



ALACHUA COUNTY FIRE RESCUE



STRATEGIC PLANNING 2016 -2019





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Fire Rescue Headquarters

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Alachua County Fire Rescue Strategic Plan Foreword by Fire Chief William K. Northcutt



On behalf of the men and women of Alachua County Fire Rescue Department, we proudly resubmit to you our FY 2016 – FY 2019 Strategic Plan

Fire Rescue Strategic Plan - First Edition. On the pages to follow, there are six, well-developed and refreshed strategic initiatives representing our departmental needs. They demonstrate the core values with which we operate, while simultaneously embodying many environmental factors and influences. This plan continues to align with Alachua County's strategic priorities for public safety, financial health, economic growth, youth development, cultural excellence, and customer service.

Each of these initiatives have been thoughtfully established to enhance the service levels commensurate with all hazards within the jurisdiction and authority of the Alachua County Fire Rescue as defined in the County of Alachua Charter and Code of Ordinances. Each initiative is the product of a risk assessment which revealed gaps, both in departmental capabilities and in providing services to our citizens, employees, and other stakeholders. In addition to the previous environmental scan which assessed industry and global trends in fire, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), rescue and homeland security services; we have revised some areas based on pilot results and changes in our environment. Conclusively, we have successfully formulated a plan, which accurately forecasts the needs of the department for the next three to five years.

The Board of County Commissioners, along with the County Manager, has sincerely embraced our Strategic Plan, championing our collective betterment in ways that are unprecedented in the history of the county. Through their unwavering support, we have achieved several key intended outcomes as well as some that would have seemed inconceivable during harsh economic times such as those currently faced by many county governments. These outcomes, or accomplishments, are a direct result of the words, sentences, photographs, and figures included on the pages that follow.

This plan is a living, breathing instrument representing a roadmap to restoring our department to optimum levels. Collectively, we acknowledged that the path would not be one easily traveled, but we would set out on this journey together with a common, relentless cause unyielding to any and all adversity or criticism. I must admit that I erred. This plan is not a roadmap, but a flight plan. At that time, we resolved to put our best foot forward; instead, we unbridled our eagle wings and embraced our resurgence!



INTRODUCTION

FY 2016 – 2019 Strategic Plan for Alachua County Fire Rescue Department



This document, developed by members of the Alachua County Fire Rescue, encompasses our vision, mission, values and their influences on our organizational goals, objectives, and strategic plan. Though this is the first edition, it still remains the first comprehensive strategic plan completed by Alachua County Fire Rescue. Our strategic plan team consists of thirty-three sworn and civilian members representing all labor divisions. All ranks, from firefighter to chief officers participated in the process. The initiatives included in this document were selected because of the caliber of the members who were involved.

VISION

Alachua County Fire Rescue, a diverse organization, is recognized as an innovative leader in public safety services that is sought out and emulated by others.

MISSION

Public servants dedicated to enhancing and caring for the lives of those in our community through preparedness and an immediate response to any and all of life's emergencies.

Our mission statement is our focus while serving the citizens of Alachua County. Ultimately, our customers decide the services we deliver. Our personnel have an obligation to provide those services in the safest, most professional, and efficient manner.

PHILOSOPHY



Aligned with the Manager's county-wide strategic priorities - Public safety, financial health, economic growth, youth development, culture of excellence, and customer service, Alachua County Fire Rescue (ACFR) is positioned to provide the community with the resources necessary to meet their needs consistently and proficiently. Responsive, qualitative public safety services provided by committed ACFR personnel build community equity and determine the trust stakeholders invest in our leadership. Our key stakeholders and the beneficiaries of our Strategic Plan are the citizens of Alachua County, business community, ACFR members, elected officials, Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU), and Alachua County Fire Rescue.



Continuing our shared focus with Manager Niblock's strategic priorities, we sustain our involvement with our stakeholders by continuously establishing, nurturing and maintaining strong relationships through meaningful interaction well beyond emergency response. We listen acutely to their needs while continuously seeking opportunities to retain our responsiveness.

Alachua County Fire Rescue provides diverse programs to meet the personal fulfillment and professional development

needs of our personnel. In recognition of the need to encourage members' support of our vision and mission, we continually strive to motivate and increase participant incentives, strengthen morale, enhance individual self-worth, and promote confidence.



CORE VALUES

Our **Organizational Core Values** determine our image. The image of the department is determined by each member's commitment to, and practice of, our values. Our members' collective professionalism determines the integrity of our organization. Membership within the Alachua County Fire Rescue denotes that each member must value the personal needs and aspirations of others and recognize the need for:

VALUES:

Communication: Transfer or exchange of ideas or information between parties and understanding the intent or meaning of the message through any media.

Integrity: The courage to stay true to your character and organizational values in the face of adversity.

Diversity: Our organization embraces the differences among our employees and reflects the unique nature of our community.

Compassion: A sincere desire to demonstrate kindness, provide care, and alleviate the suffering of those we serve.

Leadership: Continual improvement through forward thinking by embracing technological and organizational advances.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Our commitment is to anticipate, understand, and meet or exceed the expectations of our internal and external customers. Through continuous "environmental scanning", we analyze trends, programs, and services for all customers assuring their satisfaction with the services received. Considering this, ACFR initiated an environmental scan which involved conducting a comprehensive review of the constantly changing operating environment. This review yielded trends, clues, and indications of events or factors that could impact the successful execution of our strategic plan. Collectively, the ACFR planning team pooled their knowledge of external trends at the federal, state, regional, and local area

levels, in addition to their observations and experiences within the department. The following summary includes the key impact and implications of the team's environmental scan which were factors in the development of our strategic plan.



Fire Prevention and Life Safety

Public approval and support remains high for ACFR. This fact is abundantly evident by the last Alachua County Citizen Satisfaction Survey in which 72% of citizens confidently expressed that they believed ACFR would be “capable of protecting their homes in the event of a fire.”

Despite the citizens confidence being heightened, there remains an increasing trend towards creating a “culture of preparedness” throughout America. As this culture of preparedness evolves, there will be an increase of prevention-driven mandates such as installation of residential fire sprinklers, installation of smoke alarms, and greater requirements for analysis and documentation of current trends and practices.



Homeland Security

Resilience is the focal point for homeland security through preparation, protection, responsiveness, recovery, and mitigation. Homeland Security requires partnerships with government, private industry and other emergency management entities, as well as community involvement. As a result of these partnerships and community involvements, ACFR will increasingly be seen as a Homeland Security resource for the Metropolitan Alachua County Region.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

CERT Program



A prior Alachua County Citizen Satisfaction Survey indicated that some citizens are not sure about the County’s readiness for natural disaster or terrorism (38%). In response to these results, ACFR has placed greater emphasis on shared responsibility, collaboration, coordination, and decision making between the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, and with U.S. Fire Administration for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. As a part of emergency preparedness, ACFR has developed and implemented the Alachua County Emergency Preparedness Institute with objectives of being the lead, trailblazing organization in community education, readiness, and community-level survival.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

In an effort to provide training and programs to our EMS partners, there will be greater commitment to engage Federal, State, Regional and Local EMS organizations. These efforts will support life safety strategies of the local community. Allied organizations, such as the American Heart Association and Department of Public Health, will also be invited to partner with us and educate the public on emergency medical services. Strategies to enhance standard of response coverage for basic life support and advanced life support will be developed.

Special Operations

Supported by findings from the previous assessments, the current task force stations remain overwhelmed and struggle to adequately meet the demands for Special Operation Services. Consequently, there are increasing needs and demands for addressing risks for technical rescue incidents such as water, confined space, high angle, trench excavation, structural collapse, as well as hazardous materials incident mitigation.



Professional Development

With the steady attrition rates experienced over the past several years and the projected, cyclical impacts of those retirements affecting industry knowledge retention, it is projected that the department will continue to experience reduced expertise as the pool of diverse knowledge continuously retires with those members hired approximately twenty-seven years ago. Despite the steady attrition rates of recent years, the department has experienced record low vacancy rates due in part, to recent

enhancements in recruitment and hiring. It is also presumed that these enhancements will result in higher recruit retention rates, higher career success and more dynamic industry leaders benefiting the department, the county, and fire industries. With these environmental changes, the department has deliberately shifted its focus towards aggressive training and professional development to assure an array of training capabilities impacting both State mandated and departmentally required training, as well as optional, professional development-based training. Incidentally, there will continue to be an ongoing need to evaluate current processes so that a minimal loss of industry expertise and experience would result with each retirement.



Line of Duty Deaths and Injuries



As determined by the assessment of ACFR's risks and vulnerabilities, prevention has become the focus of occupational safety and health programs. ACFR will continue playing a pivotal advocacy role for a culture of health, fitness, and behavior that enhances emergency responder safety, survival, and quality of life.

Facility Enhancements and Expansions

Facility and infrastructure maintenance, improvements, and expansions have been minimal and have not grown at a pace relative to the growth of the county, departmental programs, staffing, and training activities on either the National or Local levels. Consequently, greater emphasis on appropriate maintenance and adequate space will be required to meet the increasing needs of our stakeholders.



Funding

As County funding is expected to remain static, there is a growing trend to maximize existing departmental budgets by responsibly facilitating daily business practices in ethical, business-savvy ways that result in savings. Likewise, there is an increased interest in analyzing the impact of federal fire grants on local fire departments' capabilities to protect life, property, and the environment. ACFR has successfully applied for and received several federal and state grants in recent years, including grants for staffing increases, fire risks reduction and awareness, wellness and fitness enhancements, and special operations equipment and supplies. Most importantly, ACFR will continue seeking and maintaining

partnerships with federal, state and local agencies to maximize federal funding opportunities.





ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

The greatest obligation of Alachua County Fire Rescue is emergency preparedness and response. When our customers call, we answer, timely and professionally. We continually implement programs, activities, and services premised in emergency response. A structured and well-planned budget supports our emergency services needs. Activities related to fire prevention, training, safety, maintenance, communications, support services, and human resources, comprise a strategic approach to the overall organizational priorities.



To assure that we accomplish our vision and mission, the strategic approach includes:

- I. Human Resource Management**
- II. Professional Development**
- III. Emergency Preparedness and Response**
- IV. Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Technology Acquisition**
- V. Customer Service Programs Development**
- VI. Public Information, Education, and Relations Delivery**

As a priority, we will deliver the highest quality service attainable in the most cost-effective manner. By continuously evaluating departmental operations, we will ensure a sufficient return on the appropriated funds. These evaluations will entail performance and resource measurements to maintain efficiency and accountability, and will be implemented for each initiative. Fundamentally, the purpose of these initiatives is to enhance services while maximizing resources for the benefit of our stakeholders.





STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FY2016 – FY2019

1. Conduct Facility Renovations and Replacement
2. Systematize Fire Apparatus and Fleet Replacement
3. Enhance ACFR Training Delivery
4. Ensure Competitive Salaries
5. Reinstitute Health, Wellness, and Fitness Initiative
6. Enhance Emergency Medical Services
7. Assure Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security
8. Enhance Administrative Support
9. Increase Field Operations Staffing
10. Enhance Special Operations Services
11. Enhance Community Risk Reduction



In its entirety, we are confident that this Strategic Plan will produce needed improvements in fire services within the county of Alachua. We recognize the financial challenges that continuously affect our county's progress and are consistently mindful of all foreseeable fiscal impacts and implications when querying data and compiling costs projections. Although we have achieved numerous components of many of the eleven initiatives, most of the plan remains unfunded; however, a fiscally responsible and well-communicated strategic plan positions ACFR and the county of Alachua to maximize unanticipated financial opportunities, and to more accurately plan for the future. Continued support from the Manager and the BoCC is essential to effective financial planning and full implementation of this strategic plan.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

-1-

Finance and Administration



Cheryl Ellis
Assistant Director

Administration

Abstract

The Administration section provides high quality support and logistical services to field personnel and other county agencies, enabling them to accomplish the mission to provide for the health and welfare of Alachua County citizens and visitors. Administration is organized into the General Accounting Branch, the Revenue and Collections Branch, and the Information and Technology Office.

Historical Narrative

The General Accounting Branch is responsible for the annual budget development, purchasing functions, expenditure monitoring, grant & contract coordination and administration, accounts payable and payroll functions, and personnel coordination. This branch has managed growing workloads with 3.0 F.T.E.s by implementing and utilizing new technologies. For example, all payroll functions are automated utilizing the Operations Branch's scheduling software, Telestaff for Operations employees, and the county's electronic time sheet system for administrative employees. In FY16, the county will be implementing a new financial system which is anticipated to improve the efficiency of many manual, paper driver processes.

The Revenue and Collections Branch is responsible for the administration of the department fee schedule. The Branch operates with 9.0 F.T.E.s, two of which are working supervisors. This branch records, bills, and collects the largest non-tax, fee-based revenue source for Alachua County. This consists of user fees related to rescue and transport services. In FY2015, total EMS charges were \$15.1M; Medicare/Medicaid Write Downs were \$2.5M (16.7%), resulting in Billable charges of \$12.6M (83.3%). This percentage of billable charges is above other similar agencies that average around 71%. The bad debt write offs estimated by county finance and accounting were \$3.8M (24.9%). The resulting Net EMS Charges were \$8.8M. This success can be attributed to the efforts of the Revenue and Collections Branch, and also to the efforts of the EMS crews who provide the core billing information from patients. In April 2015, this branch took over the billing process for Bradford County EMS. This agreement allowed the branch to add 3.0 F.T.E.s which addressed, not only the workload taken on for Bradford County, but also the workload issue for Alachua County. The Revenue and Collections Branch was reorganized into two functions, billing and collections.

The Information and Technology Office is responsible for technical support of all hardware and software programs within the department. The Office consists of 2.0 F.T.E.s who provide support for over 150 computers/laptops and 7 servers. In addition, the Office provides support for applications, database management and query, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) mobile management, and electronic patient/fire reporting management. The Department currently has several specialized applications that the Office

supports including the electronic EMS and fire reporting systems, ambulance billing software, and Telestaff scheduling server management. The Office provides nearly 24/7 software/hardware and network support to field operations. Previous emergency medical services and computer aided dispatch experience give these employees a unique insight into IT needs of the department.

Initiatives

1. Implement the use of social media

- Identify manager/overseer by January 2016
- Find out if County will allow Social Media by March 2016
- Establish procedures by September 2016
- Content by September 2016
- Up and running by redesign of ACFR webpage content by December 2016
- Redesign ACFR webpage content

Measurable by followers

2. News Outlets

Use local news outlets to promote events and pass on information.

- Identify local media sources
- Contact and establish a relationship with local news media.
 - a. Radio
 - b. TV
 - c. Newspaper
 - d. Internet
 - e. Bus Wrap
 - f. Coffee News (Local Paper)
- Identify someone to oversee the program
- Identify costs
- Establish procedures
- Design or create advertisements
- County approval

Measurable by the number of responses associated with the event or information advertised.

3. Public Survey

Develop public survey to obtain feedback on services rendered.

- Identify survey content by June 2016
- Identify survey placement/avenues by June 2016
 - Facebook
 - Website
 - Magazine/Paper

- Link on Media websites
- Event specific
- Form committee to develop/interpret survey data by January 2016
- Identify cost associated by June 2016
- Obtain Chief's approval by October 2016

All data measurable to implement into new, improved strategies and tactics, and identify strengths and weaknesses of the department based on community perception.

Finance

Communication

Evaluation/Assessment:

The purpose of the communication initiative is to make improvements and educate employees on all of the support functions that administration and finance provides. This initiative would give employees insight into what we do, why we do it, and how we do it.

Strategies:

- New Employee Orientation – Dedicate time during the new employee orientation to talk about the section, the department budget, employee policies, etc. There should continue to be dedicated time for ambulance billing and information technology.
 - Implement with the next batch of new hires
- District Chief Staff Meetings – Have time at one meeting per month dedicated to administration and finance issues.
 - Start the first DC meeting in January 2016
- Intranet – Create a synopsis of each branch within the section with contact information. Create a monthly “Did You Know” story which would be posted on the intranet and emailed to all employees.
 - Implement June 2016

Financial:

No financial impact is anticipated from the above strategies.

Performance Analysis:

Annual Internal Survey – Find out if employees understand the operations of the section. Find out if employees had a positive or negative experience with our services. Solicit suggestions on what we can do differently, improve, etc. This is proposed to be completed by June 2017, a year after the strategies are in place.

Diversify Funding Sources

Evaluation/Assessment:

There is a high level of competition for limited resources between programs and departments. It is critical that a dedicated funding source be established for core services such as public safety. A fire assessment would provide a dedicated funding source for the majority of fire and first response expenditures.

Strategies:

- Educate the Commission and community regarding the benefits of a fire assessment. This would be accomplished through staff and consultant presentations.
 - This would be accomplished beginning in FY17 and continue through to an anticipated implementation in FY19.

Financial:

Once the decision to implement a fire assessment is made, there would be a significant cost to prepare the study and notify impacted stakeholders. These costs could be recovered within the fire assessment fee.

Performance Analysis:

The decision whether to implement a dedicated funding source for fire rescue services is ultimately a Board of County Commission decision. Staff performance should be measured based on how educated the decision makers and community members become regarding the initiative.

Continuing Education Initiative

Evaluation/Assessment:

Training is needed in all fiscal departments to increase revenue, efficiency and to plan for the future (succession planning). As of right now, the medical billing department trains reactively instead of proactively.

Strategies:

- Cross-Training - Similar positions are currently being cross-trained so if a person is sick or quits, another person can step into that role.
 - Will identify and cross-train one significant assignment per quarter beginning second quarter for FY16.
- Training - Find what other training we need by asking our workers and reaching out to different resources to see what trainings they have found to be beneficial.
 - Resources include hospital billing sections, EMSMC, different counties who do their own billing.
 - We are host training with our billing software to learn more about the software to help medical billing be efficient.
 - Scheduled for March 2016.
- Scholarship - See if there is a way to get a scholarship at the local college for medical billing. As it stands, the staff members in medical billing have no incentive to go and obtain this degree as it would cost them money they do not have, and would not result in a pay raise once the degree was obtained. It could, by having employees obtain this degree, help the billing department gain a higher understanding of different laws and codes. ACFR currently has two slots for the paramedic course at City College and spaces at Santa Fe College.
 - Anticipate scholarship in place by FY17.

Financial:

There will be training costs and possible travel related expenditures. Staff will work with the chief to identify funding and prioritize training efforts within that funding allocation.

Performance Analysis:

We will know the trainings have been successful when revenue increases and workers are feeling comfortable stepping into another role. In addition, when the office experiences a vacancy, the effects are not dramatic and the operation continues on schedule instead of falling behind.

Implement Best Practices in Revenue Collection

Evaluation/Assessment

The purpose of this initiative is not to only collect as much revenue as possible for the County, but also be a leader in best revenue practices in the state. We will do this in the most efficient and cost effective manner. This is in direct correlation with the education initiative.

Strategies:

- Educate both field and admin staff as outlined in the education initiative.
- Monitor other agencies and emulate the more successful agencies.
 - Also include looking at agencies that are working through the same issues we are.
 - Visit the agencies to exchange information.
 - Visit Lake County January 2016
 - Visit Lee County April 2016

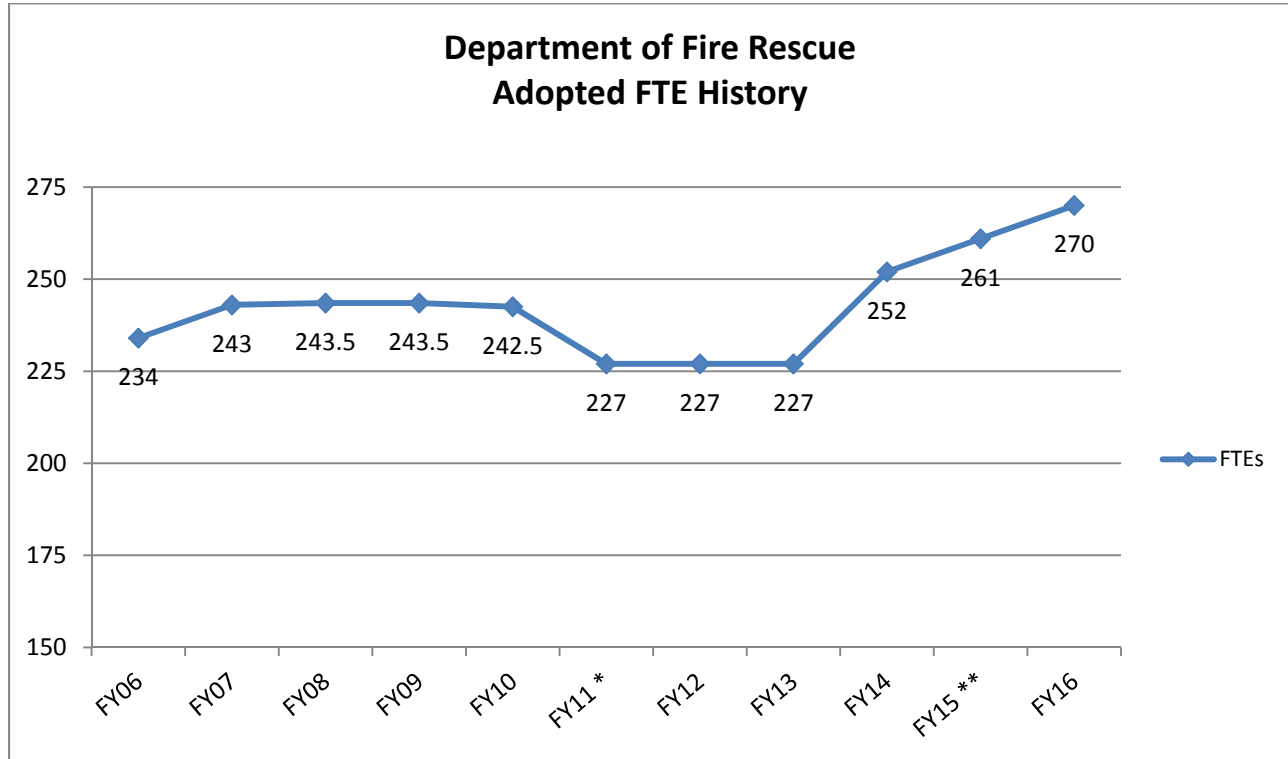
Financial:

There will be some travel related expenditures for site visits. It is anticipated that the increased revenue from implementing this initiative will exceed the additional expenditures.

Performance Analysis:

The analysis will be increased revenue, improved collection rate, and efficiency. We will continue to analyze data to ensure improvements are experienced.

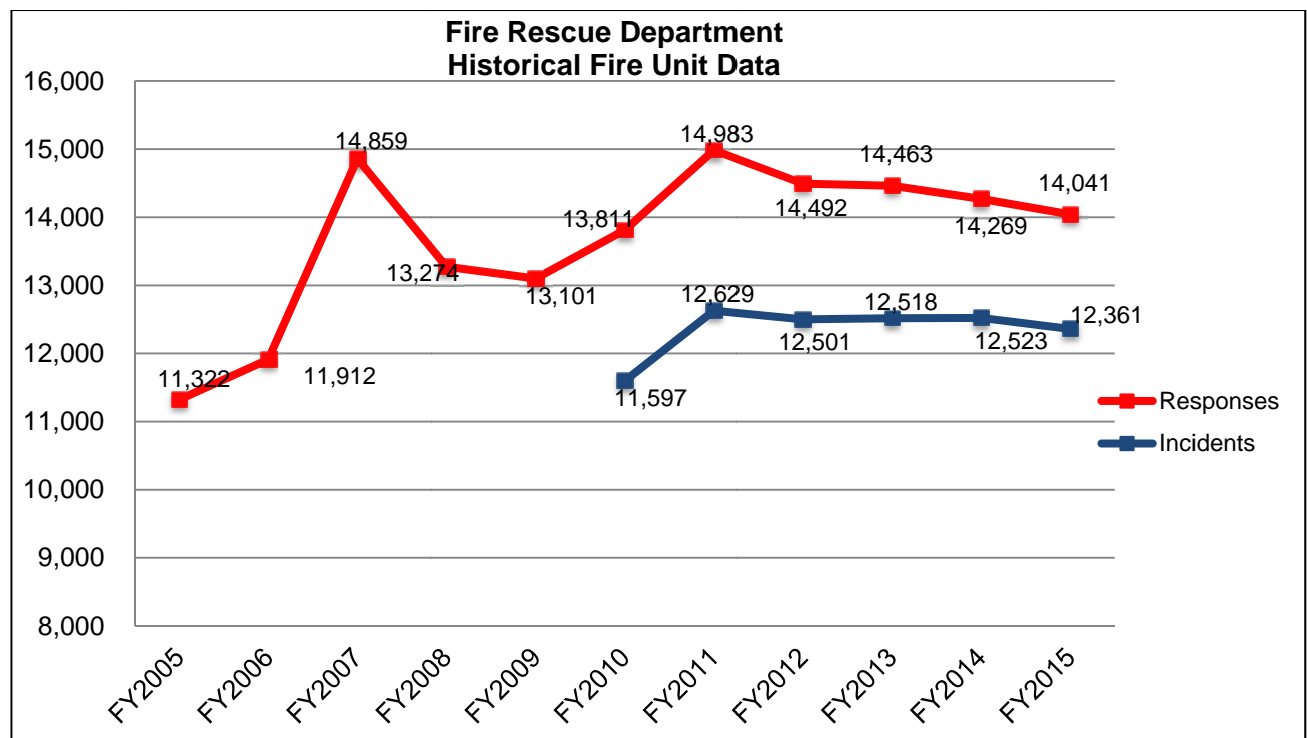
FTEs	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11 *	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15 **	FY16
Administration	8	8	8	7	6.5	4	4	4	4.05	4.05	4.05
Special Recruitment	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emergency Management	3	4	5	4	4.5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Wildfire Mitigation	0	4	4	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhanced 911	6	6	6.5	6.5	6.5	6	6	6	5.95	5.95	5.95
Rescue Medical Services	106.5	104.5	104	105.5	103	103.5	102	103.5	104	109.5	118.5
Fire Protection Services	105.5	111.5	111	110.5	114	109.5	111	109.5	134	137.5	137.5
Total Authorized FTEs	234	243	243.5	243.5	242.5	227	227	227	252	261	270
* FY11 Adopted FTEs of 229.0 was adjusted to 227.0 with the conversion of 5.0 Firefighters to 3.0 Staffing Lieutenants; FY14 Includes 22.0 positions awarded under the SAFER Grant; FY15 includes 6.0 additional staffing positions offset by overtime savings.											
** FY15 Adopted FTEs of 258.0 was adjusted to 261.0 with the addition of 3.0 FTEs in Ambulance Billing for the Bradford County Agreement											



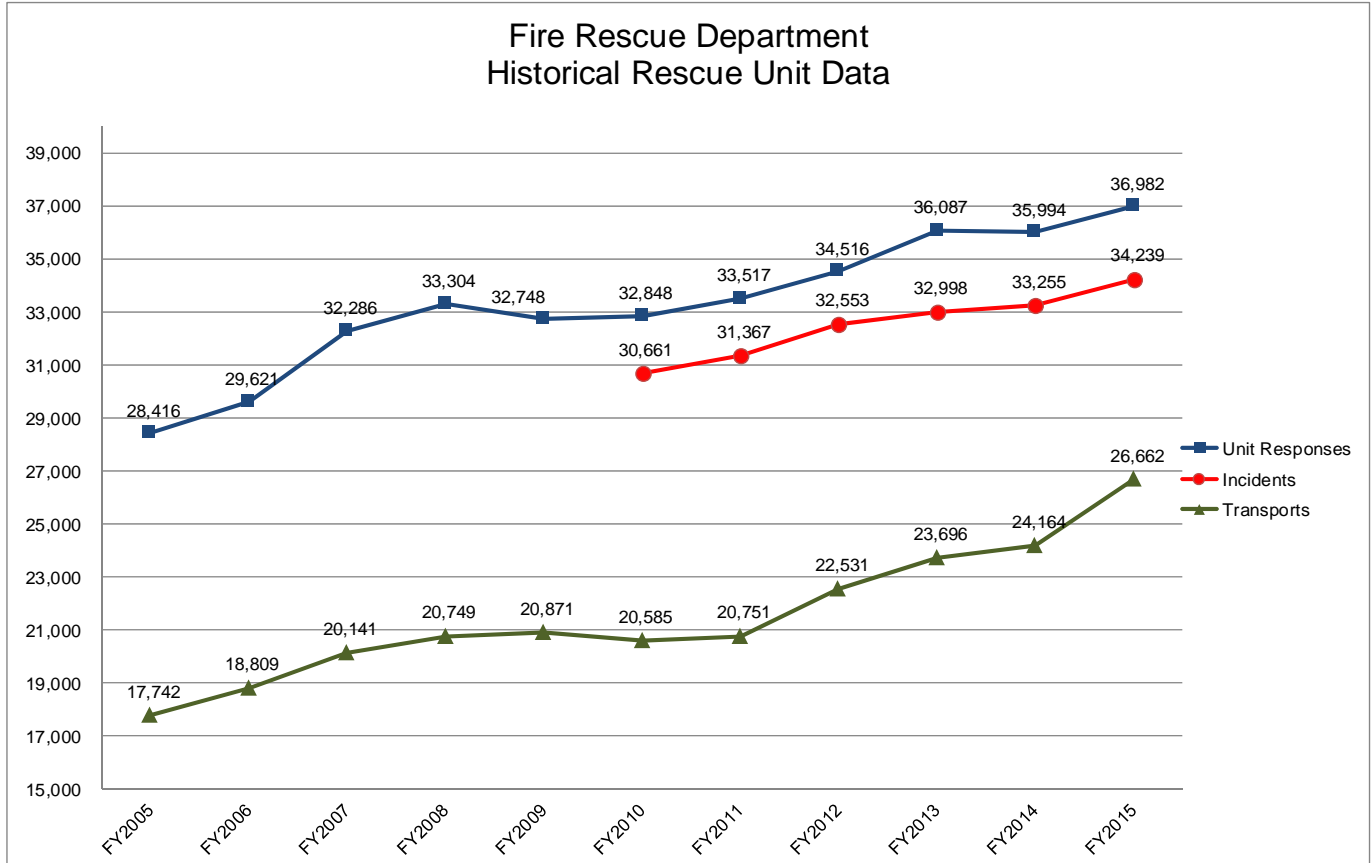
Five Year Budget Comparison					
	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
Personal Services	16,649,024	16,730,799	17,533,625	19,165,298	19,599,257
Operating Expenditures	7,320,040	6,829,705	6,782,456	7,230,631	7,535,824
Capital Outlay	1,193,534	696,697	328,697	1,481,125	516,310
Total Operating	25,162,598	24,257,201	24,644,778	27,877,054	27,651,391
Grants and Aid	30,385	30,385	30,385	30,104	30,104
Transfers Out		60,000	60,000	-	
Reserves				62,500	
Total Expenditures	25,192,983	24,347,586	24,735,163	27,969,658	27,681,495
* FY15 Adopted budget includes \$1M SAFER Grant Expenditures and \$1M for Self-Contained Breathing Equipment Replacement					

Five Year Actual Expenditure Comparison					
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
Personal Services	16,296,494	15,549,765	16,615,457	17,512,690	18,411,865
Operating Expenditures	6,470,742	6,214,191	6,430,207	6,801,133	6,389,897
Capital Outlay	1,613,501	390,567	652,816	275,228	1,389,703
Total Operating	24,380,737	22,154,523	23,698,480	24,589,051	26,191,466
Grants and Aid	30,385	30,385	30,385	30,385	30,103
Total Expenditures	24,411,122	22,184,908	23,728,865	24,619,436	26,709,092

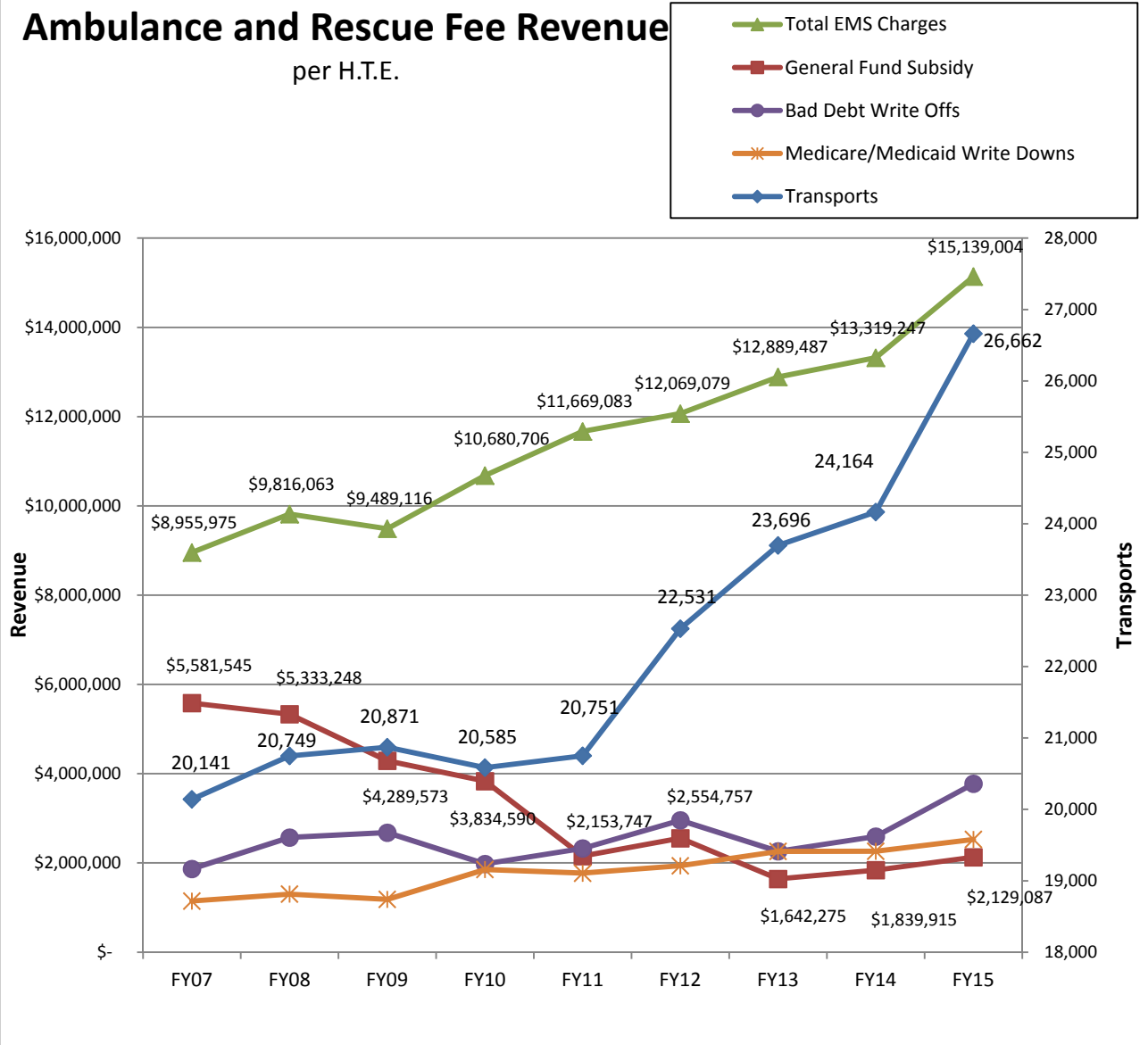
10 Year Fire Response Data



10 Year Rescue Response Data

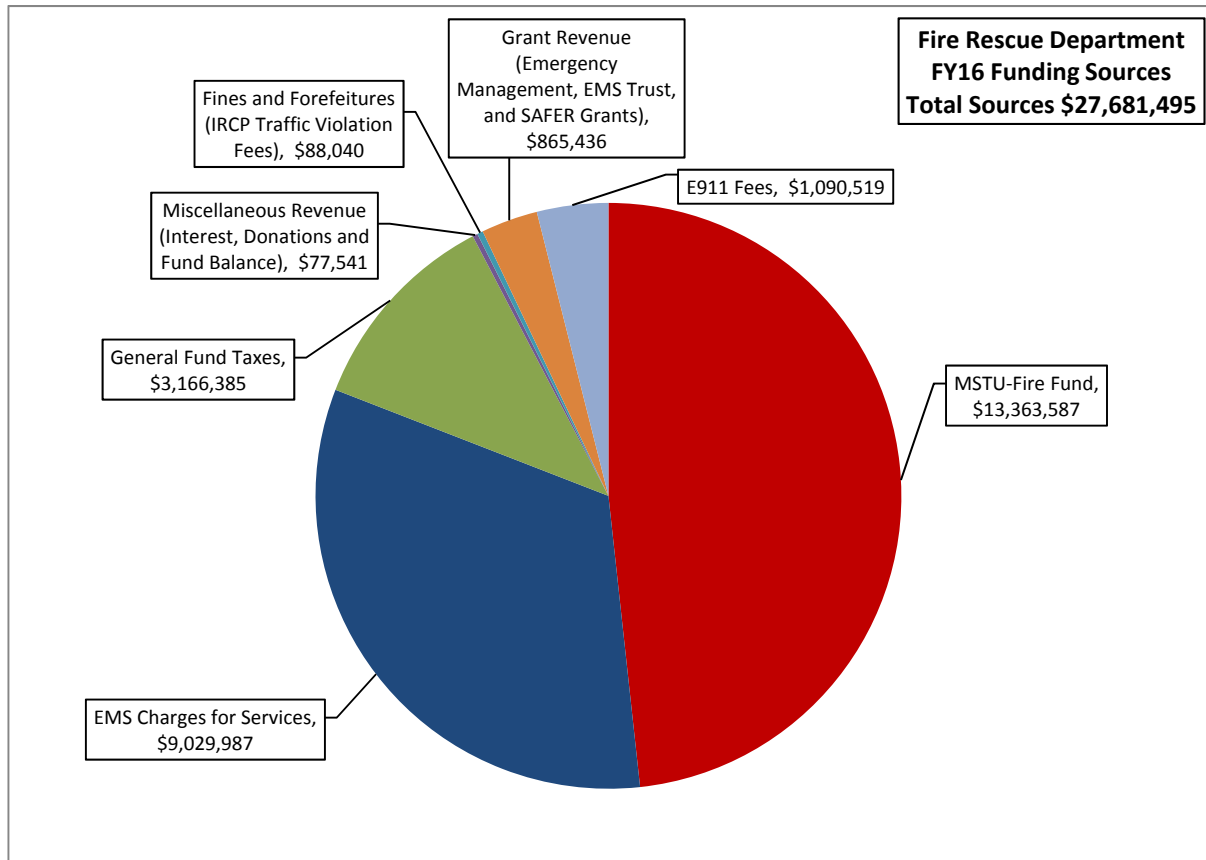
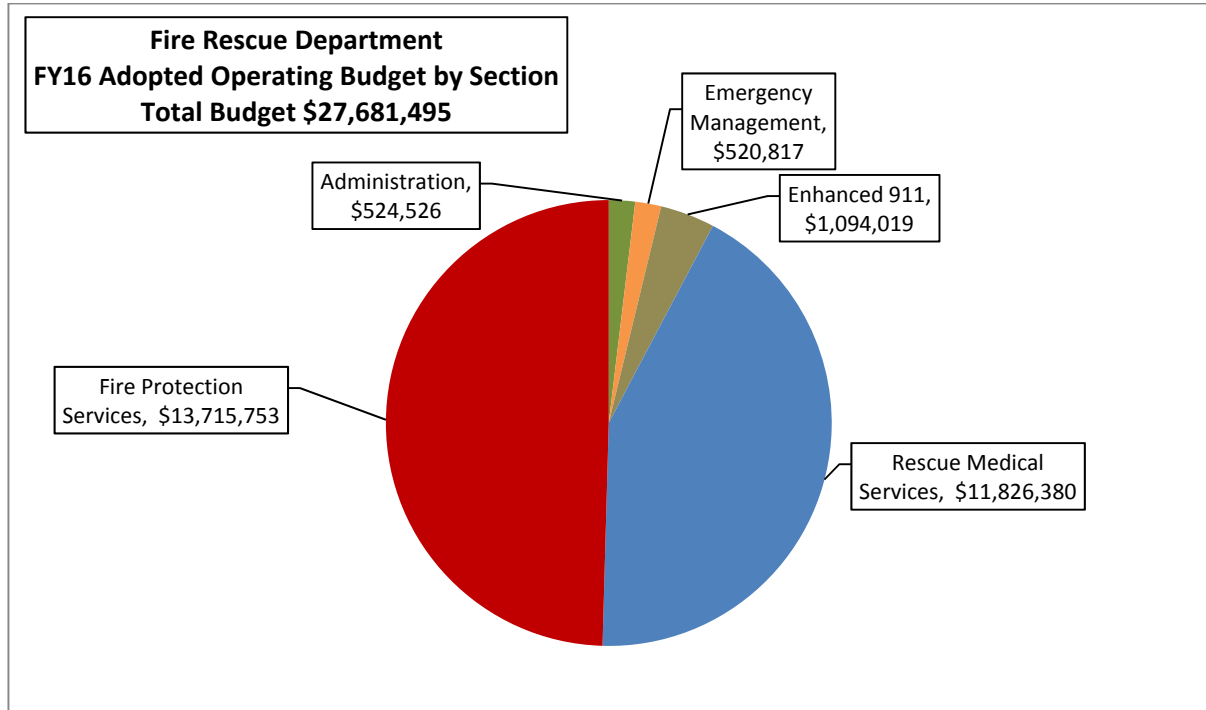


Ambulance and Rescue Fee Revenue per H.T.E.



Summary of Ambulance and Rescue Fee Revenues									
	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
Total EMS Charges	8,955,975	9,816,063	9,489,116	10,680,706	11,669,083	12,069,079	12,889,487	13,319,247	15,139,004
Medicare/Medicaid Write Downs	1,145,726	1,300,975	1,183,623	1,851,471	1,769,934	1,936,832	2,258,486	2,261,376	2,526,518
Billable Charges	7,810,249	8,515,089	8,305,493	8,829,234	9,899,148	10,132,248	10,631,001	11,057,871	12,612,486
Bad Debt Write Offs	1,866,393	2,569,516	2,679,101	1,978,829	2,325,335	2,955,335	2,261,502	2,592,328	3,775,104
Net Revenue Actual	5,943,857	5,945,573	5,626,391	6,850,405	7,573,814	7,176,913	8,369,499	8,465,543	8,837,381
Transports	20,141	20,749	20,871	20,585	20,751	22,531	23,696	24,164	26,662
General Fund Subsidy	5,581,545	5,333,248	4,289,573	3,834,590	2,153,747	2,554,757	1,642,275	1,839,915	2,129,087
EMS FTEs	104.5	104.0	105.5	103.0	103.5	102.0	103.5	103.5	106.5
Note: Bad Debt Write-Offs are accounts determined to be uncollectible; the annual amount is determined by Finance and Accounting.									

Summary of Ambulance and Rescue Fee Revenues									
	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
Ambulance Fees - Regular	8,911,211	9,722,408	9,380,346	10,634,054	11,585,249	12,010,490	12,814,305	13,233,692	14,999,937
Other Charges	44,764	93,656	108,769	46,651	83,834	58,589	75,182	85,555	139,067
Total EMS Charges	8,955,975	9,816,063	9,489,116	10,680,706	11,669,083	12,069,079	12,889,487	13,319,247	15,139,004
Medicare/Medicaid Write Downs	1,145,726	1,300,975	1,183,623	1,851,471	1,769,934	1,936,832	2,258,486	2,261,376	2,526,518
Billable Charges	7,810,249	8,515,089	8,305,493	8,829,234	9,899,148	10,132,248	10,631,001	11,057,871	12,612,486
Bad Debt Write Offs	1,866,393	2,569,516	2,679,101	1,978,829	2,325,335	2,955,335	2,261,502	2,592,328	3,775,104
Net Revenue Actual	5,943,857	5,945,573	5,626,391	6,850,405	7,573,814	7,176,913	8,369,499	8,465,543	8,837,381
Note: Bad Debt Write-Offs are accounts determined to be uncollectible; the annual amount is determined by Finance and Accounting.									



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

-2-

Operations



Harold Theus
Deputy Chief

Abstract

The operations section is responsible for the provision of emergency response, fire protection/prevention, and emergency medical service (EMS) to the community. Operations is the largest section in the department with 234 members, 221 of which are uniformed personnel assigned to operations that staff emergency units 24/7. The Deputy Chief oversees major program functions as well as the support functions; life safety and prevention, as well as equipment and supplies.

Historical Narrative

The BoCC (Board of County Commissioners) is responsible for providing fire protection services to the unincorporated areas of the county as well as the cities of Archer, Waldo, Hawthorne and Alachua. All fire service throughout Alachua County is provided either directly or through contracts with other participants within the Fire Services Network. Alachua County provides direct services by way of eight suppression units, one quint aerial device and a heavy extrication squad. These units provide advanced life support coverage with responses exceeding 14,000 for FY 15. The Department is the sole Emergency Medical Services Ambulance provider in Alachua County by way of the Certificate of Public Convenience Need. Emergency Medical Services is accomplished by operating fifteen rescue units, twelve 24/7 and three 6 days per week during peak call loads. Rescue units responses for FY15 were almost 37,000.

Initiatives

Increase Diversity

One of Alachua County's values is diversity. To accomplish greater diversity, Alachua County Fire Rescue has committed resources to increase the number of qualified minorities and women applying for advertised vacancies through specified advertising, active outreach, and community involvement. The goal of Alachua County Fire Rescue is to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

Methodology/Goals:

We have identified what we believe to be easily reached and receptive audiences in the following areas; Career Day in Alachua County, Job Fairs (College/High School/Veterans), creating and utilizing an Alachua County Recruitment Web Page, and printed information (pamphlets, flyers), contacting Leaders in the athletic arena (Athletic Directors), direct public contact through community involvement. Our ultimate pursuit is to change the atmosphere from that of passive to pursuit.

Improve Internal Communication

Alachua County Fire Rescue seeks to promote a sense of pride and unity among the employees of the organization. To accomplish this goal, the organization is committed to communicating the organizational goals, values, and mission utilizing multiple modes of communications. These may include methods such as direct discussion, e-mail, podcast, video links etc. The intent is to create well-informed work cultures while achieving a set of common goals through their daily activities.

Assessment

Our challenge is to find a better way to effectively reach the newest firefighter at the furthest station. If we can accomplish this, we know we are also efficiently communicating to the other 227+ Personnel.

Methodology/Goals:

With the objective of increasing effective, measurable, and accountable feedback we have discussed new and available technologies such as Skype/video conferences, audio call-ins for multiple communicators, and podcasts.

Utilizing these new forms of communication will allow us to increase our performance. These tools will increase transparency while allowing measurable feedback and the increase in clear and defined information streams to decrease confusion.

Provide a method for Community Feedback

Alachua County Fire Rescue seeks to promote feedback from the community we serve. The organization understands that community feedback is essential in measuring results of service delivery. The intent of this feedback is to lead to improvements in service delivery with the goal of improving quality of life for the public we serve. Practical, cost-effective community feedback tools can build trust and confidence in our organization through increased participation, transparency, and access.

We recognize that the current process is lacking, and currently have no effective way of receiving feedback on our service or performance.

Methodology/Goals:

For the system to work, the process must be simplistic, dynamic, and allow for feedback. The goal is for an effective web feedback venue through the use of focus groups. Partnering with our existing IT and county PIO's will allow this. Using social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Periscope, and other channels, will allow us to direct the flow of information and provide us with the ability to have immediate and measurable feedback. Other avenues that we will explore are partnering with the journalism department at UF for public relations and PIO services. We would also like to explore utilizing our trucks as billboards, encouraging the public to engage with us.

Improve Wellness/Fitness

Alachua County Fire Rescue and the International Association of Fire Fighters have a desire for healthy lifestyles. Due to the physical demands of the job, it is essential that all uniformed personnel maintain a high

level of fitness and wellness. The purpose of the Wellness Fitness Initiative (WFI) is to ensure that uniformed personnel are healthy enough to work safely and effectively during their careers and maintain good health during retirement. The intent is to implement the program as mandatory and non-punitive where all uniformed personnel work to improve his/her health and wellness. The goal is for each employee to gain a competitive spirit wherein they compete only with themselves.

Goals:

- Annual medical and fitness evaluations
- Exercise equipment in all fire stations
- Encourage the daily use of exercise equipment

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

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Emergency Medical Services



Jeff Taylor
Assistant Chief

Abstract

The purpose of the Emergency Medical Services Strategic Plan Initiative is to fully enhance the level of Emergency Medical Services in Alachua County by 2019.

EMS Branch Overview

EMS

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is one of the primary services provided by members on shift. Being current with laws and regulations is critical. Our staff participates in service delivery decisions with the Medical Directors as well as proposed state-wide changes being recommended by the industry. Current medical direction provides innovative approaches to patient care that stays abreast of trends and best practices. Coordination with the training function is critical to maintain our high-quality services while implementing innovative solutions to patient care. The challenges facing this area are: Funding for technology improvements for patients and employee safety. Medical Directors provide an integral part in the delivery of advanced training, quality assurance, and advances in service delivery.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The Health & Safety Officer's responsibilities continue to be more complex with an increase in the illnesses that our members are exposed to and the injuries associated with the services we provide. As we have observed in the previous year, infectious diseases are prevalent. The acquisition of equipment and training is often difficult during crisis. The need to evolve with best practices and the funding necessary to appropriately train employees, while providing protection of the infectious disease threat to patients and employees, has been affected by recent cuts in funding. Short term needs have been addressed but long term needs will still need to be addressed through efforts being considered in the areas this function supports.

LOGISTICS

The Central Supply Warehouse (CSW) is responsible for the systematic selection, procurement, warehousing, and logistics of supplies and services for ACFR. CSW coordinates purchasing requests and manages inventory control for over 800 stock items - Everything from paper towels, medical drugs, and

supplies to personnel protective equipment. The CSW staff focuses on acquiring high quality products, services, and supplies at the best cost and is responsible for the majority of the department's receiving, distribution, and shipping operations, ensuring all ACFR work locations are stocked with the appropriate medical and station supplies. When natural or man-made disasters require the distribution of emergency relief supplies, CSW plays a critical role in Emergency Support Function 11 at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Alachua County Fire Rescue has seen a steady rise in calls for both non-emergency and emergency services. Not only have the requests for services increased but the complexity of those requests has increased as well. The delivery of pre-hospital medical care has changed dramatically and health care reimbursement has become more complicated. This has created a need for extensive education for accuracy and billing practices.

Future Challenges for the EMS Branch:

1. Providing a Progressive Quality Assurance Program

As call load and responsibilities have increased, maintaining appropriate review of patient care reports has been difficult. The department will need to explore options that are available for improvement in this area.

Goals:

- In December 2015, the department will establish 30% of all reports completed as the minimum acceptable monthly review rate. The current QA rate is 20-25% of all reports. Consistently review the established minimum goal is to be achieved by April 2016.
- In order to meet the new QA standard, a review of the current QA process is underway. The QA committee will make recommendations to amend the current process or develop a new process to ensure that the 30% goal is consistently met without sacrificing the quality of the report reviews.
- Provide oversight for QA reviewers to ensure quality standards are not jeopardized by the increased number of reports reviewed.
- Include the Medical Billing Division in the QA process to ensure that billing needs are met in EMS reporting. A Medical Billing representative will begin attending all monthly QA meetings (both departmental and joint), to ensure consistency. This will begin at the first scheduled meeting in February 2016.

2. Rescue Lieutenant Turnover

The Rescue Lieutenant position is one of the most challenging and underappreciated positions in the department. It is imperative that issues surrounding this position, including: Qualifications for promotion/hire, pay parity, and workload are addressed.

Goals:

- In order to achieve parity of rank, pay, and respect for the rescue lieutenant, it is understood that the minimum standard for promotion to the position must be developed. This standard will be identified by the 2nd quarter of 2016.

- The EMS Division will establish a committee to identify methods to reduce the daily workload of the rescue lieutenant. Possible alternatives to the work schedule have been presented including a station rotation, “paramedic is a paramedic”, etc. A station rotation has been developed and will be implemented for B-shift beginning in January 2016. If successful, the rotation will be expanded to include the remaining shifts. “Paramedic is a paramedic” is still being examined and has not been approved, though it is being used successfully within the department on a limited basis.

3. Meeting the needs of both an increasing 911 service and an increasing demand for highly specialized non-emergency transfers traveling out of county

Local hospitals report a substantial increase in recent years of both the number of patients seen at their facilities and the acuity of the illnesses and injuries presented. As a result, pre-hospital EMS agencies have experienced a dramatic rise in wait time. For Alachua County Fire Rescue, this led to increased move ups and incidents of having no rescue units available for emergency response.

Additionally, our local hospitals continue to request transportation to hospitals outside of Alachua County. Healthcare reimbursement has become more complicated requiring extensive education for accuracy and billing practices.

Goals:

- The department will expand the peak load division by adding two (2) additional units in FY 2016. Continue to expand this division annually to meet the transport needs of the community and our EMS partners.
- The need for an EMS District Chief has been identified. For the remainder of FY 2015-16, the department will track the need for this position and create a classification in order to help demonstrate the need for implementation in FY 2016-17.
- Despite the addition of the peak load division, the department recognizes the need for additional ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescues. Call volume and distribution will continue to be examined to determine the optimal level of full-time units and their locations.

4. Communication

Communication has been identified as one of the department’s areas for needed improvement. In order to address this issue from the EMS perspective, the following strategies are planned:

- FY 2016, the Technical Services Division will produce and distribute via e-mail, an “EMS Update” to all members of the department. The frequency and content will be determined as the first quarter of 2016 progresses, but currently the update is planned to be sent out weekly and feature updates, happenings, case studies, training, and a “Call of the Month.” A question of the week/month to be submitted by field personnel is planned and will be implemented no later than April 2016 in order to facilitate communication from the field to administration.
- The EMS Division and the Medical Director will work to establish a quarterly review of all protocols. A complete protocol review and new formatting will be completed by January 2017.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

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Technical Services Division



Larry Stewart
Assistant Chief

Abstract

The purpose of the enhanced ACFR technical services strategic planning initiative is to increase delivery of hands-on training opportunities needed to meet the needs of our evolving department

Historical Narratives

Historically, ACFR Technical Services is tasked with providing both online and hands-on training for the department. The online training is accomplished primarily through the use of Target Solutions. Target Solutions is a web based program which allows for the delivery of educational materials to all personnel within the department via an internet connection. Given our 962 square miles within the county, this technology is required to meet the needs of the department. Additionally, ACFR Technical Services provides first person training on-site at our training facility at Lofton High School. The Lofton Training facility is the only recognized “facility” training available to the department. Finally, the use of on-scene or at-station training is delivered by one of the four current captains in the Technical Services Branch.

Initiatives

Initiative 1: Develop an annual training plan

Goals:

- Calendar, survey, required training, company officers
- Department-wide training on lesson plans

Initiative 2: Separate training and hiring within the technical services branch

Goals:

- One captain per shift (3 new FTEs), or reassign 1 Lieutenant and 1 Rescue Lt. from each shift on staffing to Technical Services for training.
- Hold district chiefs accountable for lack of company training, especially:
- Multi-company training

Initiative 3: Continuing education/mentoring

Goals:

- Instructor classes and internal paramedic school
- Shift friendly
- Driver Operator, Fire Officer, Critical Care, National Fire Academy
- Paramedic required
- Development of public speaking group for fire rescue

Initiative 4: Establish a Public Information Office

Goals:

- Press Releases/PSAs
- Public Education
- Community Relations
- Social Media
- Departmental Newsletter

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

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Life Safety & Internal Affairs Branch



Mark Smith
Fire Marshal

Abstract

Fire prevention activities are handled with three (3) members within the Life Safety/Internal Affairs Branch. The Fire Marshal conducts all complaint investigations and is the authority having jurisdiction for fire code enforcement. Two fire inspectors conduct fire safety inspections and enforcement of code violations of existing structures as well as plans review and inspections in new construction. There is an increasing trend towards creating a “culture of preparedness”. As this culture of preparedness evolves, there will be an increase in prevention-driven mandates such as installation of residential fire sprinkler systems, installation of smoke alarms, and greater requirements for analysis and documentation of current trends and practices.

History

This Branch currently charges a fee for conducting these inspections which covers some portion of the cost of their services. Efforts within this Branch have been impacted by recent budget reductions that have resulted in the elimination of all public education activities. Public Education efforts included safety training for children and older adults, two of the groups most affected by fires and other injuries. The long term impact of these reductions will be difficult to quantify.

Initiatives

1. Provide Public Education Program

Goals:

- Establish a process for creating a public education program.

2. Create an Electronic Records System

Goals:

- Establish a means of electronic recordkeeping for all program areas within the Life Safety & Internal Affairs Branch.

3. Research Residential Fire Sprinklers Ordinance Need

Goals:

- Identify the need for a residential fire sprinkler ordinance.

4. Create an Inspection Process Modality

Goals:

- Implement a periodic fire inspection process and procedure.

Emergency Management



Dave Donnelly
Emergency Management Director

Develop Emergency Preparedness Publications for Distribution

Abstract

The purpose of the Develop Emergency Preparedness Publications for Distribution initiative is to increase the production and dissemination of emergency management publications to the public via partner agencies throughout the county.

Historical Narrative

Historically, Alachua County has relied on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for disaster preparedness publications to hand out to the public at events and in the office; however, there are several issues that need to be addressed. First, FEMA is cutting back on expenses and is putting the printing costs on local governments who request these publications. Second, there are local emergency management programs such as shelters, Praise and Prepare, and special needs, which warrant local development of brochures for distribution to the public. Lastly, while emergency management staff attends several public outreach events and presentations annually, there are other venues or mechanisms that can be utilized to get disaster preparedness information in the hands of our citizens. Facilities such as libraries, city halls, and fire stations are perfect venues to display this information for public consumption. The issue here is distribution: getting the documents to these facilities.

Initiatives

- Develop Emergency Preparedness Publications for Distribution – vehicle is a workgroup to develop and distribute publications

The Development of an Emergency Preparedness Publications for Distribution initiative is part of the Enhanced Emergency Management promotion and outreach activities/opportunities objective in Emergency Management's Strategic Plan. The strategic plan was developed by three groups: emergency management staff, the county's emergency response team (ERT), and the recovery and resiliency team (RRT). Each group conducted a SWOT analysis then developed goals and objectives based on these analyses. Like goals and objectives from each group were merged and vetted before final presentation of the plan to the Fire Chief. Several action steps have been identified for this initiative and the project outcome is to ensure that every identified recipient location has sufficient stock of current publications for a given calendar year.

Current Status: Project will start in January 2016.

Current State Assessment

Emergency Management staff will convene workgroup to begin publication development in January.

Recommendation & Impact

Strategic Measures

Time Frame: 3 years

Costs:

- **Reach out to Media Outlets –**
Emergency Management will work with the County Communications Office to identify and reach out to local media outlets.
- **Partner with festivals, fairs, expos, etc. –**
Emergency Management staff will carry out working with local event organizers.
- **Acquire Leadership Buy-In for staff to dedicate time to ERT responsibilities such as building-out EM plans, attending meetings, participating in training and exercises.**
- **EM Director will work with Senior Staff**
Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all functions – EM Staff will work with each ESF agency to develop.
- **Identify Critical Tasks/Processes/Procedures that staff needs to know –**
EM Staff will work with each ESF agency to develop.



Appendix

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>DIVISION OF LABOR</u>
Bielling, Jeff	Assistant Director	Emergency Operations
Bosier, Grant	Driver Operator	Operations
Dix, George	Pastor	Passage Family Church
Donnelly, David	Director	Emergency Operations
Edison, Craig	Driver Operator	Operations
Ellis, Cheryl	Assistant Director	Finance & Administration
Erhler, Arvin	Rescue Lieutenant	Operations
Fletcher, Ian	Vice President of Education	Gainesville Chamber of Commerce
Friis, Mike	Firefighter/Paramedic	Operations
Glasgow, Glenn	Rescue Lieutenant	Operations
Hines, Jacqueline	Sr. Staff Assistant	Administration
Horner, Jennifer	Program Coordinator	Emergency Management
Knapp, Joey	Firefighter/EMT	Operations
King, Radcliffe	Rescue Lieutenant	Operations
Mallard, Jonathan	Rescue Lieutenant	Operations
McAlhany, Michael J.	Lieutenant	Operations
McAlhany, Mick	Lieutenant	Operations
Medina, Rick	Citizen	Community Business Owner
Noto, Nicole	Supervisor	Ambulance Billing
Northcutt, William	Chief	Administration
Patterson, Justin	Driver Operator	Operations
Richardson, Jonathan	Firefighter Paramedic	Operations
Rucker, Rodney	Lieutenant	Operations
Rulapaugh, Kevin	Lieutenant	Operations
Scott-Kotb, Karem	Firefighter Paramedic	Operations
Smith, Mark	Fire Marshal	Fire Prevention
Steen, Mark	Driver Operator	Operations
Stewart, Larry	Assistant Chief	Technical Services
Sullivan, Robert	Rescue Lieutenant	Vice President Local 3852
Taylor, Adrian	Vice President of Regional Initiatives	Gainesville Chamber of Commerce
Taylor, Jeff	Assistant Chief	EMS
Theus, Harold	Deputy Chief	Operations
Walters, David	Rescue Lieutenant	Operations
Williams, Richard	Retired GFR Fire Chief	Retired
Woods, Misty	Lieutenant	Operations