the budget process is three fold: to assure necessary programs and services are adequately funded, to assess the need for additional financial resources and to assure the long term financial stability of the fire district.

The Fire Chief, District Secretary and Board of Fire Commissioners share the responsibility of financial planning, management and stability of financial resources.

The Fire Chief monitors the financial status of the district throughout the year on a continuous basis and provides reports to the Board of Commissioners.

ECONOMIC FACTORS & COMPARISONS

Increased regulatory mandates and call volumes require increased administrative and operational man-hours, while anti-tax initiatives have imposed a 1% budgetary growth limitation. It is not complicated to understand that 1% revenue growth will not keep pace with growing demands, increased personnel costs, and increased costs of goods and services due to inflation.

The fire district's finances are already stressed due to its unusually low tax levy. By far the lowest fire tax assessment in Cowlitz County, our 2006 levy rate of \$0.47 is totally inadequate for the service and staffing needs of the district. While we collect at the lowest levy rate the fire district is the third busiest fire department in Cowlitz County. A comparison of call volume and levy rates for several local fire districts is shown in the table below.

Fire District	2005 Calls for Service	2005 Levy Rate
1 – Woodland	286	\$1.14 (\$1.60 w/EMS Levy)
2 – Kelso	4619	\$1.65
3 – Toutle	347	\$0.99 (\$1.23 w/EMS Levy)
4 – Ryderwood	<100*	\$0.99 (\$1.48 w/EMS Levy)
5 – Kalama	683	\$1.45
6 – Castle Rock	1257	\$0.49
7 – Cougar	<50*	\$0.90

* Call volume statistics are not electronically available for these districts.

** Tax levy rates above do not include bond issues or other special levies, does not include municipal fire departments who derive their operating budgets from their municipal budget.

In assessing the Cowlitz County Auditor's records, Fire District 6 has never asked voters to increase its tax levy since the fire district was established in 1966. This is despite the obvious increase in service requirements over the years associated with an explosion in call volume.

Two additional figures have been analyzed in comparing the finances of the fire district against others: annual operating tax revenues and per call cost. A per call cost is established by dividing the total number of a fire district's calls into the fire district's annual revenues for that year. These figures are depicted below:

Fire District	2005 Tax Revenue	Per Call Cost
1 – Woodland	\$421,235	\$1,472
2 – Kelso	\$2,799,813	\$606
3 – Toutle	\$206,923	\$596
4 – Ryderwood	\$23,292	\$232
5 – Kalama	\$855,622	\$1,252
6 – Castle Rock	\$167,782	\$133
7 – Cougar	\$123,300	\$2,466

Fire District 6 has the third lowest collectable tax revenue of any fire district in Cowlitz County and the lowest cost to call ratio.

According to the consumer price index, the costs of goods and services have increased approximately 585% between 1966 when the fire district was

established and 2005. For many years, the fire district could increase its tax levy without vote at a rate of 6% annually. Then most recently, a Washington State initiative limited tax adjustments to 1% annually. This equates to an approximate tax levy growth for the fire district of 215% in the last 39 years. This has placed us well behind the pace of inflation.

For example, if the cost of a fire engine was \$50,000 in 1966, that same fire engine would cost about \$292,927 today. Fire District 6 only increased its annual tax revenues an average of 5.51% yearly between 1966 and 2005. That means that hypothetically, had we set aside \$50,000 in 1966, it would have only grown to become \$107,500 in 2005. If we were to try to buy the same fire engine we spoke of earlier, we would be short \$185,427. If you apply this same example to other areas of our operating budget it is easy to see that our tax revenue assessments have not kept pace with the cost of business.

The fire district has passively found ways to make up the difference and as a result, the district's cost to call ratio over the years has been reduced. At this point, our cost to call ratio is so low that we can't afford to pay for the staff (both volunteer and career) we need or the facility upgrades necessary to serve the public adequately.

Major Goal Statement(s)

- Develop an annual budget which, in the short term, assures continued basic operation of the fire district at existing levels of service.
- Seek increased tax based revenue to pay for staffing, vehicle, equipment and facilities maintenance and upgrades as identified by this plan.
- Explore alternate funding sources such as fee for service agreements, false alarm fees, voluntary mitigation agreements, fire suppression agreements for non-tax paying properties and other external funding sources other than tax based revenue.
- Establish and maintain a capitol expense and apparatus replacement fund.
- Maintain the level of the existing expense fund as appropriate for reserve operation of the fire districts in times of funding crisis or other emergencies.
- Assure proper fund growth and annual budgeting to assure long term financial stability of the fire district and its services.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Background & Analysis: Fire remains the largest single cause of property loss in the United States. In the last decade fires have caused direct losses of more than \$120 billion dollars, injured 20,000 and kills over 3,000 each year.



In any community, fire burns the same way; it harms people and property the same way. The resources and practices required to safely respond to the fire or emergency tends to be the same everywhere. What may differ is an individual department's defined scope of response and resources available to perform those responsibilities.

While fire calls no longer represent the highest demand for services, they have steadily increased over the past ten years. The increase requires fire departments to, at a minimum: maintain distribution, concentration, and staffing of personnel and equipment. It is clear that to employ these minimums in Fire District 6 additional staffing is needed. This will require additional funding.

It is evident that the key element in the reduction or prevention of loss of life and property at a fire is a properly organized, staffed and deployed fire department. A fire emergency is a time sensitive and labor intensive task. Ours, like many fire departments and districts, currently does not have the capability to provide all the requisite functions for an initial first alarm response in a timely manner.



Until November 29, 2005, the City of Castle Rock contracted with Fire District 6 for fire protection. On that date, the City was annexed by the district. The newly merged fire district relies on a single station with three career and over 50 volunteer firefighters to carry out its mission. The district has modern apparatus and equipment and utilizes the latest technology. Personnel are cross trained to perform multiple functions. Fire District 6 relies on good relationships with neighboring fire districts; this has resulted in an excellent mutual aid response from these districts when required. The district has an excellent training program which has improved over the last several years; it includes standardized orientation and academy training for all new employees and volunteers. All of this has resulted in a more safety minded and effective fire district on the whole.

However, our fire district is experiencing staffing problems related to volunteer participation; this has resulted in occasional poor turnout to emergencies and the occasional need for multiple alarms. With only three full-time employees who are predominately dedicated to provide constant medical response coverage, the district has no ability to assure constant staffing on fire related emergencies. Additional training requirements have caused the district to experience a shortage of qualified large apparatus operators.

The district requires a more diverse staffing plan with a greater number of paid employees to assure constant staffing levels for fire responses. Our district's budget matches personnel costs against purchasing proper equipment or other expenses to keep pace with growth. These same issues are repeated throughout our region, State, and Country.

Fire District 6's inability to effectively deploy proper resources does not result from lack of knowledge, effort, leadership, or poor management; it is the result of an increased scope of services over the years matched with a lack of funding.



The service delivery goals stated within this document will establish long-term quality service while providing the proper safety those personnel deserve. The district has a moral obligation to present the options to the community and allow them to determine their level of risk, and acceptable loss. In addition to seeking proper funding the district leadership has an obligation to seek improved efficiency of service.

Major Goal Statement(s)

- Develop a staffing plan to ensure that fire suppression capability includes sufficient on duty personnel to efficiently, effectively, and safely deploy to a fire suppression emergency. The plan should include a diversity of staffing methods including: full-time, part-time, shift volunteer, on call volunteer, resident, intern, and lateral positions to maximize efficiency.
- Strictly enforce that a minimum of three combat ready firefighters are required to be on scene prior to conducting a rescue in any hazardous environment (IDLH) where a known life hazard exists or a minimum of four firefighters on scene prior to interior firefighting operations (WAC 296-305).

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Continue to standardize all firefighting tools and equipment.	N/A		Ongoing
Purchase compatible and interoperable communications equipment.	2006-2007	Chief	Complete
Continue training program.	N/A	Training Captain	Ongoing
Continue professional computerized reporting program.	N/A	ERS	Ongoing
Establish turn-out time for fire responses (dispatch to response) of 60 seconds 90% of the time.	12/31/2007	Chief, Officer's, Board of Commissioners	
Upon assembly of necessary resources, safely initiate an initial attack and/or deliver services within 2 minutes of the arrival on scene 90% of the time.	12/31/2007	Training Captain, Officers	
Recruit and retain more volunteer firefighters.			
Add additional "shift volunteer" positions (on duty volunteer firefighters) and retain through program changes and increased financial stipend.			
Establish firefighter residency program to improve staffing.			Would require facilities upgrade or external living quarters.
Hire additional full-time staff.			
Develop and implement deployment plan based on adequate staffing levels.			
Develop apparatus replacement schedule.			



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Background & Analysis: The responsibilities of today's fire districts extend well beyond traditional firefighting. The fire service has evolved to respond to almost all local hazards, protecting property and life.

Emergency medical services now dominate the fire service call volume. Last year, requests for emergency medical services accounted for 64.2% of the district's total call volume. The aging population suggests this trend is expected to increase.



Fire District 6 operates 3 licensed ambulances, one of which is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week providing advanced life support (paramedic) first response and transport service to its residents. The district also provides that service to Cowlitz County Fire District 3 (Toutle/Silver Lake) and to the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument 50 miles East of Castle Rock. This response area includes hundreds of miles of logging roads and hiking trails.

Since 1999, significant improvements to the local EMS system have been made in order to comply with State regulations governing ambulance service. In 2001, the department employed two full-time paramedics who worked 96 hour alternating shifts. 2002 marked the beginning of the fire district's "quick response vehicle" program which allowed the paramedic to respond immediately without waiting for additional staff to arrive; this also improved the availability of advanced life support in Northern Cowlitz County. The existing full-time staff was cross trained for firefighting and command in 2004 and was promoted to company officer level positions. This improved supervision of district personnel and training. The fire district now staffs a daily shift with one full-time career paramedic and two volunteer EMTs. The majority of the duty staff is cross trained in firefighting with the exception of a few volunteers. These improvements allowed for quicker first response and compliance with all State regulations and regional response time requirements.

Following a number of calls for injured wilderness enthusiasts, the district upgraded EMT training to include "prolonged pre-hospital critical care". This training has prepared personnel to respond in the harsh wilderness environment safely and to care for victims under adverse conditions.

Fire District 6 bills patients who are transported to the hospital. Over half of the fire district's patient's are elderly and are insured by the Federal Medicare system. Sweeping changes to the Medicare fee schedule have meant reduced ambulance reimbursements. The private insurance industry have followed suit

with reduced reimbursements. Soaring jobless rates in Cowlitz County have also affected the number of patients that are unable to afford insurance. All these factors have reduced the overall EMS budget since 2000.



The fire district passed a Washington State Department of Health EMS service inspection in May of 2006 without any deficiencies. While the program design is solid, it is too dependant on volunteer staffing. The two daily shift volunteers are paid only \$3.00 per hour, the lowest wage of any regional fire department with similar positions. This results in a high attrition rate and inability to compete for volunteers among the higher paying fire

departments. The district operates on a proverbial “razors edge” trying to balance volunteer recruitment with our staffing needs. Such a practice provides for a very unstable staffing model.

Major Goal Statement(s)

Seek improved EMS funding to improve staffing through the addition of stable full-time staff positions, increase pay for shift volunteers to a competitive rate to reduce attrition and to improve staffing stability, and to maintain EMS equipment and apparatus.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Maintain current staffing and service levels.	Ongoing	Chief & Board	
Maintain existing quality assurance program and review of patient medical records.	Ongoing	Career Shift Officers	
Maintain existing EMS training program.	Ongoing	Capt. Lienhard	
Continue electronic patient report program.	Ongoing	Capt. Lienhard	
Change EMT training reimbursement from 1 year to 2 years of service.	2007	Chief	Completed
Increase EMT participation requirements to improve shift coverage.	2007	Chief, Officers & Board	
Hire an additional full-time paramedic position (See Staffing Section)	2008	Chief & Board	
Improve second and third call response times.	2007	Chief & Assistant Chief	
Increase shift volunteer pay to competitive amount.	2007	Chief & Board	Increased \$0.50 on January 1, 2007
Implement intern program to take the place of one shift volunteer position.	2007	Chief, Officers & Board	
Seek EMS levy to fund EMS staffing changes.	ASAP	Chief & Board	
Increase injury prevention program frequency in all age groups, especially the elderly.	2007	Capt. McCoy	

TECHNICAL RESCUE

Background & Analysis: The fire district established a technical rescue team after a series of tragic incidents and near misses within the fire district's jurisdiction. At the time of the incidents, the fire district did not have resources to handle the emergency calls and external resources that were called to assist were either unable to respond or did not exist.



The fire district focused on three areas of technical rescue: swiftwater and surface water rescue, rope rescue, and wilderness rescue. The team was outfitted with adequate gear and industry standard training to respond to such emergencies. The team is staffed by employees and volunteers who have attended the special training and have been certified to do so.

In 2005, Fire District 6 responded to 32 technical rescue calls for service, this represented 2.5% of the district's total calls for service that year.

Favoring intergovernmental cooperation, Fire District 6's team has partnered with Fire District 5 in Kalama to form a "Joint Technical Rescue Team". Both agencies are dispatched simultaneously to any technical rescue emergency in Cowlitz County. Fire District 3 in Toutle is expected to contribute two trained responders to the joint team in 2006. The teams not only respond together but they train together regularly.



Major Goal Statement(s)

Technical rescue is a highly specialized endeavor; frequent training is required and special equipment is necessary to deliver such a service. Major goals include continued cooperation with other fire districts, continued training of technical rescue personnel, pursuit of funding for technical rescue equipment replacement and internal team restructuring to allow for greater participation among fire district employees and volunteers. Integration of technical rescue training into the general fire district training program will allow more personnel to attend and receive technical rescue training. Restructuring training offerings may reduce employee overtime and thus the financial impact of the technical rescue program.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Maintain current level of rescue service.	Ongoing	Capt. Hodnot	
Maintain joint agreements with Fire District 5 and 3.	Ongoing	Chief	
Instruct technical rescue courses to other fire districts for a fee; use revenue to replace aging rescue equipment.	12/31/2007	Capt. Hodnot	
Allow any volunteer or employee to participate in technical rescue "operations" level certification.	ASAP	Capt. Hodnot	
Train and redistribute "technical" level personnel and equipment as necessary.	2007	Asst. Chief & Capt. Hodnot	
Integrate technical rescue into normal fire district training program.	2007	Capt. Hodnot & Capt. Lienhard	In Progress
Reduce employee overtime associated with technical rescue training	2007	Chief & Asst. Chief	



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Background & Analysis: Public education programs are important to our community and are a major program service area for the fire district. These programs include two major topics: fire prevention and injury prevention; other areas include fire code education, CPR and first aid courses, community emergency response training (CERT), open burning information and many other minor topic areas.



The public education program for the fire district includes specific activities such as open houses, speaking engagements, school assemblies, public promotions, the district website, ad campaigns and special programs targeting “at risk” groups are all examples of our public education programs. Our personnel perform public education daily during counter contacts at the fire station, on the telephone and when responding to incidents.

Prior to 2002 the district’s public education program was somewhat unorganized. Since then, a career Captain has been appointed to organize and execute the program. EMS and fire prevention week are two annual major community wide events that allow us access to the public. Other events are scheduled by the program Captain typically on a bi-monthly or greater basis; they include station tours, on site visits to target hazards, public classes, holiday events, etc...



Free bicycle helmets and free smoke detector programs and have been available and administered by the fire district but they are dependant on outside funding.

Public education is a valuable service provided to our taxpaying public. A favorable light can be cast upon the district by its positive and frequent interaction with the public. By providing and creating

public access to these programs many taxpayers report a sense of satisfaction in the value of their fire district.

Public education is a “win-win” scenario. The better public support a fire district has the better capable they are to service the public.



CPR, babysitting and first aid courses are in demand by the public; the fire district could and should deliver these classes but does not. These courses can typically be funded on a “for fee” basis allowing us to provide our volunteers with a financial incentive for assisting in the delivery of the courses.

Promotion of events is important to the success of the program. Proper

promotion should include print ads, television, and radio public service announcements. Handouts, materials emblazoned with fire safety logos, pamphlets, videos and other literature are needed to properly connect with our target audiences.

Staffing support for these public education activities is always an issue. A possible solution is to open several “support” volunteer positions within the public education program. These personnel could be non-firefighting positions,

dedicated specifically to public education programs. Other traditional incentive programs for staff participation could include gift certificates, free meals, special stipends, or a point system for participating in public education events. Staff recognition should be considered as well such as awarding a “public safety educators award” annually. Some districts even require each member of the district



to participate in a certain number of public education events annually as a part of their normal volunteer duties. Any number of these methods could be used to improve staffing at public education events.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Maintain the current public education program.	Ongoing	Capt. McCoy	
Increase the number of "major" public education events from 2 to 4 annually.	2007	Capt. McCoy	
Fill 2 public education volunteer positions with external applicants	12/31/2007	Chief & Capt. McCoy	
Increase budget to allow for greater advertisement and promotion of public education events and to purchase public education supplies	2007-2008	Chief & Board	Complete
Develop and publish an annual public education schedule with at least one event to occur monthly	3/1/2007	Captain McCoy and Pub Ed Staff	
Budget for and institute an incentive plan for participation of personnel in pub ed activities	2008-2009	Chief & Board	



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Background and Analysis: Public relations describe all the things that the fire district does to communicate with the public. This communication takes place through several means. Sometimes this communication is one way (pamphlets, ads, press releases) and sometimes two-way (press conferences, media interviews, public speaking).

Over the past few years, Fire District 6 has taken great steps to improve its public relations program. The district has attempted to improve its branding and marketing during this period as well.

Branding describes the process of how the fire district identifies itself through its communications.

An example of how important branding is to a fire district became evident when our fire district annexed the City of Castle Rock in 2005. Several members of the public questioned the proposition; they had mistakenly thought that the annexation was related to a Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue tax increase.



It is important for the fire district to have a consistent and noteworthy way to communicate its identity to the public. In 2001, a unique logo was designed by the firefighters of the district; different from any other fire department logo in the area, it provides instant notoriety.

All new fire district equipment displays the new logo on each door of the apparatus. The logo is also present on other pieces of equipment, helmets and the station itself.



In 2006, department uniform shirts were emblazoned with a stencil on the back. Fire District personnel frequently respond to scenes where law enforcement officers are present. Firefighters wear a dark blue uniform and can be easily mistaken for police. Because of this, the new stencil includes a red block "FIRE" in large letters.

Part of the effort has included the maintenance of a district website:

www.cowlitz6fire.org



The website contains background information on the district and its operations. News items, photos, press releases, and other information are uploaded to the site monthly for public viewing. It is visited over 500 times per month.

The newest addition to the site includes real time fire danger and homeland security information. This information is uploaded to the site in real time and is accurate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

The latest additions to the site include downloadable volunteer applications and other information relating to volunteering with the district.

The fire district has participated in several public education programs which doubled as public relations events. They include the December "Santa Run" where firefighters chauffeur someone in a Santa costume around the community. The firefighters pass out candy. More importantly, they distribute holiday fire safety information on candle safety, miniature light safety, Christmas tree fire prevention and other pertinent safety materials. The firefighters also have an opportunity to show the public our apparatus and equipment and answer questions about who we are and what we do. Another event held for the first time in 2005 was the "trick or treat the fire station" event. Held on Halloween, the station was decorated and staff was on hand to answer questions and distribute materials. Hundreds of children and adults visited for a handful of candy, some fire safety and injury prevention information and an inside look at our fire station.

The public is eager to know what their emergency services are doing. To keep the public informed we issue press releases after all noteworthy events. These releases of information are brief and factual. They sometimes include photographs of the incident scene or responders in action. Because of confidentiality laws, photos and names of injured persons are not released.



Often, press releases trigger interviews with the media; these are typically done by the Fire Chief but other district officers and incident commanders are authorized to give interviews as well. The Fire Chief gives regular radio or newspaper interviews and from time to time gives on camera television interviews for regionally important events.

It is imperative that personnel who deal with

the media be trained to do so. One recommendation made by district staff is to recruit a non-firefighting volunteer to serve as a "PIO" (Public Information Officer) and to train the individual in working with the media. In the interim, one of the district Captains has been assigned this program area.



There have been challenges in the area of public relations.

When trained staff is unavailable, press releases are not made. Even when staff is available, because they are so busy with other operational areas, press releases are often delayed. Frequent routine interactions with the media are desirable because this builds a good working relationship. This lack of relationship was never more evident than when the fire district took delivery of its newest fire engine. Hundreds attended the christening of the new truck however not one article appeared in the local newspaper. Unfortunately, the truck purchase received more media attention in Germany than it did locally when it was featured in a German fire magazine. A great relationship with the media is not only desirable but essential.



The district's website has a wealth of potential if only there was a staff member dedicated to updating and caring for the site. At this time, the volunteer Captain responsible the entire district's information technology program is also responsible for the district's training program; multiple duties make it impossible for the person in that position to update the site regularly.

Presence in the media and on the internet has the ability to attract new volunteers. Our staff has noted that increased appearances in the media caused increased inquiries from citizens who want to be associated with the fire district. Many districts take out ads, make pamphlets and produce videos to educate the public and attract new volunteers.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Appoint and train a volunteer public information officer.	1/31/2007	Chief & Capt. Jones	
Improve public information funding.	2007	Chief & Board	
Further standardize duty uniforms.	2007	Captains	
Further standardize vehicle labeling.	2007	Capt. McCoy	
Develop promotional materials including a video.	12/31/2007	Chief & FF Bonner	In Progress
Develop a yearly public education / public information calendar and publish	1/31/2007	Capt. Jones & Capt. McCoy	
Consider combining public information with public education and providing greater staffing of the position.	1/1/2008	Chief & Board	

RISK MANAGEMENT & PERSONNEL SAFETY

Background & Analysis: Throughout the region, firefighters' lives are potentially endangered because staffing levels are inadequate to perform necessary functions or provide back up. By national statistics, two-thirds of the nation's fire departments are not properly staffed to safely perform all functions necessary for an initial first alarm response. While we have examined the need to improve staffing and establish strategies of how to successfully achieve these goals, we must also examine our course of action if improved funding is to no avail.

Our membership will inevitably encounter high-hazard situations. In their interest to protect and serve, they may feel compelled to place themselves at a level of unreasonable and unacceptable risk. District leadership must continue to enforce the practice of "risk/benefit" analysis to prevent unsafe acts due to low staffing levels.

The principal safety goal is to establish a comprehensive safety program that provides proper training, PPE, apparatus/equipment and minimum staffing requirements.

In 2004, the district implemented several policies and programs primarily designed with personnel safety in mind. These programs and policies are still in effect today. All personnel must pass a comprehensive driver/operator training program prior to operating district apparatus on emergency calls; the passing score for this program is 100% and allows for no critical failures. The district also consolidated its policy and procedures manual to a single location; it is available digitally 24 hours a day on the internet. All district personnel did or will receive mandatory training on the safety aspects of the policy manual in 2006. Firefighter safety is a required training topic annually for all personnel. The district has a written safety reporting program. These reports are transmitted to the Chief and staff so that changes can be made and reported deficiencies repaired. All accidents are investigated and future incidents are prevented with remedial training.

Even with all the fire district has done there are areas which require attention. Washington law requires every fire district to appoint a safety officer who is dedicated to oversee the district's safety program. Without such a staff member, our safety program still lacks the proper surveillance and oversight. While every opportunity is taken to improve and make the fire district a safe place to work and volunteer, it is possible the district is still in violation of State and Federal requirements.

Major Goal Statement(s):

- Meet or exceed industry standards for firefighter/personnel safety while maintaining a safe, healthful and respectful workplace.
- Strictly enforce safety policies and WAC 296-305.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Appoint a Safety Officer	2007	Chief	
Continue present safety training, policies, and procedures.	Ongoing	Officers & Capt. Lienhard	
Annually review safety training, reports, policies and procedures and make recommendations for improvements.	Ongoing	Safety Officer & Attendees at Safety Meeting	
Implement and enforce policies and procedures related to safety.	Ongoing	Officers	
Improve safety incident reporting system and publish information regularly to other fire district staff.	ASAP	Chief	Completed
Conduct an internal safety audit in accordance with NFPA 1500 and WAC 296-305.	2007	Safety Officer	
Develop non-punitive "near miss" reporting.	ASAP	Chief	Completed
Purchase and issue SCBA spectacles as needed.	Ongoing	Capt. McCoy	
Improve 1 st alarm staffing to provide adequate turnout on calls.	12/31/2007	Chief & Board	
Continue Mayday and RIT training.	Ongoing	Capt. Lienhard	
Purchase vehicle exhaust filter system.	2007	Chief & FF Watts	FEMA Grant Awarded Scheduled for Bids
Continue physical fitness incentive program.	Ongoing	Capt. McCoy	
Continue hose and pump testing on an annual basis.	Ongoing	Capt. McCoy	
Consider method for ladder testing on an annual basis.	2007	Capt. McCoy	

PURCHASING, INVENTORY AND DISTRIBUTION

Background & Analysis: The proper system of purchasing, inventory, and distribution is essential to any organization.

The purchasing, inventory and distribution system used by Fire District 6 has been recently centralized. Purchase decisions have been regulated to the officers of the district, a handful of staff members perform central purchasing and supplies have been centrally stored and secured.



A computer accountability system was recently implemented. This system has the potential to provide the district with some measure of asset control as well as enhancing the ability to keep an accurate stockpile of necessary equipment on hand. The computer system is already showing some improvement in these areas.

Further efforts should be made to limit purchasing authority to specific staff members for specific purposes and programs. This has resulted in purchasing through multiple vendors; it is costly and is currently not well managed. This affects the quality and consistency of our supplies. Vendor “cold calls” create wasted time on the part of staff and ties up our single phone line. There are currently no equipment contracts or fixed vendors for particular services. Despite improvements to the program area, further improvements should be made.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Formally establish general purchasing controls for minor items including spending limits and vendors.	3/31/2006	Chief & Board	Complete
Formally establish specific purchasing controls for more expensive goods and services and assign purchase authority to specific staff members.	3/31/2006	Chief	Complete
Require all other purchases to have proper pre-approval.	3/31/2006	Chief & Board	Complete
Seek annual bids and award contracts for commonly purchased supplies and equipment.	6/30/2007	Assigned Officers	
Strengthen internal inventory control and asset tracking.	2007	Capt. McCoy	
Annual inventory of all assets over \$250.	Annually by 12/31	Capt. McCoy	

COMMUNICATIONS

Background & Analysis: The district's external emergency communications system is outsourced to the Cowlitz County 911 Center. The district is a voting user agency that participates in the governance of the communications system. The fire district also funds the system based on a use formula.



The existing system infrastructure will undergo a complete replacement which is scheduled for completion in February of 2007. Funding for replacement of the communication system will be divided among all the Cowlitz County agencies that use the system. A major source of this funding was provided by grants. The total system replacement cost is estimated to be \$3.2 Million. The new system will provide for more reliable communications,

additional radio frequencies, and better reception. The project has been linked to a similar project in Columbia County, Oregon and by way of contract; the new system will include an upgrade for the use of Mobile Data Computers in some of the fire district's vehicles.

To prepare for this new radio system Fire District 6 was forced to replace most existing internal radio equipment. Most of these costs were deferred to external sources. As of August 2006, all internal communications equipment necessary for use on the new system has been acquired; this gear is awaiting programming and deployment.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Partner with other fire districts and seek integrated data transfer into district's computer reporting system directly from 911 center.	6/30/2007	Chief	
Investigate back-up power options for communications gear at the fire station.	6/30/2007	Chief & Capt. McCoy	Hazard Mitigation Grant Application Submitted
Continue to improve interoperable communications and conduct annual test with neighboring counties.			
Consider purchasing Nextel phone for use by on duty crew.	6/30/2007	Chief	
Assign alpha pagers to key staff.	2007	Chief	Complete
Maintain existing email system.	Ongoing	Capt. Lienhard	
Consider changing telephone plans to a third party business plan to include voice mail, additional lines, and trunking.	6/30/2007	Capt. Lienhard, Chief & Board	

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Background & Analysis: A large percentage of delivery trucks in the U.S. today are equipped with GPS mapping and Mobile Data Computers. Only 1 in 28 fire departments have similar technology. Thermal imaging technology has been in existence for over a decade and is now considered essential firefighting equipment; only one-fourth of the fire departments in the U.S. have thermal imaging cameras. Fire District 6 is fortunate to have two thermal imaging cameras and four mobile data computers purchased by external funds.

In the age of information technology tools such as computers, the internet, email, electronic networks, and wireless data have become the mainstay. This field is ever-changing. We have been fortunate as a fire district to receive grants annually to maintain and update our information technology equipment.

The fire district must continue to expand the technology available to us and maintain the technology we currently possess.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Continue to maintain and update our computer equipment annually.	Annually	Capt. Lienhard	
Install and maintain new mobile data computers in key apparatus.	ASAP	Chief & FF Mansur	Installed and operating in: U61, E61 Installed but not operating in: M61
Explore the benefits of mobile mapping and wireless access to pre-fire plans.	2007	Chief, Asst. Chief, Capt. Lienhard, Lt. Lansing	
Maintain our gas detection equipment	Ongoing	Capt. McCoy	
Install interoperable radio equipment.	1/31/2007	Asst. Chief & Capt. Lienahrd	Complete

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

FIXED FACILITIES / STATIONS

Background & Analysis: The proper distribution of staffed and equipped fire stations is essential.

Fire District 6 currently operates from a single fire station which was built in 1971. The building consists of two main areas separated by an 8" cinderblock wall. The areas are each discussed separately below.



Apparatus Bay: The apparatus bay houses three fire engines, one heavy rescue truck, one water tender, three ambulances, a squad (pickup truck), firefighting equipment, gear racks, maintenance equipment and general storage.

Living/Office Area: The living and office area includes two semi-private offices, a reception area, radio equipment, a small meeting room, a kitchen, a living room, three semi-private bedrooms, a shower room, and storage areas.



The station has gone through extensive remodeling of its residential and office areas since 1999.

The combined remodeling projects cost approximately \$40,000 and were funded through grants and donations. The most notable changes include:

- Meeting room and living room were separated with an insulated sheetrock wall (replacing an accordion wall).
 - This created a true living area called a “dayroom” where employees and volunteers on shift can sit, relax, and/or watch television during standby times.
- A large storage room was divided by sheetrock walls into three bedrooms and two storage rooms.
 - This provided semi-private sleeping quarters for on duty personnel.
- Carpeting was laid in the meeting, living, and sleeping areas of the station over what was previously bare concrete.
- The meeting room was redesigned with new tables, chairs, and storage areas.
 - This included upgrades such as wiring for a overhead computer projector, refurbishment of the lectern with wiring for computer and audio visual equipment.
 - Upgrades to the meeting room make it attractive for use by community groups but because the facility lacks ADA accessibility, the rooms use is limited to government agencies and fire district sanctioned events.

- The kitchen area received minor upgrades including a newer used refrigerator, a newer used dishwasher, and a new stove/oven, however, it is generally in the same condition as it was when the building was constructed in 1971.
- The building's torch down style roof was repaired.
- New combination locks were installed to provide for increased building security and to improve ease of access.
- A computer network was installed and computers were purchased through outside funding for staff work stations.
- The station's computers were connected to the 911 center, funded through a collaborative contract with the City of Castle Rock Police department in an exchange of services.
- Speakers were installed throughout the living area of the building for the makeshift transmission of emergency radio information to duty crews.



There are multiple problems and challenges with the station:

- The foundation is cement slab and cinderblock. The area sustained an earthquake in 2001 and records indicate that the building never underwent a structural analysis to determine if damage was sustained.
- Because of building codes, ceilings in the office and sleeping areas could not be constructed. Because of this, the areas are noisy and are not private. Lighting in these areas is also poor.
- The apron in front of the building has several large cracks, areas that are uneven, and areas of major wear.
- Heating and air conditioning units are provided in the building but are not adequate for the size of the structure and are aging.
 - The bay is adequately heated by a very inefficient forced air natural gas fired heater.
 - The meeting and sleeping areas of the building are served by an aged forced air gas furnace and are cooled via the same air handling system coupled to a heat pump.
 - The furnace provides adequate heating but is very inefficient.
 - Air conditioning is totally inadequate and requires hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars annually to maintain. Even when functioning the system only cools the meeting room and sleeping areas. Storage areas and the front offices often have temperatures rise into the 80-90 degree Fahrenheit range. This resulted in a catastrophic computer crash in June of 2005 with loss of data and hundreds of hours of staff time.
 - A separate forced air gas furnace provides adequate heating to the office and reception areas of the building.
- The building is not ADA accessible.
- There is not enough room for vehicle storage, equipment storage, staff work space, or for meetings and training.

- There is no area outside the building for conducting fireground training.
- The building's single line telephone system is highly inadequate.
 - The system has no voice mail capability.
 - The system has only a single line.
 - The system has very limited conferencing capability.
 - The system is not well distributed throughout the building and lacks enough handsets.
 - The system is old and does not accommodate expansion.
 - The system has no "caller ID" capability (this is important because the station frequently receives emergency calls on the business line).
 - The system has no forwarding capability or usable extension system.
 - The system has no long distance control capability.
- Electrical service in the station has areas that have been created from the original or existing construction to enhance functionally but are no longer adequate.
 - Some areas receive service by use of extension cords in violation of the fire code.
 - Circuit breaker panels are unmarked.
 - There is no emergency power for the building. In case of a power outage, all radios, the telephone system, computers, and lighting fails. Bay doors can be raised manually.
- Building security is highly inadequate; there are loose assets valued at over \$2.25 million dollars housed at the station, sensitive records,



confidential medical information, and class 2 controlled narcotics which are stored in the building.

- The attrition rate of volunteers is high in any fire department. There is no easy way to change locks/combinations for access to the building on a regular basis.
- There is nothing to prevent a key from being duplicated and distributed or a combination from being compromised.
- There is no way to track access to the building.
- There is no surveillance system on the interior or exterior of the building to protect these expensive public assets.
 - Frequently, apparatus bay doors are open when apparatus respond to calls allowing uninhibited access to most fire district assets.
- Apparatus bay doors are original equipment.
 - The doors are large with glass panes; they are not energy efficient and huge amounts of heat are lost via the single paneled glass.
 - The door openers on two of the bays have been replaced, one with a new motor and opener and the other with a new opener. However, the other openers are original equipment and are in disrepair and require replacement.
- There is inadequate emergency equipment built into the station.
 - All fire stations are to have reliable station wide public address and radio systems to alert its inhabitants. The current system is makeshift and unreliable.
 - There are no warning systems for power outage, telephone failure, or radio failure. These events are catastrophic to the community



- and there is no method available to automatically notify the station or its on or off duty staff of the event.
- There is no outside emergency telephone or doorbell. The public frequently comes directly to the building in cases of emergency. There is no phone or emergency button that can be pressed by the public to notify us of the emergency.
 - There is no fire alarm system in the building, only battery powered smoke detectors.
 - There are no carbon monoxide detectors in the building.
 - There are no natural gas detectors in the building.
 - All staffed fire stations must have automatic disconnects for stoves, ovens, microwaves, coffee makers, and other dangerous appliances. These disconnects automatically turn off power to devices when a emergency call is received. The station is not equipped with this system because when the building was constructed, it was not staffed 24 hours per day.
 - All staffed fire stations must have air handling equipment to prevent dangerous exhaust gasses from entering the living quarters from the apparatus bay. This station is not equipped with such a system because when the building was constructed, it was not staffed 24 hours per day.
 - There are no emergency weather alarms in the building.



The current status of the station is considered by many to be sub-standard.

The fire district has made several makeshift improvements to the structure but only so much can be accomplished with our current finances and the physical limitations of the structure.

In February of 2001, a 6.8 earthquake struck the Olympia area, causing over a billion dollars in damage. It was felt as far south as central Oregon. Unfortunately, for some reason the station was never inspected or analyzed for damage from this quake. Many Washington fire stations were damaged and required major repair. (insert statement about earthquake proofing).

The probability of another major earthquake in our region is estimated at greater than 80% in the next 20 years (United States Geological Survey, www.usgs.gov, June 2006). When the next earthquake occurs, it is possible that the fire district could loose all its assets in an instant. Even worse, the station is staffed regularly and such a loss of life is unthinkable. The district would be completely incapacitated in a matter of minutes.

The station is in close proximity to the Cowlitz river. The City of Castle Rock where the station is located is protected from flooding by a dike. In the case of a

flood event with failure of the dike, the building and all the district's assets would be immediately incapacitated and most likely destroyed in a matter of minutes. Because of the location of the station, flooding frequently diminishes our response capabilities.

The station has no system to prevent exhaust from vehicles from in the bay from entering the living areas of the building. There is evidence of exhaust gases in the way of a fine coating of diesel particles in all areas of the station. This coating is easily detectable on horizontal surfaces and by looking at furnace vents (black visible soot is present). Exhaust gasses contain known cancer causing chemicals. Staff and visitors who use the station are exposed to this danger daily. The liability in this matter is extreme, not only in the declining health of our personnel but to the potential monetary loss due to lawsuits.

The building was built utilizing asbestos containing materials. Asbestos is present in many areas of the building. Asbestos is a known cancer causing agent.

There are several other issues that plaque the building including: cracks in walls, inadequate storage for vehicles and equipment, inadequate staff work space, poor heating and cooling system, damage to the front apron, an aging roof, aging plumbing, etc...

Simply put, it was beyond the vision of our community that our local fire department would grow to become the third busiest in the County by the year 2000. The building's useful life has been exceeded and new facilities are required for the safety and security of the district's staff, equipment and to maintain our ability to provide our services.

Furthermore, the response coverage section of this document outlines the need to better protect certain geographical zones of the fire district. Possibilities exist for the consolidation of services with nearby Fire District 3 which seem to make sense based on the location of their Station 32 on South Silverlake Road; it is less than a half mile from our fire district boundary.

Based on the previous analysis, the following is recommended:

- Strongly consider consolidating operations with Fire District 3, utilizing station 32 in our facilities plan.
 - Station 32 appears to be properly located in Northern Cowlitz County to service an area central to Station 31 and Station 61 (both current and future).
- Acquire land and construct a new headquarters facility that meets the needs of the district both now and in the foreseeable future.
 - Consider placement of the new station on the West side of the Cowlitz River, South of four corners. This will provide continued coverage to Zone CI (City of Castle Rock and I-5) and improved coverage to the Westside Hwy corridor in all major growth areas.

- Future satellite stations can be considered for study depending on future need.
- Hire a consultant who specializes in the areas of consolidations and facilities management to evaluate these staff recommendations and to assist the district in moving forward with project funding, purchase of land, and construction of facilities.

Through the implementation of these recommendations the district can function more efficiently and more effectively in the future.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Continue to maintain building and systems as necessary for proper operation.	Ongoing	Capt. McCoy	
Have the building inspected by a structural engineer to check for earthquake damage from the 2001 earthquake.	2007	Capt. McCoy	
Consider partial or total consolidation of operations with Fire District 3 and incorporate their capitol facilities into a single facilities plan.	2007-2008	Chief & Board	
Complete a capitol facilities plan.	2007	Chief & Board	
Consistent with consultant and staff recommendations, acquire funding, purchase land and construct a new headquarters facility.	2008-2012	Chief, Consultant & Board	

APPARATUS, VEHICLES, TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

Background and Analysis: Properly staffed; reliable fire and EMS apparatus ranks as one of the most important factors that define the fire district's ability to deliver services.

An apparatus and vehicle replacement schedule was developed in 2005 to assure we are financially capable of replacing our apparatus at appropriate intervals as necessary. The fire district recognizes industry standard apparatus replacement criteria as follows:

Type	Industry Standard	Current Replacement Plan
Engine	20 Years	18 Years
Tender	20 Years	15 Years
Heavy Rescue	15 Years	15 Years
Ambulance	5-10 Years	5 Years
Squad / Brush	5-10 Years	10 Years
Staff / Utility	5-10 Years	7 Years

The fire district currently maintains a fleet of reliable, state-of-the art apparatus; however, the fire district does not possess certain types of apparatus that are considered to be industry standard for fire department operations. These apparatus deficiencies have been an operational challenge. Apparatus missing from our fleet that are considered to be "industry standard" include:

- Second Water Tender
- Chief Vehicle
- Utility/Staff Vehicles
- River Boat
- Brush Unit

In order to fulfill water supply requirements the fire district currently has to dispatch two mutual aid water tenders to every structure fire incident. Relying on outside agencies for two-thirds of our required water supply at an incident is unacceptable. At a minimum an additional water tender is required by the fire district to assure water supply needs are met. It is recommended that the specification and purchase of a water tender occur in the near future.

Fire District 6 is the only fire district in the region that does not supply its fire chief with a command vehicle. Command vehicles are valuable platforms for incident management and are equipped with communications equipment, command and planning resources. They also allow the fire chief an invaluable means of transportation and incident access during time of major emergencies. Most fire district's also afford this capability to the department's Assistant Chief and/or on call duty officers. It is recommended that the purchase of a chief's vehicle occur as soon as possible. When the district's 2002 Chevy Blazer is replaced, it is recommended that it be modified for use as a command vehicle and assigned to

the Assistant Chief and/or duty officers. As of January 2007, the Board of Commissioners has signed an employment contract with the Chief that includes the purchase of a Chief's vehicle. The vehicle is expected to be ordered by mid February and in service by June of 2007.

The fire district services several miles of navigable river channel. The Cowlitz River is a hotspot in the region for fishing and recreation. The fire district operates two rescue kayaks which are excellent platforms for rescue in most situations but they lack the power and speed required for river operations. It is recommended that the district acquire a small motor boat and trailer to facilitate emergency river operations.

Finally, the fire district recently converted it's pickup truck by adding a small water tank and pump. This has given the district some off road firefighting capability. However, wildland firefighting operations typically require multiple brush firefighting units and the district relies very heavily on outside resources from other fire districts to fight brush fires. It is recommended that the Fire District 6 acquire at least one additional brush firefighting unit in the upcoming years to allow for less reliance on outside resources during wildfire season.

Major Goal Statement(s):

- Obtain, design and maintain apparatus, vehicles and equipment adequate to meet Fire District goals and objectives while observing industry best practices.
- Obtain, design and maintain structural firefighting apparatus for multiple first alarm fire flow requirements between moderate (2000 GPM) and low (1000 GPM) hazard incidents.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Appoint apparatus committee when necessary to develop apparatus specifications.	As Required	Chief	
Develop and publish an apparatus tools and equipment inspection, testing, and preventative maintenance schedule.	6/1/2007	Capt. McCoy	
Develop standard procedure for apparatus and equipment repair work order, train all personnel in its use and enforce compliance.	6/1/2007	Capt. McCoy and Officers	Maintenance request system in service in ERS; not well used at this time. Staff training required.
Enforce 100% compliance of daily readiness and inspection of apparatus and equipment.	1/1/2007	Capt. Hodnot and McCoy	

Develop data/records management of apparatus equipment maintenance.	6/1/2007	Capt. McCoy	System in place in ERS; staff training required to enforce use of system.
Develop quarterly inspection of PPE and request for replacement procedure.	6/1/2007	Captains	
Standardize tools and equipment on all like apparatus.	12/31/2007	Asst. Chief & Capt. McCoy	
Design and purchase ambulance.	2007-2008	Chief, Asst. Chief, Capt. McCoy & Committee	Committee forming.
Design and purchase utility vehicle to replace Blazer and assign Blazer to Assistant Chief.	1/1/2009	Chief & Appointed Committee	
Design and purchase chief's vehicle.	2007	Chief & Board	Approved by Board, Pending Delivery

HUMAN RESOURCES

STAFFING

Background & Analysis: The district's services are delivered by a competent group of volunteers aided by a handful of part-time and full-time staff. In recent months, the district has experienced the effects of losing a few key volunteers. This has resulted in a marked decrease in our deployment capabilities. An overall steady decrease in volunteer participation over the last 10 years has been measured.



Regrettably, these decreases in volunteer participation and failure to increase other staffing levels have resulted in measurable damage to property. The district has done everything possible to prevent this staffing crisis from causing harm to the residents of and visitors to our fire district. Within two months of the publishing of the first draft of this plan the district has recorded three incidents where no volunteers responded to incidents other than the on duty shift crew. Unfortunately without action to bolster staffing levels the probability of additional risks to the community will persist.

While volunteer participation has fallen over the last 10 years, the professionalism and competence of our volunteers has remained high. Our talented volunteer personnel are trained to a standard State curriculum. They demonstrate their skills and abilities on every run they respond to.

To improve daily staffing during the summer of 2006, the Board of Fire Commissioners authorized the Chief to hire two full-time temporary firefighters for a three month period. This has dramatically improved staffing coverage and the district is increasingly able to meet the requirements of WAC 296-305 from 0900-1700 hours daily during the trial period.

The district employs three full-time career personnel. Each works a rotating 24 hour shift to assure that one career employee is on duty at all times.

Two of the employees are Captains. Each Captain oversees two fire district program areas and a company of approximately 10 volunteer personnel. Both Captains are certified Paramedics. The Captains respond to all emergency calls in addition to their other duties. The workload for the career Captain position is extensive; mastery of any one project area is quite difficult because of the level of workload assigned to each position.

The third full-time employee is the Fire Chief. The Chief is salaried and works a non-traditional monthly schedule. In addition to covering one-third of the district's 24 hour duty shifts opposite the two Captain positions, he is responsible for daily administrative duties. Outside of duty shifts, the Chief works weekday mornings at the station, from home or at other locations in Cowlitz County. The Chief takes phone calls and answers email 7 days a week regarding district operations; this is due to a lack in administrative staffing. The Chief is a certified Paramedic and functions on the districts ambulance during duty shifts because of a lack of Paramedic certified employees. The Chief is also on "duty chief" call approximately 96 additional hours per month. A third full-time Captain is needed to allow the Chief to focus on administrative duties.

The district is served by a part-time District Secretary. She works Monday through Friday from 0900-1300 hours. The District Secretary is responsible for the multitude of clerical and accounting work necessary to operate our fire district. Fire District 6 is the only fire district our size in the region that does not employ a full-time District Secretary; additional hours for this position are needed.

Assisting the District Secretary is a part-time Billing Clerk. The Billing Clerk works four hours per week. She is responsible for emergency medical service billing. This position was recommended by the State Auditor as a "best practice" in order to separate the person who bills for services from the person who receipts payments. The Billing Clerk reports occasional overruns of work which could be absorbed by a full time District Secretary position.

The fire district is served by four additional volunteer supervisory positions: one Assistant Chief, two Captains and one Lieutenant. Each volunteer officer is responsible for a program area. Many of the program areas are vital to the district's operation including operations, training, public relations, and fire prevention. Each volunteer's ability to work on the project areas varies, ranging from an hour or two a week to several hours. Each program area is important and each requires additional time on task if only there was staff available.

Both volunteer and career staff is represented by associations. Volunteers are represented by the Castle Rock Firefighters Association. The career staff is represented by the International Association of Firefighter's Local 3828.

Major Goal Statement(s):

- Maintain current staffing levels through aggressive recruitment and retention programs.
- Bolster existing staffing by using a multi layered approach combining non-firefighting volunteers, firefighting volunteers, resident programs, intern programs, duty shift programs, part-time positions, temporary positions and full-time career employees.
- Consider investing in the infrastructure to allow for a true resident firefighter program.

- Obtain funding for and add additional full-time staff positions.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Increase non-monetary incentives for volunteers to improve morale and improve retention and participation.			
Increase monetary incentives for volunteers to improve morale and improve retention and participation.			
Consider long term lease agreement with nearby residence/apartment to allow for residency program at Station 61.			
Consider joint residency program at Station 32 with joint funding from District 6 and 3.			
Promote, redefine, and re-establish intern program.			
Aggressively recruit new volunteers both locally and laterally.			
Consider temporary and part-time employment options for personnel.			
Seek funding for improved staffing and proposed positions.			
Hire a third full time firefighter/paramedic position (24 hour shift).			
Increase District Secretary hours from part-time to full-time (8 hour day shift).			
Hire a full time mechanic/maintenance firefighter/EMT position (8 hour day shift).			
Hire a full time training, safety and public education Captain.			

TRAINING

TRAINING & COMPETENCY

Background & Analysis: The quality of services delivered by the fire district is determined largely by the quality of our personnel and their training.



The district enjoys an excellent training program and has developed superior training guidelines and course outlines over the last two years. The district's training program is supervised by a volunteer Captain whose function is to maintain our personnel's competency and to develop their skills.

The district participates in countywide training programs. Our fire district's talented staff often serves the role of primary instructor for all or a portion of these courses and countywide programs. Examples include basic firefighter academies, emergency medical technician courses, intravenous technician certification classes, instructor development training, and technical rescue certification courses.

As does many predominately volunteer fire departments, Fire District 6 struggles to provide training and orientation to a staggered influx of new recruits, required training for existing staff, and delivering extra training for those seeking additional information and skills.

The primary challenge to our district's training program is to deliver training to the volunteer membership with varied schedules. The fire district has developed regularly advertised training schedules published months in advance of training dates along with distance learning and self study programs to aid our volunteer professionals in achieving training goals.

In addition to providing needed training to our seasoned personnel, the fire district is charged with providing proper orientation training to new personnel. In 2005 the district implemented a field training program for new recruits. The program is ground breaking for the fire service; this program has been widely duplicated throughout Washington State and is frequently based on the Fire District 6 program.

To maintain and develop innovative programs such as these, core staff requires exposures to external quality training. Attendance at statewide conferences and workshops provide our staff with the ability to become exposed to industry best practices that are on the cutting edge. Without these opportunities the fire district would be placed in a position of "reinventing the wheel" so to speak. Unfortunately, the fire district lacks the financial resources of most fire district's our size. This has resulted in severe limitations preventing staff travel and attendance at these important training events.

It is clear that managing and planning the training function of a fire district our size is beyond the scope of a volunteer position. The fire district's existing training officer has performed an admirable job in developing these important existing programs but is unable to fully manage the program because of time constraints. Surveys of similarly sized fire districts have revealed that it is a common practice to fund a full time training officer position that is dedicated to overseeing training programs.



A major challenge to the fire district is a lack of training facilities. The existing fire station does not allow for outdoor areas to conduct training activities. The existing meeting room is cramped and is not large enough for many training offerings. The fire district lacks the property and the financial resources to develop safe training props for high risk firefighting activities such as ladder training, vertical rescue, and live fire training.

It is important to motivate our volunteer personnel to attend training offerings. Fire District 6 is the only local fire district that does not provide its volunteers with a financial incentive for attending drills.

Major Goal Statements:

- Continue to maintain a quality training program consistent with the district's services and regulatory mandates using a flexible delivery system.
- Develop training facilities in conjunction with any capital project or facilities planning.
- Increase overall training program funding.
- Employ a full time employee with the prime duty of managing the district's training program.
- Offer financial incentives for volunteers to attend drills and training.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Continue to maintain existing training program with flexible delivery.	Ongoing	Captain Lienhard	Ongoing
Maintain field training and evaluation program for orientation of new personnel.	Ongoing	Captain Lienhard & Officers	Ongoing
Continue annual training requirements to meet service needs and to comply with regulatory mandates.	Ongoing	Captain Lienhard & Officers	Ongoing
Include training facilities in conjunction with any capital project or facilities planning.		Chief & Board	
Offer financial incentives for volunteers to attend drills and training.	2008-2009	Chief & Board	
Employ a full-time position with training as a function.		Chief & Board	(See Staffing Plan)



ESSENTIAL RELATIONS

EXTERNAL AGENCY RELATIONS

Background & Analysis: It is well established that the fire district's administration have and will continue to support the development of external relationships. Joint operational agreements have been established in an attempt to improve efficiency of services. Additional opportunities exist for joint cooperation and consolidation of services with neighboring fire districts. This strategic planning document has provided additional justification that establishes the need to consolidate resources on a more regional basis. This need will continue to exist and with added urgency.

The district shares a common weakness at least two of our neighboring fire districts. This weakness is our comparative inability to provide sufficient support programs such as administration, training, fire prevention, public education, and clerical support programs. In addition these districts' emergency services are designed and funded for routine situations and frequently lack the depth of service of larger regional organizations that provide the capability of response to multiple incidents or multiple alarm incidents. If our fire district loses one or two pieces of equipment or if one or two key people are absent it creates a service crisis, thereby influencing the ability of the district to properly carry out its emergency mission.

It has been well established that additional funding is needed for administrative, support, and operational priorities. However, it is doubtful that additional funding alone will provide the long term viability that is required. Long term prosperity is dependent upon the district's ability to reduce and maintain expenditures. Since existing expenditure levels are not adequate for the levels of service required, consolidation of external resources must be considered as a method to improve efficiency and to perhaps create a stronger more regionalized fire district. Without some form of consolidation of fire district services with regional partner(s), the common weakness and challenges the district faces today will remain for the foreseeable future.

Opportunities exist to build on the current relationship with Cowlitz County Fire District 3 and with Lewis County Fire District 2. Both districts are similarly staffed, have a common geography, have common service needs, have similar population densities, and are geographically compatible with Fire District 6.

Future strategy should focus to enhance the relationship of the personnel of each of these fire districts; we all need to understand that we share common goals and that consolidation is not threatening.

Major Goal Statement(s):

Establish a regional fire district through consolidation and/or operational agreements within three years that achieves sufficient administrative and support programs, while building the operational depth necessary to safely, efficiently and effectively deploy adequate manpower to multiple incidents and multiple alarms while minimizing or eliminating duplication of equipment and services.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Monitor legal tools such as the Washington State "Regional Fire Authority" statute and others.	2006-2007	Chief & Board	
Develop mutually beneficial operational agreements and consolidation of services.	2007	Chief & Board	
Develop joint operating policies and procedures with partner fire districts.	2007	Chief & Board	
Develop consolidated response areas with partner fire districts.	2007	Chief	
Establish joint staffing of administrative positions with Cowlitz County Fire District 3.	2009	Chief & Board	
Establish joint staffing of support and clerical positions with Cowlitz County Fire District 3.	2009	Chief & Board	
Establish joint staffing of operations positions and volunteer staff with Fire District 3.	2007-2008	Chief & Board	
Establish joint board planning meetings.	2007-2008	Chief & Board	
Develop joint training programs.	2007	Captain Lienhard	
Develop joint district outings and social activities.	2008	All	

EXTERNAL AGENCY AGREEMENTS

Background & Analysis: The fire district has and will continue to participate in several external agency agreements for the provision of providing efficient services to our citizens.

In 2004, our fire district took the lead on developing a countywide mutual aid agreement which provides for automatic initial response of mutual aid resources on emergency alarms. That agreement is now in full effect with 9 different area fire districts and 3 Cities.

Several other agreements provide for exchange of services between governmental agencies and the fire district. They range from agreements with the City of Castle Rock for joint storage, telephone systems, computer networks, and water systems to fire suppression agreements with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

Major Goal Statement(s):

Develop new, evaluate and renew mutually beneficial agreements that improve efficiency and effectiveness of service.

Goals & Objectives	Timeline	Assigned	Status
Annually reevaluate automatic mutual aid agreements.	4 th Qtr. of Every Year	Assistant Chief	
Develop dispatch response lists to establish appropriate turnout for initial alarms.		Assistant Chief & Officers	
Develop agreement with the National Forrest Service and Cowlitz County Fire District 3.		Chief & Board	
Establish other agreements as required for mutual cooperation and consolidation of services with external agencies. (See External Agency Relations Section)			

WASHINGTON SURVEY & RATINGS BUREAU

(Pending Future Addition)

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