



2015

# 5 Year Strategic Plan



Revised September 24, 2015

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## MISSION STATEMENT

**The Mission of the Arivaca Fire District is to respond to the needs of the community relative to fire, rescue, prevention, and emergency medical services.**

Revised November 15, 2012

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is the intent of this document to provide a framework for the Arivaca Fire District (AFD) to operate when making decisions as to the development and operations of the District's business. The plan includes the history of the AFD to ensure we know where we have come from before deciding where we should be going.

The members of the board and the management of the AFD should use this document as a roadmap when making decisions regarding purchases and programs to ensure we maintain the direction that has the best interests of the stakeholders of the AFD at the forefront at all times. The stakeholders consist of; the taxpayers, residents, members, and visitors of the AFD.

The mission of the AFD is to respond to the needs of the community relative to fire, rescue, prevention, and emergency medical services.

The 5 year goals of the District are as follows:

- 1) Control the tax rate for residents of the Fire District while continuing to deliver consistent, high quality services in a cost effective manner, within the approved Budget.
- 2) Provide ALS transport response 24 hours per day, 7 days per week within the requirements of our CON, within the approved budget.
- 3) Provide additional services to District residents and visitors to provide more value for their taxes, within the approved budget.
- 4) Maintain a capital improvement plan to replace vehicles, equipment, and improve facilities, per NFPA standards, within the approved budget.
- 5) Retain and recruit personnel that are qualified and certified to meet the needs of the District, within the approved budget.

The AFD should pursue these goals as the primary objective in meeting the stakeholder's needs, in consideration of the historical record of the department and the promises made in the initial impact statement when forming the District. These goals can be accomplished through careful fiscal management and seeking non-tax based alternative funding sources while increasing services and retaining current personnel.

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to update it according to the progress made at that time.

## Strategic Plan

As a District the AFD has secured a reliable income to support operations to meet the needs of the AFD stakeholders. The group of stakeholders of the AFD consist of the following individuals; Tax payers, Arivaca residents, AFD members, and Arivaca visitors. Each group has different but similar needs from the AFD that need to be met within the budgetary restraints of the available income.

Since becoming a district, which currently has a tax rate of \$2.50/\$100 of assessed value, there has been substantial change in the way service is provided to the community. Progress toward the goals in the original AFD formation impact statement has been extensive with the majority of those goals being met ahead of schedule.

Previously personnel were paid \$20/call but now response is provided by personnel being paid minimum wage per hour, still making it difficult to attract and retain qualified, trained personnel. So, the citizens have seen a substantial decrease in response times as well as several additional services although we continue to struggle with the retention of qualified/certified personnel. These services include, ALS transport service, Fire Inspections as requested, and 24 hour staffing of the station.

It is our intent to review the services of the AFD for compliance with national consensus standards and to recommend specific improvements where deficiencies are identified. We believe the AFD can provide compliant, competent, and professional service to the stakeholders, thereby giving them substantial personal benefits for their tax payment which were not provided by the volunteer fire department and in line with the intent of the AFD formation impact statement.

## Service Request Response Time Discussion

The national consensus standard for service requests of an emergent nature is 14 minutes for a rural area such as that of the AFD, per NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments, p. 1720-7, table 4.3.2.

Prior to forming a District the department's average response time was 23.75 minutes, which is a deficit of 9.75 minutes from the national standard. Only 25% of the emergent responses were compliant with the national standard in 2008, the last year as a volunteer department. The number of responses was increasing at an average rate of 40 service requests per year, with an average of 140 per year.

The AFD has improved response times since the formation of the District as identified in Appendix D. The current AFD average response time is 15.17 minutes from dispatch to on scene which is an improvement of 2.76 minutes over last reported date of 17.93. Currently AFD has had a 13% decrease in call volume each year since 2012. In 2012

there were 213 calls; in 2013 there were 200 calls and in 2014 there were 175 calls.

### **Apparatus and Equipment Discussion**

The national consensus standards for the replacement of equipment and apparatus are;

- 1) **NFPA 1901: Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus**
- 2) **NFPA 1851: Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance, of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting**
- 3) **NFPA 1852: Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance, of Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)**
- 4) **NFPA 1962: Standard for the Inspection, Care, and Use of Fire Hose, Couplings, and Nozzles, and the Service Testing of Fire Hose**

The recognized standard for replacement/refurbishment of fire apparatus is 15 years old, "Because the changes, upgrades, and fine tuning to NFPA 1901 . . . have been truly significant, especially in the area of safety, fire departments should seriously consider the value (or risk) to fire fighters of keeping fire apparatus older than 15 years in first-line service.", per NFPA 1901, page 1901-176, D.1. There is no specific recommendation or standard for the replacement of ambulances. According to Managing Public Equipment (by H Green and R Knorr, copyright 1989 by American Public Works Association), the optimal economic life of a vehicle can be determined by using "Life Cycle Costing". Based on a study of the city of Alberta, Canada it was determined to be 5 years for light vehicles; taking into account depreciation, operations and maintenance costs, downtime, use rates, obsolescence, operator training costs, parts inventory, and the value of money. The recommendation of this plan is based on the average expected mileage versus the rising repair and maintenance costs for the ambulances and utility vehicles. Currently the average age of the District's fire apparatus is 16.5 years old with the oldest apparatus being 27 years old, see Appendix E. This is 1.5 years older than the recommended replacement age for fire apparatus. It is the recommendation of this plan to replace the fire apparatus when they reach the age of 30 years for large apparatus, 25 years for light duty apparatus, 15 years for ambulances, and 10 years for utility vehicles, twice the NFPA recommendation, based on the light use of the AFD apparatus. The AFD can budget for these vehicles through regular annual contributions to the Capital Fund. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will reduce large fluctuations in the year to year financial needs required to fund these expensive replacements.

The recognized standard for the replacement of structural firefighting PPE is 10 years from the date of manufacture per NFPA 1851, page 1851-22, 10.1.2. In 2011 the AFD purchased 12 sets of structural PPE through a 2011 UASI Rural Fire Grant. These were placed into service to accommodate 100% of the current membership. It is the recommendation of this plan to purchase another 6 sets of structural firefighting PPE in the FY 2013-2014 year. The balance of the PPE owned by the AFD is in excess of 20 years old and as such is unserviceable. It is imperative to outfit all certified firefighting personnel with NFPA 1851 compliant PPE. The AFD should continue to seek grant opportunities to procure the additional PPE.

The recognized standard for the upgrade or replacement of SCBA is 15 years per NFPA 1852, page 1852-9, 4.4. Currently the SCBA in use by the AFD were manufactured compliant with the 2002 standard and as such need to be replaced by 2017. The CIP shall plan for the replacement of the SCBA accordingly, see Appendix E. The recognized standard for the replacement of composite SCBA cylinders is 15 years per NFPA 1852, page 1852-25, C3. Currently the composite SCBA cylinders in use by the AFD were manufactured in 1999 and as such require replacement by 2014. The CIP shall plan for the replacement of SCBA cylinders accordingly, see Appendix E. The AFD shall actively seek grant opportunities for the replacement of these critical items to ensure the safety of its personnel.

The recognized standard for the replacement of fire hose is 10 years per NFPA 1962, page 1962-8, 4.12. Through a grant the AFD was able to procure new structural fire hose when the replacement engine was purchased. Currently the fire hose in use by the AFD has an average manufacture date of June 2012 with an age of 1 year old. The CIP shall plan for the replacement of the fire hose accordingly, see Appendix E.

From a risk management perspective it is imperative to replace the apparatus and equipment per the CIP in compliance with industry standards. The failure to do so could result in compromising the safety of our personnel and their inability to complete their mission to mitigate emergent service requests for the safety of the AFD residents and visitors. The liability that could arise from the failure of the AFD to properly equip their personnel and their inability to meet mission requirements could be astronomical due to insurance claims, lawsuits, and fines. It is the responsibility of the AFD to meet Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH) requirements, which are applicable to public employees, to ensure the safety of its employees and volunteers as administered by the Industrial Commission of Arizona (ICA). The proper replacement and maintenance of the equipment and apparatus is paramount to this mandate. As such, the CIP shall be reviewed and updated annually to ensure proper planning for the major costs associated with the replacement of the apparatus and equipment.

### **Retention and Recruitment Discussion**

Currently, the AFD has 25 personnel who respond to service requests in accordance with the AFD formation impact statement which specified that the number of personnel would be in the teens. The breakdown of certification for the current personnel is as follows: 56% are EMT-B (14), 24% are EMT-P (6), 52% are Structural Firefighter I/II (13), and 88% are NWCG FFT1 or FFT2 (22).

When the current personnel (12) are able to complete additional training then 100% of the personnel will be triple certified for EMS/Structural Firefighter/Wildland above the goal in the AFD formation impact statement.

Due to the limited availability of personnel locally (5) the majority (80% or 20) of the personnel reside outside of Arivaca. This necessitates an average commute of 124 miles roundtrip for them to fulfill their obligation of covering shifts to respond to service requests. The average cost of fuel for the personnel to report for a shift is \$28.84 each, not including trips for training and recertification. The average shift for each employee is 24 hours at a time, during which they are currently paid \$8.07 per hour, slightly above minimum wage, with 8 hours deducted

for sleep time. This has been implemented since receiving the CON and as such we have not fully been able to see the effect on our retention of personnel. The District needs to review the possibility of providing transportation from Tucson and provision of benefits to personnel to further enhance retention.

Currently our volunteers are covered by worker's compensation for any injuries that occur while on duty as a volunteer. There are no other incentives to our volunteers beyond their stipend and training.

**GOAL1: Control the tax rate for residents of the Fire District while continuing to deliver consistent, high quality services in a cost effective manner, within the approved Budget.**

**AFD Formation Impact Statement Correlation** – Page 3, paragraph D9, D10;  
Page 9, paragraph A1, A4  
Page 10, paragraph B1, B2

- A. Effectively track and manage income and expenses.
  - 1. Maintain financial records in accordance with ARS 48:
  - 2. Maintain adequate accounts to properly track income/expenses.
  - 3. Maintain an inventory of all property owned by the AFD.
    - Properly dispose of property no longer required by the AFD.
  - 4. Review purchases against the strategic plan prior to purchase approval.
  - 5. Invoice wildland services within 30 days of returning from a deployment.
  - 6. Whenever possible keep funds in interest bearing accounts.
  - 7. Use carryover funds to contribute to Capital Fund to reduce annual need.
  - 8. Initiate electronic payment system for all billing
  
- B. Decrease costs
  - 1. Provide certification training in house.
  - 2. Provide EMS re-certification training in house.
  - 3. Acquire newer multi-purpose response vehicles.
  
- C. Increase income
  - 1. Aggressively pursue grant funding opportunities. -
    - a. Federal grants (AFG, FP&S, SAFER, USRDA)
    - b. State grants (VFA, GoHS, UASI)
    - c. Private grants (SAEMS, Walmart, 100 Club)
  - 2. Provide subscriptions for services outside of the District.
  - 3. Provide memberships for non-taxpayers for EMS response.
  - 4. Build an active wildland response capability.
    - a. Respond to all AZ state land requests if budget allows
    - b. Seek out other contracting opportunities to support
      - Fuels crew subcontract opportunities
      - Wildfire response for hand crew
      - Prescribed burn contract opportunities
  - 5. Provide training classes, for a fee.
    - a. Conduct an annual fire academy for a fee.
    - b. Conduct an annual EMT class for a fee.
  - 6. Hire Consultants as necessary for special projects

**GOAL 2: Provide ALS transport response 24 hours per day, 7 days per week within the requirements of our CON, within the approved budget.**

**AFD Formation Impact Statement Correlation** – Page 3, paragraph D5, D6, D11, D12  
Page 9, paragraph A3

Maintain ALS transport service.

- A. Continue needs assessment.
- B. Maintain CON requirements.
- C. Maintain adequate paid staffing to meet CON requirements.

**GOAL 3: Provide additional services to District residents and visitors to provide more value for their taxes, within the approved budget.**

**AFD Formation Impact Statement Correlation** – Page 3, paragraphs D1, D3, D4, D6, D7, D11, D12, D13  
Page 9, paragraph A3

- A. Continue to provide ALS response.
- B. Continue wildland fuel reduction program as budget allows
- C. Expand lifeguard program at Sopori school – June/July as budget allows
  - a. Implement water safety program.
  - b. Implement swimming lessons.
- D. Continue to provide fire safety inspections.
- E. Provide a meeting place for community events
- F. Provide a Mobile Integrated Health Program.

**GOAL 4: Maintain a capital improvement plan to replace vehicles, equipment, and improve facilities, per NFPA standards, within the approved budget.**

**AFD Formation Impact Statement Correlation** – Page 3, paragraph D10  
Page 10, paragraph B4, B5

- A. Continue the apparatus replacement plan meeting the NFPA standard..
  - See Appendix E
- B. Continue the equipment replacement plan that meets the NFPA standard
- C. Continue the plan for the improvement of facilities to meet the District’s needs.

**GOAL 5: Retain and recruit personnel that are qualified and certified to meet the needs of the District, within the approved budget.**

**AFD Formation Impact Statement Correlation** - Page 3, paragraphs D5, D6, D11, D13  
Page 9, paragraph A2  
Page 10, paragraph B2, B3

- A. Maintain a proficiency training program that meets the NFPA and OSHA standards.
  - 1. Conduct monthly training sessions
  
- B. Expand benefits to members to retain personnel.
  - 1. Provide increased benefits
    - i. Explore health insurance options.
  
  - 2. Continue to work with SAFFA.
  
- C. Recruit from Arivaca by providing training opportunities locally.
  - 1. Conduct annual Structural Fire Academy
  - 2. Conduct annual EMT and EMR class
  - 3. Conduct annual wildland firefighter class
  - 4. Conduct annual refresher courses
  
- D. Recruit qualified personnel for Explorer Program as allowed

## Summary

Through aggressive pursuit of the identified goals the AFD can meet its mission to provide the residents and visitors of our District with high quality fire, rescue, prevention, and emergency medical services.

**The most valuable asset of the District is its personnel** due to their being irreplaceable and the investment of time and funds in developing them to be qualified and certified to perform the required mission. Therefore the proper training and equipping of our personnel to safely perform their mission is a mandate that can only be met through careful planning and continual review of the strategic plan.

It is the intent of the Board, management, and members of the District to safely provide the highest quality of service with consultation of the taxpayers within a cost effective manner while meeting or exceeding national standards.

## REVISIONS

September 24, 2015:

1) Revised Goal #1 sub-point

-Add 'as budget allows' to heading

-Deleted billing as this is already being done

-Added: Hire consultants as necessary for special projects

2) Revised Goal #2 sub-point

-Add 'as budget allows' to heading

-Deleted 'Expand CON service area to match response area

3) Revised Goal 3# sub-point

-Add 'as budget allows' to heading

4) Revised Goal #4 sub- point

-No changes

5) Revised Goal #5 sub-point

-Add 'as budget allows' to heading

-Add to Item C-

-2. Conduct annual EMT and EMR classes

-4. Conduct annual refresher courses

-Add Item D 'Recruit qualified personal for explorer program as allowed'

December 15, 2013:

1) Revised Goal #1 sub-points

- Added sub-point 'Maintain Financial Records in accordance with ARS 48

- Deleted sub-point, 'Explore the legality of a possible tax rebate at the end of the year.

- Modified sub-point C2(b) from 'Acquire' to 'Maintain CON requirements'

- Modified sub-point C5(b) by adding

- Fuels crew subcontract opportunities

- Wildfire response for handcrew

- Prescribed burn contract opportunities

2) Reworded Goal #2 from NFPA requirements to CON requirements

3) Revised Goal #2 sub-points

- Changed 'Provide' to 'Maintain' ALS transport service

- Changed 'Acquire CON' to 'Maintain CON requirements'

- Changed hiring personnel to 'Maintain adequate paid staffing to meet CON requirements.'

- Added 'Expand CON service area to match response area'

4) Revised Goal #3 sub-points

- Changed wording in B from 'Implement' to 'Continue'

- Changed wording in C from 'Continue' to 'Expand'

- Added sub-point 'Implement water safety program'

- Added sub-point 'Implement swimming lessons'

- Added F 'Provide a Mobile Integrated Health Program'

5) Revised Goal #4 sub-points wording from 'Create' to 'Continue'

November 15, 2012: 1) Revised Mission Statement

2) Changed wording of goal #5 from 'needs' to 'goals'.

- 3) Deleted sub-points under maintain adequate accounts, Goal #1.
- 4) Added two sub-points, Goal #1, sub-point 'Effectively track and manage income and expenses.'
  - Initiate electronic payment system
  - Explore legality of a possible tax rebate at end of tax year.
- 5) Changed sub-point wording under decrease costs
  - Acquire newer multi-purpose vehicles.
- 6) Added three sub-points under Goal #1, sub-point 'Increase income.'
  - Provide subscriptions for services outside the District
  - Provide memberships for non-taxpayers for EMS response
    - Provide incremental billing
- 7) Deleted 'Provide ALS level response.' under Goal #2 as it is complete.
- 8) Deleted 'Contract EMS billing company...' under Goal #2 as it is being done in house.
- 9) Changed implementation date for hiring of EMT/FFs to 90 days after issuance of CON.
- 10) Added sub-point under Goal #3
  - Continue lifeguard program at Sopori School
- 11) Changed implementation date for providing a meeting place for the community, under Goal #3 to December 31, 2013.
- 12) Deleted 'Provide better sleeping accommodations' under Goal #5 as it is complete.