

# JACKSON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 5 STRATEGIC PLAN 2007 - 2012

## INTRODUCTION

Jackson County Fire District 5's first Strategic Plan was adopted in 1996. The Board of Directors and Staff Personnel developed the Strategic Plan over a 5 – 6 month period by evaluating general strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the district. The plan was driven by our Mission Statement:

*“To Deliver Quality and Professional Services that Promote  
Community Life Safety and Property Conservation.”*

During the past ten years, the Strategic Plan has proven to be an effective and efficient tool, and has provided the fire district with a road map for success.

Many of the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives have been accomplished over time. However, many of the goals and objectives remain current and are still valid today.

As we look forward and develop future plans, we do so by continuing to focus on the following questions:

- What is best for the customers we serve?
- How can we serve the customer better?

The Strategic Plan 2007-2012 summarizes and prioritizes our key strategies, and highlights the goals and objectives that we intend to accomplish in the future.

## **Overview & Legal Jurisdiction**

Jackson County Fire District 5 is organized as a Rural Fire District pursuant to ORS 198.705 to 198.755. The District is governed by five elected Board of Directors. A Director may be an elector living in, or the owner of real property within the boundaries of the District. Jackson County Fire District 5 encompasses approximately 115 square miles including twenty-four miles of Interstate 5. Fire District 5 provides fire & life safety services within this area, including the Cities of Talent and Phoenix. Fire District 5 provides automatic aid to the cities of Medford and Ashland, Oregon, and also provides mutual aid to fire agencies throughout Jackson and Josephine counties on a request basis.

The assessed value of real property within Fire District 5 is approximately 1.278 billion dollars. The population is approximately 20,000, and during the 2008 calendar year Fire District 5 responded to 2145 calls for service. Of these requests for service, 57% were Emergency Medical Services, 13% were responses to fires and 30% were non-fire public service incidents.

Fire District 5 is a combination Fire Department with twenty-eight career personnel and forty volunteer personnel operating out of three stations. Fire District 5 provides fire prevention, public education, fire suppression and emergency medical services. Fire District 5 operates as a semi-military operation. All orders and commands are issued through a well-defined chain of command of one Fire Chief, one Division Chief, seven Captains, six Engineers, eleven Firefighters and forty Volunteer Firefighters.

Staff assignments are delegated throughout the organization based on management by objectives, utilizing a participative management approach. Examples of staff assignments include fire prevention, community relations, emergency medical services and training.

The training program is managed by the Division Chief/Training Officer. Training standards are based on statewide fire standards and training curriculum. All new recruits must complete a minimum of:

1. Eighty-Hour NFPA FF 1 Course
2. Hazardous Materials Awareness
3. First Aid/CPR
4. Infection Control Training
5. Wildland S130-190 Training

All Firefighters work a 56-hour week on 24-hour shifts. Administration personnel are assigned 40 hour per week positions.

The budget process, organized under Oregon budget law, utilizes five citizens appointed by the Board of Directors to work with the Board on the District Budget Committee. The Budget Committee approves the budget, which is the annual spending plan for the District. The Board adopts the budget following a Public Hearing.

## **PROCESS**

The strategic and operational planning process that was utilized in producing Jackson County Fire District 5's Strategic Plan included the following:

**Step 1:** Review of the organizational chart and the management philosophy regarding planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling operations of the fire district.

**Step 2:** The Staff and Board of Directors reviewed general strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organization.

**Step 3:** Review of the Mission Statement, addressing the following questions:

- Does it represent our purpose for existing?
- Should we be more specific?

**Step 4:** Goal setting; establishing and prioritizing goals through brainstorming, discussion, comparing impacts and determining rating methodologies.

**Step 5:** The board directed the Chief to establish a Strategic Planning Group comprised of two Career Firefighters, two Volunteer Firefighters, three Staff Personnel, one board member and one community member to evaluate the Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives, and to provide a Strategic Plan draft by the July 2007 board meeting for review and approval.

Through a consensus process the board reviewed and approved the Strategic Plan based on critical customer needs, most important functions and services of the district and established goals and objectives to shape the direction of the fire district during the next five years.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Mission of Jackson County Fire District 5 is to Deliver Quality and Professional Services that Promote Community Life Safety and Property Conservation.**

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## **DISTRICT GOALS**

- **To Prevent Fires from Starting**
  - **To Educate Customers Regarding Fire Safety**
  - **To Confine and Extinguish Structural and Wildland Fires**
  - **To Provide Emergency Medical Services at the Advanced Life Support Level**
  - **To Provide Hazardous Materials Response**
  - **To Encourage and Support Professional and Ethical Behavior for All Personnel**
  - **To Provide a Safe and Healthful Environment for All Personnel**
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## **EMPLOYEE VALUE STATEMENT**

***“We Still Make House Calls”***

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## **STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS**

- **Fiscal Stability**
- **Human Resources: “*Our People*”**
  - **Customer Service**
- **Fire Prevention / Public Education**
  - **Apparatus & Equipment**
    - **Facilities**
    - **Training Program**
    - **Volunteer Program**
    - **Wildland Firefighting**
    - **Board / Staff Interaction**
- **External Threats / Opportunities**

**Goal #1: Fiscal Stability**

**To Maintain a Stable Financial Position in Order to Provide Quality and Professional Fire and Life Safety Services for the Customer**

Objectives:

- Annually review budgeted programs and expenditures to determine cost effectiveness and benefits to the customers.
- Annually budget monies to reduce the district's unfunded vacation and compensatory time liability.
- Annually budget as much cash carry-forward possible for the purpose of eventually reducing short-term loan interest expense and ultimately eliminating the need to borrow. When possible, postpone large expenses until tax revenues are received.
- Continue to monitor the district's tax rate and assessed value, and work very closely with the Jackson County Assessor and the Oregon Department of Revenue to accurately reflect the growth and value within the fire district.
- Continue to review the costs and benefits associated with regional Fire and EMS protection options such as contracts, mergers and consolidation with other fire protection agencies in Jackson and Josephine Counties.
- Continue to review / research non-tax revenue opportunities such as grants and EMS / Fire and Haz Mat billings for non-district customers.
- Continue to review and enhance our purchasing policies and procedures in order to fulfill our responsibilities for maintaining a system of internal accounting and control.

**Goal #2: Human Resources – “Our People”**

**Promote Employee Excellence by Recruiting, Hiring and Developing Our People.**

Objectives:

- Continue to develop an organizational culture that recognizes our people are our greatest asset.
- Continue to develop effective recruiting and hiring practices for career, student and volunteer firefighters.
- Continue to acknowledge that training and development is the key ingredient for a successful organization.
- Continue to provide internal / external training and development opportunities for all employees (board, administrative staff, career, student and volunteer firefighters.)
- Continue to improve and enhance labor / management communication and cooperation.
- Continue to recognize / reward outstanding performance, both for emergency and non-emergency operations and programs.
- Maintain a Medal of Honor Program for outstanding performance in areas such as: Years of Service, Distinguished Service, and Courage.
- Continue to conduct biennial performance evaluations for all personnel.
- Continue to conduct annual Awards Banquet for all personnel.
- Continue to provide the Critical Incident Stress De-Briefing Program to help our personnel become aware of and recognize the psychological stresses that they may encounter during their duty at emergency situations.

### **Goal #3: Customer Service**

#### **Provide Effective Customer Service That Satisfies and Delights Our Customer.**

##### Objectives:

- Acknowledge and recognize that our fire district exists because of the people we serve: the customer.
- Promote an organizational culture that acknowledges our primary goal is to deliver outstanding service to our customers.
- Promote an organizational culture that understands there are internal and external customers.
- Promote an organizational culture that acknowledges that the internal customer must be treated with respect and fairness in order to deliver outstanding service to our external customers.
- Acknowledge that customer service means never saying “no” to a customer. Sometimes we may have to invent or customize creative solutions in order to accomplish their objective.
- Promote an organizational culture that simply says, “We Still Make House Calls” and “We Go the Extra Mile” to our customers.
- Promote / provide annual Customer Service Training for all personnel.
- Continue to provide the Chaplain Program for internal and external customers. The purpose of the program is to provide a ministry of support to meet emotional, mental and spiritual needs of district personnel, their families and to victims or families the district serves.
- Continue to develop and provide a biennial newsletter for customers that highlights all facets of the fire district.
- Continue to provide our rural addressing program by providing our customers with quality reflective address signs and posts.
- Maintain district web site with current and useful information.

**Goal #4: Fire Prevention / Public Education**

**To Provide Quality Fire Prevention and Public Education Programs.**

Objectives:

- To prevent fires from starting.
- To educate customers regarding fire safety.
- Continue to provide residential fire safety and wildland/urban interface inspections.
- Continue to provide commercial pre-fire planning.
- Provide Company Inspector training to personnel.
- Continue to promote and support the Fire District's smoke detector program (to provide a working smoke detector in every structure of our fire district.)
- Continue to participate in and support the Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative.
- Continue to participate in and support the annual 'Smokey Bear' presentations in the elementary schools.
- Continue our annual Open House Program during Fire Prevention Week.
- Continue to offer services to the public such as Child Safety Seat installation, CPR classes, fire extinguisher training and loaning flue cleaning brushes and EMS "File for Life" Program.

## **Goal #5: Apparatus and Equipment**

### **To Maintain a Highly Functional and Efficient Fleet of Vehicles.**

#### Objectives:

- Continue to revise, update and evaluate Apparatus / Equipment Replacement Plan, and modify vehicle replacement cycles if necessary.
- Develop a high level of fleet uniformity through consistency in purchases and the type of vehicle utilized by various divisions within the fire district.
- Develop and maintain standard vehicle categories utilized (i.e. staff vehicles, engine companies, water tenders, etc.)
- Develop and maintain standard specifications for vehicle color, vehicle markings, specific vehicle pump size, tank size, engine size, etc.
- Review, research, develop, and continue to monitor vehicle replacement criteria such as cost of operation, reliability, job performance capability, cost of repair vs. replacement, appearance, capability to meet standards or regulations (NFPA, etc.).
- Maintain standard operating guidelines of disposing of fire district vehicles in conjunction with an orderly replacement cycle.
- Continue to maintain a high quality maintenance program for each vehicle, utilizing daily, weekly and monthly checks, plus regular service programs.
- Continue to maintain a reliable and functional method of acquiring, distributing and evaluating fuel for the fire district fleet.
- Continue to budget monies each year in the fire district capital projects fund for apparatus / equipment.

**Goal #6: Facilities**

**Maintain Highly Functional, Effective and Strategically Located Fire Stations Within the Fire District.**

Objectives:

- Complete Station Two upgrades / remodel
- Continue to provide a high level of station maintenance at current stations.
- Locate fire stations in areas characterized by equal risk with equal response times throughout the fire district (i.e. rural residential.)
- Locate volunteer stations in or near areas where volunteers live and work to facilitate quick response.
- Annually review station operating costs such as electricity, water, landscape maintenance, building improvements and implement cost-saving measures as applicable.
- Investigate the future possibility of constructing a training tower behind Headquarters Station One, as well as the eventual use or disposition of excess property behind Station One.
- Continue to review and collaborate with neighboring fire agencies regarding potential joint facilities in order to reduce costs and improve service levels.

## **Goal #7: Training Program**

### **Provide a Comprehensive Training Program for All Personnel.**

#### Objectives:

- Maintain a systematic training program to teach each fire district employee and volunteer to operate at acceptable performance levels for their position and assignment.
- Maintain in-house training activities and programs that range from recruit firefighters to fire officers and board members.
- Provide for all district personnel outside training opportunities such as those offered by National Fire Academy, DPSST, and other fire service seminars and conferences.
- Provide educational incentives for employees to attend college fire science programs.
- Provide in-house programs that relate to specialized areas such as fire prevention, public education, community relations, emergency medical services, haz mat response, wildland fire management, supervision and leadership.
- Maintain a comprehensive record keeping system that tracks all training activities for each member of the fire district.
- Maintain quarterly and annual performance evaluations based on the monthly training schedule.
- Continue to schedule and evaluate all personnel's physical fitness capabilities through annual physical fitness testing.
- Develop and complete an annual training program report (topics, hours, certifications, etc.)
- Continue to schedule career / volunteer firefighter interactive training sessions.
- Continue interactive fire & EMS training sessions with neighboring agencies.
- Continue to participate in the Rogue Interagency Training Association (RITA) in Jackson / Josephine counties.
- Complete annual maintenance training of fire certification in cooperation with DPSST.

## **Goal #8: Volunteer Program**

### **Provide an Effective and Efficient Volunteer/Student Firefighter Program**

#### Objectives:

- Recruit, train and maintain an active volunteer/student firefighting force that assists the career firefighters in all phases of fire district operations.
- Provide a systematic training program for all volunteer/student firefighters that will allow them to attain state and national certifications (i.e. DPSST, NFPA, etc.)
- Provide supervision and leadership for volunteer/student program and members.
- Maintain positive relations between career and volunteer/student personnel.
- Utilize the volunteer firefighter program in order to recruit student firefighters and summer firefighters.
- Provide all OSHA-mandated training (i.e. Haz Mat, Infection Control, ICS, F/F1.)
- Provide minimum requirements for attendance to drills, alarms and related activities.
- Provide safety and communication equipment and for all volunteer/student firefighters.
- Support and encourage professional and ethical behavior of all volunteer firefighters.
- Support and encourage physical fitness for all volunteer firefighters.
- Provide a safe and healthy environment for all volunteer firefighters.
- Support, encourage and provide training opportunities to maintain volunteer firefighters' professional development.

## **Goal #9: Wildland/Urban Interface Firefighting**

### **Develop Comprehensive Fire Prevention and Fire Suppression Activities to Combat the Problems Associated with Wildland Fires.**

#### Objectives:

- Assist with SB360 Inspections
- To provide an active fire prevention program that addresses wildland/urban interface fire issues such as fuel breaks, apparatus/equipment access, building construction, roof coverings and general fire safety guidelines.
- To work closely with neighboring fire agencies at the county, state and federal levels to enhance fire prevention and fire suppression programs.
- To develop active fire prevention programs in designated wildfire hazard areas such as Tolman Creek Road, Timberlake Drive, Wagner Creek Road, Ashland Mine Road, Anderson Creek Road, Griffin Creek, Old Hwy 99 / Steinman Road and the Dark Hollow/Pioneer Road area.
- To develop pre-programmed suppression forces in the wildfire hazard areas that utilize Jackson and Josephine County resources as well as state and federal resources.
- To develop neighborhood fire prevention teams to distribute materials, hold community meetings, develop telephone information systems, monitor fire behavior and, in some cases, actively train and become involved with fire suppression activities (i.e. hand trailing, emergency water storage, etc.)
- Annually monitor, inspect and fill existing large volume water storage tanks and other water sources throughout the fire district for water shuttle purposes and fire suppression activities.
- Continue to work with individual property owners to enhance home fire suppression and fire prevention strategies and develop private water systems when available.
- Continue to work closely with the Jackson County Planning Department to monitor and enforce the Jackson County Planning Ordinance Sections 8.7 (Wildfire Safety) and 9.5.4 (Emergency Vehicle Access.)

## **Goal #10: Fire District Board & Staff Interaction / Communication**

### **Provide Quality Communication and Interaction Opportunities for the Board of Directors and Staff.**

#### Objectives:

- Continue to meet on a monthly basis to conduct fire district business.
- Continue to support and encourage participation by the board and staff in yearly conferences sponsored by the Oregon Fire District Directors Association, Special Districts Association of Oregon and the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association.
- Develop regular channels of communication with board members and staff at scheduled monthly meetings.
- Continue to schedule and conduct special meetings such as planning and study sessions for board and staff.
- Encourage attendance at special workshops and seminars in order to understand ongoing issues facing fire district.
- Continue to review, modify and adapt policies and procedures as they relate to the board and fire district operations.
- Schedule regular meetings between the Board Chairperson and the Fire Chief to review fire district performance in relationship to strategic plans, budgeted programs and fire district residents' expectations.
- Continue to conduct biennial performance evaluations of fire district staff.
- Continue to review and assess the organization's performance against objectives, resources, plans, policies and services rendered.
- Conduct new board member orientation for the purpose of defining duties and responsibilities, district policies and procedures, and to provide an overview of district operations.

## **Goal #11: External Threats / Opportunities**

### **Monitor, Analyze, Evaluate and Prepare for Potential Threats and Opportunities for the Fire District.**

#### Objectives:

- Develop an understanding and knowledge of the internal and external pressures facing the fire district and the fire service industry.
- Review and develop strategies to provide and implement programs and services that are logical extensions of our existing fire district programs and services.
- Develop an understanding of the important political and leadership role our Board of Directors, staff and line personnel play in our fire district's future.
- Continue to provide an organizational marketing program that will communicate to our customers the value of our organization by:
  - increasing public appearances
  - positive media coverage
  - presentations at public gatherings
  - citizen survey projects
  - home inspection programs
  - community fire prevention/public education programs
  - fire & EMS Career Day opportunities
- Develop and implement strategies that address opportunities and threats in the following areas:
  - financial support
  - health and safety of our personnel
  - crew size and response variables
  - marketing programs / public image
  - personnel management / labor relations
  - training program
  - volunteer program management

## **SUMMARY**

**Our Strategic Plan is driven by our Mission Statement:**

***“To Deliver Quality and Professional Services that Promote  
Community Life Safety and Property Conservation.”***

**The goals and objectives established by the board and staff need to be reviewed and revised as necessary in order to celebrate the successes and evaluate unsuccessful efforts.**

**Doing ‘what is best for Jackson County Fire District 5 customers’ is not just a goal; it is a commitment from our organization to the public we are sworn to protect. This Strategic Plan will provide direction, vision and a focus that we can use as a tool to monitor our organization’s effectiveness and efficiency.**