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PINELLAS COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

1995-1996

A coalition built on value.....

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PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Strategic Planning Committee of the Pinellas County Fire Chiefs Association assembled for a two-day workshop in Clearwater, Florida, on April 6-7, 1995. The workshop was initiated by the Board of Directors in an effort to clarify the direction of the association and to strengthen the coalition of member departments. When asked why the members were there, responses varied from seeking a common direction, planning the fire service to meet tomorrow's needs, establishing training and standards, ensuring community needs while protecting employees, developing a consensus plan, improving resources by cooperation, and establishing common goals.

The plan, as you see it evolve in this report, is to guide the Pinellas County Fire Chiefs Association in developing and implementing policy. In addition, its purpose is to inform our members and public of what our policies will be. The ensuing goals and objectives represent the collective efforts of the Committee and their commitment to serve the citizens of the County.

PROCESS TO DEVELOP THE PLAN

The two-day workshop format allowed for the opportunity to do a complete analysis of the present environment of the Pinellas County Fire Chiefs Association. Fire Chiefs from all over the County participated in a SWOT analysis and tried to focus on the organization's strengths and weaknesses as they exist today. In addition, the committee studied the opportunities and threats that could be anticipated. As a result, we thoroughly dealt with the following four major steps:

- Situation Analysis (where are we now?)
- Goal Formation (where should we be going in 95-96?)
- Resource allocation (what should we budget in the future to get there?)
- Evaluation (are we getting there?)

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLAN

The Strategic Planning Committee was composed of the following individuals:

Bob Davidson, Fire Chief, Clearwater Fire Department
Tom Jarrell, Fire Chief, Palm Harbor Fire Department

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Ken Cramer, Fire Chief, Pinellas Park, Fire Department
Jerry Knight, Fire Chief, St. Petersburg Fire and

Rescue Department

Charles Fant, Fire Chief, Treasure Island Fire Dept.

Dwaine E. Booth, Fire Coordinator, Pinellas County

Fire Administration

Scott McGuff, Fire Chief, Oldsmar Fire Department

Brian Turini, Fire Chief, Madeira Beach Fire Dept.

John R. Leahy, Jr., Fire Chief, Seminole Fire Rescue

Dan Fries, Fire Chief, Largo Fire Department

Larry Ladd, Fire Chief, Indian Rocks Fire District

Joseph A. Pidala, Fire Chief, Belleair Bluffs Fire

Department

Ed Hooper, Lieutenant, Pinellas County Council of

Firefighters

Bud Meyer, Fire Chief, Dunedin Fire Department

Max G. Shimer, Deputy Chief, Safety Harbor Fire Dept.

Ron Taylor, Fire Chief, East Lake Fire and Rescue

William J. Stout, Fire Chief, Safety Harbor Fire Dept.

This report and workshop was written and facilitated by
William H. Austin, Management Consulting Services,
Inc., Tampa, Florida.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Due to the high caliber of management experience in the Strategic Planning Committee, the group was able to move rapidly through the situation analysis phase of the process. The in-depth knowledge of the County sphere of services, concerns, and politics made this phase an easy task for the committee members.

The committee felt that the present strengths of the association included the following:

- A joint purchasing agreement
- The County communications system
- Common Procedures known and utilized
- A willingness to work together
- Monthly meetings
- Organization of Fire Chiefs
- Geographics
- Closest unit dispatch
- Funding
- Depth of knowledge in association
- Stability of the organization
- Quality of training and equipment
- National participation and knowledge base
- Quality of personnel
- Shared resources

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- A partnership with the County
- Common Fire Prevention Codes
- Common shared role in emergency management
- County wide fire legislation
- EMS system in the fire departments
- Networking availability
- Labor organizations
- Availability of post secondary education
- Participation in the Florida Fire Chiefs legislative process
- The officer development program of the association
- Community Support
- Training facilities
- Shared facilities and resources
- Interagency cooperation and coordination
- Outside technical support on environmental issues
- Regional mutual aid
- Quality of service
- The Coordinator's cooperation with state agencies
- Cooperative vehicle maintenance program
- Current working conditions
- Cooperation on arson investigations
- Mutual problem solving
- Water rescue
- Labor/Management cooperation
- Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
- Quality of facilities, equipment, and personnel
- Utilization of equipment and staffing
- Quality of two-tier system
- Ability to recruit quality personnel
- Other agency cooperation (PD, Red Cross. etc.)
- Response times

The committee dealt next with organizational weaknesses and decided that they included:

- Individual agendas and goals
- Disparity of pay and benefits
- Multiple labor contracts
- Political subdivisions (bunches of them)
- Varied resources from departments
- Lack of commitment to unified procedures
- Varying types of fire department financial and operating resources
- Topography and response barriers
- Severe weather vulnerability
- Extremely hot weather
- Instability of EMS
- Transient Population

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- Traffic conditions
- Near buildout county wide
- Varied code interpretations (impact fees/ad valorem)
- Shrinking funding resources
- Automatic aid agreement
- Areas of poor service delivery
- Disparate treatment related to size
- Disparate policies throughout county
- Lack of joint progressive marketing
- Diversity leading to lack of consensus
- No common applicant processing
- Varied employment requirements
- Lack of coordinated efforts on apparatus purchases and fire station locations
- Lack of fire service plan
- Population density
- Age of population
- Lack of industry based economy
- Aging of departments, resulting in large turnover in near future
- Twenty two different authorities
- Operational differences due to size
- Lacking of funding
- Labor contractual items
- No political pressure
- Staffing and equipment standards (or lack of)
- Lack of training standards
- Resolution of disagreements between departments
- County control of EMS
- County control of Fire
- No organizational authority by Fire Chiefs
- Constant budget hardships
- No plan or mission
- No consensus of agreement on some "big" issues

Evolving out of our strengths and weaknesses came a clearer picture of what the association opportunities could be and the committee decided they included:

- Further sharing of resources
- Researching alternative funding sources
- Consolidation
- Improve common training
- Standardize staffing levels
- Correct disparity in pay and benefits
- Improve location of fire stations and equipment
- Cost control through sharing
- Single tier EMS system
- Improve marketing
- Move toward stronger consensus
- Better utilization of quality personnel

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- Adopt F.A.S.S.
- Develop personnel into voluntary education groups
- Expand our product line
- Fees for services
- Standardize code enforcement
- Standardize equipment
- Improve purchasing procedures
- Standardize labor contracts
- Elimination duplication
- Develop county wide fire plan
- Expand officer development to include chief officers
- Better utilization of reclaimed water
- Research better methods in firefighting
- Improve relationships on regional basis
- Have annual meeting with county commission
- Publish annual report
- Utilize cable television
- Develop a common mission statement
- Fee for fire department EMS services (transport, new services)
- Fees for unique services
- Labor
- Simulation training
- Consolidation of inspection services
- Consolidation of all services
- Cross sharing of resources
- Personnel pools
- Injury prevention
- Stronger codes
- Centralized training
- Impact fees
- County wide tax/capital/consolidated services
- Opportunity to prioritize needs
- Public Education
- Education of Public Officials
- Marketing
- Quality recruiting and centralization
- ISO death and IAFC grading schedule
- Government insurance
- Input to NFPA, IAFC, etc.
- Urban renewal

Next, the committee decided that the main threats facing the Pinellas County Fire Chiefs Association were:

- The single tier EMS system
- Budget constraints
- Job lost
- Privatization
- Consolidation

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- Loss of political power
- Shrinking tax base
- Lack of vision, goals, and purpose
- Political infighting in and out of our organization
- No mission statement
- Unfunded mandates (OSHA, ADA, State, Federal, etc.)
- Individual agendas
- Doing more with less
- Large scale disaster (natural or man-made)
- Increased cultural diversity in fire service
- Unsolicited consultants
- Lack of public support through misunderstanding
- Loss of qualified personnel
- Adverse legislative action
- Lack of world order
- Crime
- Our own apathy
- Threats of safety of personnel
- Annexation
- Withdrawal of commitments by fire service agencies
- Traffic patterns
- Renegade politicians
- Diverse communities
- Lack of water resources
- Build out of the county
- No standardized cost of firer protection
- Funding reduction and slower economy
- Down sizing
- Citizen involvement in management
- Resistance to change
- Political agendas
- Reduction in staffing by attrition
- Non-cohesiveness within our organization
- Static tax base
- Law suit oriented society
- Public safety officer threat
- Language barriers and ethnic differences
- Benefit costs
- Reduction in workweek
- Values and work ethic
- Demographics

Having defined the organizational strengths and weaknesses and analyzed our opportunities and threats, we decided that there were some clearly identifiable critical issues to deal with. All of the issues are identified in Appendix A, with the most serious issues being further described at this point in the report.

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CRITICAL ISSUES

The following critical issues were prioritized for action in 1995-1996.

- Establish a county wide fire/EMS tax
- Standardize service in the county in reference to stations, manpower, etc.
- Expand and strengthen the planning process
- Stabilize the EMS issue and establish a single tier system with fire department control
- Educate the public as to what we do
- Combine fire and EMS agencies by region or consolidate all fire and EMS services in the county
- Consolidate training
- Create and/or expand the association's political influence
- Standardize the hiring process
- Set county wide priorities for the fire service

VISION OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION

The vision of the Pinellas County Fire Chief's Association is to be the pre-eminent influence within the County for providing leadership on issues affecting emergency services.

MISSION OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION

The mission of the association is to develop priorities and funding; and influence education, hiring, and training processes for the delivery of a standardized fire and emergency medical service system to the citizens of Pinellas County.

GOALS

Having determined the critical issues, the committee turned those issues into the following goals:

GOAL #1: Establish a county wide fire/EMS tax.

Objective: Appoint a task force to study current legislation, determine cost and type of proposed tax, and issue report by 1 July 1996.

Who: President of the PCFCA

When: 1 September 1995

Costs: none

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GOAL #2: Standardize station location, apparatus location and staffing, and type of apparatus and equipment.

Objectives: A. Appoint a sub-committee of the association to review current station/apparatus/manning practices and develop a catalog.

B. Determine an acceptable level of response service.

C. Determine where variances exist between the level of service wanted and what the catalog shows is being delivered.

D. Appoint a task force to create a report on how existing and new resources should be allocated to meet the established standard of service.

E. Sell plan to all political entities.

F. Review goals and follow up on objectives

Who: Objective A - President of PCFCA
B - Board of Directors
C - Sub committee
D - President
E - All association members
F - Board of Directors

When and Costs: Objective A 1 July 1995 - \$25.00
B 1 July 1995 - none
C 1 October 1995 - none
D 1 June 1996 - \$100.00
E 1 December 1996 - \$1,500.00
F 1 June 1997 - none

GOAL #3: Expand and strengthen the planning processs.

Objectives: A. Complete the initial strategic plan.
B. Establish fixed date to update the plan.
C. Formal adoption of the plan by PCFCA.
D. Establish fixed date to evaluate results of plan components.
E. Identify partnerships.
F. Distribution and buy-in.

Who: Objective A - Association members
B - Board of Directors

C - Association members

D - Board of Directors

E - Board of Directors

F - Association members

When and costs: Objective A 15 April 1995 - No cost
B 1 May 1996 - No cost
C 1 July 1995 - \$250.00
D 1 January 1996 - No cost
E 1 July 1995 - No cost
F 1 December 1995 - No cost

GOAL #4: Stabilize the EMS issue with single tier service under fire department control.

Objectives: A. Appoint a task force to determine in the fire service is capable of providing EMS treatment and transsport at the same or a better level of service at the same or a lower cost. Report due 1 December 1995.

Who: President of PCFCA

When and costs: 1 August 1995 - No cost to the association, however, separate cities and departments may incur some minor costs.

GOAL #5: Educate the public as to what we do.

Objectives: A. Catalog all the various services offered.
B. Catalog how the services are delivered.
C. Enlist participation by PIO's, firefighters, union, and public education personnel.

Who: Objective A and B - Association members
C - Each individual department

When and Costs: Objective A 1 July 1995 - No costs
B 1 July 1995 - No costs
C 1 July 1996 - \$3,000-\$5,000.00

GOAL #6: Regional or county wide consolidation.

Objectives: A. Appoint a task force to study consolidation regional or county wide. The specific areas to be included in the study are areas or functions that can be readily consolidated without much pain, determine political willingness, and determine benefits of consolidation.
B. Have outside consultants study the validity of

county wide consolidation.

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Who: Objective A - President of PCFCA
B - Association members

When and costs: Objective A 1 August 1995 - No costs
B 1 July 1996 - Consulting fees

GOAL #7: Develop uniform and standardized continuing fire education (CFE) program similiar to C.M.E.

Objectives: A. Standardization of all programs to meet local, state, and national standards.
B. Standardize an annual training program.
C. Conduct an annual review
D. Gain acceptance of training by accreditation agencies.

Who: Refer all objectives to the county training officers group.

When and costs: 1 July 1995 (with report due 1 December 1995) -
No costs to association.

GOAL #8: Create and expand the association's political influence.

Objectives: A. Conduct an annual meeting with county commissioners.
B. Determine what influence we want as the PCFCA.
C. Publish a county wide annual report.
D. Interact with homeowners.
E. Establish a speakers bureau.
F. Conduct a legislative day.
G. Invite politicians into our turf.
H. Seek national exposure.
I. Build partnerships with local and state firefighter organizations.
J. Build relationship with area Chambers of Commerce, Council of Mayors, and City Managers organization.

Who: Objective A-D Association members
E. Board of Directors
F-I Association members
J. Board of Directors

When and Costs: Objective A-B 1 July 1995 - No costs
C 1 June 1995 - \$2,500.00
D Continually - No costs
E 1 October 1995 - \$500.00

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GOAL #9: Develop and create a single applicant screening process for fire and emergency agencies in Pinellas County.

Objectives: A. The PCFCA will continue to support St. Petersburg Community College in the development of this program.
B. SPCC will implement the program.
C. Evaluate the program.

Who: Objective A - Association members
B - St. Petersburg Community College
C - Association members

When and Costs: Objective A - Continually - No costs
B - 1 October 1995 - \$2,000.00
C - 1 October 1996 - No costs

GOAL #10: Set county wide priorities for the fire service.

Objectives: A. Set a meeting to determine priorities.
B. Determine the most feasible priorities.
C. Publish a list and market the decisions.

Who: Objective A - President of PCFCA
B and C - Association members

When and Costs: Objective A - 1 September 1995 - No costs
B - 1 September 1995 - No costs
C - 1 December 1995 - No costs

SUMMARY

The Strategic Planning Committee of the Pinellas County Fire Chief's Association spent two hard charging days in developing this plan. The plan in itself is just a beginning of what the association can be and do in the future. Through this plan the organization has developed a vision and a mission, and through the mission its goals and objectives. The plan must still be modified, adopted, and sold to the many agencies that both belong to the association and impact on its environment.

This document is a huge step forward for the Pinellas County Fire Chief's Association and no doubt the first step in becoming the pre-eminent influence that the organization will soon be.

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APPENDIX A

- Establish a county wide fire/EMS tax (7)
- Standardize service in the county in reference to stations, manpower, etc. (10)
- Expand and strengthen the coalition (2)
- Expand and strengthen the planning process (4)
- Stabilize the EMS issue (8) *
- Educate the public as to what we do (6)
- Regionily combine the fire and EMS agencies (5) *
- Establish a single tier EMS system with fire department control (7) *
- Expand services in prevention and education (2)
- Establish fees for services such as non-taxable property, blue print services, etc. (1)
- Pinellas County Fire Chiefs Association to have authority to operate the fire service (0)
- Consolidate all fire/EMS services in Pinellas County (5) *
- Consolidate training (7)
- Eliminate duplicate administrative services (2)
- Create and/or expand the association's political influence (6)
- Standardize pay and benefits (1)
- Standardize the hiring process (5)
- Unify the coalition on policy issues (0)
- Set county wide priorities for the fire service (4)
- Need to receive education on the team approach to management (0)

* Item was consolidated into another larger issue.

Numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of votes that issue received from committee members as a critical issue.