

Rogers Fire Department

Strategic Plan

2010-2015

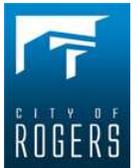


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Executive Summary

On the behalf of the Rogers Fire Department, We are excited to present our Strategic Plan. This plan is more than a blueprint for coordination and cooperation within the fire department. It represents the finest ideas and projects that the fire department has to offer. Painstaking effort has occurred by the numerous members who volunteered their time to develop our mission, values, and ultimately our goals. This Strategic Plan is intended to be used as a guide for the Department, as we attempt to meet the challenges that will present themselves in the future.

The idea behind the document was born in May 2009, at the Department's strategic planning retreat, which was held at the Candlewood Suites in Rogers. There, representatives from the various functions, shifts, and ranks of the department came together to announce a common vision and mission. Throughout the summer of 2009, goals and planning occurred to help establish a realistic and viable list of objectives, which are contained within this document.

As a result of our efforts, we have identified the following Strategic Priorities:

- 1. Care for, train, and ensure the safety of our employees**
- 2. Develop our organization to lead the fire service**
- 3. Deploy and manage our resources effectively**
- 4. Reach out to our community**

Over the course of the next half decade, our Fire Department will strive to successfully accomplish the items listed in this report. In the end, our efforts to address issues will only makes us stronger, more unified, and better prepared to respond to the needs of our community.

In closing, we appreciate the support of our City Council, our Mayor, and other elected officials who give us the resources to protect the great city of Rogers.

Rogers Fire Department

Department Slogan

“Courage to fight, compassion to service”

Vision Statement

It is the vision of the Rogers Fire Department to be an established authority, nationally recognized in every risk-related discipline.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Rogers Fire Department to provide exceptional risk-related services to our customers.

Statement of Values

- 1. Our employees are our most valuable resource.***
- 2. Relationships with internal and external agencies are integral to our success.***
- 3. Reducing risk to all of our customers and employees is paramount.***
- 4. We embrace character, integrity, and ethical behavior.***

Mission Statements by Section

Command Staff Mission Statement

The mission of Command Staff is to provide leadership and vision for the Department that embodies the goals and desires of the City Council, Mayor, and the expectations of the community. We encourage the success of our members and lead the department through effective budgeting, project management, training, equipment acquisition, and citywide command and control.

Field Operations Mission Statement

The mission of the Field Operations Section is to maintain a constant state of readiness and respond to all requests for service in a trained, professional, and consistent manner.

Fire Prevention Mission Statement

The mission of the Fire Prevention Section is to provide our customers with a greater quality of life through effective fire prevention education, quality inspections, conducting detailed investigations, and implementing interactive community outreach programs. We rely on our trained and experienced personnel to reduce the loss of life and property from fire hazards.

Emergency Medical Services Mission Statement

The mission of the Emergency Medical Services Section is to respond to ill and injured patients in a quick and professional manner, embrace the latest life-saving technologies and systems, and monitor continued performance and improvement.

The Plan

Introduction

This document outlines the Rogers Fire Department's Strategic Plan for 2010 to 2015. This document's sole purpose is to help guide the decision-making ability of the department's leaders into the next half decade.

The idea of creating a Strategic Plan was facilitated in May of 2009 under the guidance of a Command Staff that included:

Tom Jenkins, Fire Chief
Allan Skogen, Deputy Chief
Travis Hollis, Fire Marshal
Eddie Thompson, Battalion Chief "A" Platoon
Bryan Hinds, Battalion Chief "B" Platoon
David Whitlow, Battalion Chief "C" Platoon

The Strategic Planning event involved the selection of key leaders within the organization who represented either their rank or shift, or provided extra involvement into specific functions within the fire department. Deputy Fire Chief Greg Neely of the Broken Arrow (Oklahoma) Fire Department was hired to facilitate the Strategic Planning session and guide the participation of the members, listed below:

Eddie Thompson (BC, A)
Josh Terrell (CP, 3A)
Shawn Rogers (FF, 1A)
Tommy Thompson (CP, 4B)
David Storm (FF, 1B)
Nick Mason (FF, 1B)
Clint Bowen (CP, 6C)
Doug Earp (CP, 7C)
Jeremy Hoyer (CP, 7A)
Allan Skogen (DCA)

Scot Mason (CP, 1A)
Jeff Parks, (FF, 3A)
Bryan Hinds (BC, B)
Matt Kriehn (CP, 1B)
Jeremy Criner (CP, 7B)
David Whitlow (BC, C)
Shawn Treat (CP, 5C)
Cleve Clark (FF, 4C)
Dusty Qualls (FF, 4C)
Travis Hollis (FM)

Matt Miller (CP, 6A)
John Richert (FF, 1A)
Jack Wassman (CP, 6B)
Dusty Meredith (CP, 2B)
Brandon Howard (FF, 3B)
Cliff Thompson (CP, 4C)
Rob Taylor (CP, 3C)
Aaron Thomas (FF, 3C)
Tom Jenkins (FC)
William Rumsey (AFM)

Background

On May 09, 2009, some 30 dedicated RFD members assembled together for the expressed purpose of determining how to best maximize the effectiveness of their organization both now and into the future. After a welcome and well-warranted challenge and exhortation from both Mayor Steve Womack and Fire Chief Tom Jenkins, the group was introduced to a lesson in team-building and creating a new culture for their organization. After discussing the concepts of a Theory X versus a Theory Y culture, the collective consensus saw the merit in having a workforce that was both well trained, and mature in order that employees could enjoy the freedom and autonomy to be innovative and creative contained within the Theory Y environment. The group saw the value of the Theory X style of management when relegated to emergency situations and when subordinates fail to comply; not because of their skill but because of their will. The group embraced the idea that they (employees) can have input in helping to shape a new culture, one that strives for excellence, holds its members accountable, delivers a superior product, while never resting on its past successes. Some talking points that members came away with to help reinforce lessons learned included:

- The importance of being a thermostat not a thermometer
- Remain teachable and willing to increase knowledge and service levels
- When faced with adversity, say and do what is noble (despite ones' feelings)
- Everybody wins when we all come to work with our "Y" card on our sleeve
- Being minimal is not acceptable, do something "extra" ordinary
- Create positive peer pressure to foster and nurture excellence in the work place
- Don't be "That Guy" who tears down people and or the agency
- There is freedom in submitting to authority
- Stack the woodpile taller than you found it
- Work for the name on the side of the truck, not the one on the front of your shirt
- Be Safe!
- Be Nice!

S.W.O.T. Exercise

The next portion the session evolved around articulating the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats be they actual or perceived, both within the fire department and the City of Rogers as a whole. In these exercises there will always be some duplications or use of synonyms. These are brain-storming sessions so it is important to capture what is being said, not debate whether or not something has already been addressed. This promotes participation and creates an environment where any member can sound off without fear of reprisal. For this reason this report will list all items solicited from the members in the activity, which included:

Strengths

- **Support from local businesses**
- **Support from community organizations and their leadership**
- **Positive rapport with surrounding communities**
- **Mutual aid**
- **Strong candidate pool for job applicants**
- **Partnerships with other city departments**
- **Higher Education (community college with fire and EMS courses)**
- **Local Economy**
- **Current Revenue**
- **Reputation**
- **School System**
- **Voter Support**
- **Council Leadership**
- **Mayoral Leadership**
- **Young Fire Department (Youthful membership occurring naturally thru attrition)**

The overall strengths served to remind the members that they had much to be grateful for and their department and city had a lot going for it. They were ahead of the curve in many respects. This was a rather cathartic portion of the exercise and an important one because it is a natural reaction to focus on what might be wrong. However, it is imperative for an organization to also reflect and consider all the things that are right and going well. Counting one's blessing so to speak.

Weaknesses

- **Officer Development**
- **Standard Operating Procedures**
- **Pre-Fire Planning**
- **Training**
- **Keeping up with City Growth**
- **Cultural Diversity**
- **"D" Shift "That Guy" mentality**

- **Public Education**
- **Previous lack of leadership continuity**
- **Staffing shortages**
- **Lack of reciprocity with public (need to more openly give back to the community)**
- **Equipment**
- **Communications (all encompassing)**
- **Young Fire Department (loss of experience through attrition)**
- **The current "Minimum" Culture**
- **Demands placed on all services due to rapid growth**

The group very methodically discerned and discussed those areas that need shoring up. Once the problem or weaknesses was articulated, there was an almost collective sigh of relief having identified it. The group now realized that collectively each weakness could be addressed and rectified in short and long term planning resolutions.

Opportunities

- **Giving back to public who supports us**
- **Growing Department**
- **Growing City**
- **Growing Population**
- **Personal Growth**
- **Current Leadership Continuity**
- **Increase services for ARFF, HazMat, Tech Rescue, Administrative Services**
- **Pay Schedule (Incentives)**
- **New Equipment**
- **Recruitment**
- **Better training and development for recruits and job at large**
- **Become a Destination Fire Department**

This portion of the exercise required the members to stretch their imaginations a bit and would later assist them in writing their new vision statement. What impressed this facilitator most was the member's willingness to do more, by threatening the status quo, and business as usual.

Threats

- **Complacency**
- **Economic downturns**
- **"D" shift "That Guy" mentality**
- **Loss of voter support**
- **Poor customer service**

- **Diversity**
- **Changes in leadership equating to loss of support (Council, community etc.)**
- **Future bond elections due to a poor economy**
- **Retirements (loss of experience)**

The group readily identified those items that they could control and those items that they could not. However, they also realized the importance of listing all actual, perceived or possible threats in order to lessen their effects through a more defined goal setting session, which would come next.

Goal Setting

While observing the results of the S.W.O.T. exercise pasted on the walls before them, the group began chipping away at their weaknesses and threats, creating opportunities and honing their strengths by establishing a set of goals and objectives to address each item that they previously identified. The group collectively established nine goals as follows: (in no particular order).

- **Establish an Officer Development Program**
- **Focus on overhauling Standard Operating Procedures.**
- **Re-organization of the Training Division**
- **Establish Recruitment Officer and ensuing responsibilities**
- **Establish a program to get entire membership to “buy in” into the New Culture**
- **Provide a resource allocation study for determining staffing, equipment levels and fire station locations.**
- **Program for continuous engagement of Fire Department with the public to satisfy the lack of current reciprocity and promote community risk management**
- **Establish Pre-Fire Planning Program**
- **Establish a Succession Planning program**

Members were each given six adhesive dots to place on those items they believed to be of highest priority. The results of the prioritization were as follows:

- 1. Establish an Officer Development Program 28**
- 2. Re-organization of the Training Division 27**
- 3. Establish a program to get entire membership to “buy in” into the New Culture 23**
- 4. Provide a Resource Allocation Study for determining staffing, equipment levels and fire station locations 23**
- 5. Establish Pre-Fire Planning Program 20**
- 6. Focus on overhauling Standard Operating Procedures 20**
- 7. Establish Recruitment Officer and ensuing responsibilities 17**
- 8. Program for continuous engagement of Fire Department with the public to satisfy the lack of current reciprocity and promote community risk management 10**
- 9. Establish a Succession Planning Program 3**

Vision, Mission & Values

The final and capstone exercise of the day centered on the discussion of the Rogers Fire Department's Values, revisiting the current Mission Statement and creating a Vision Statement. Members of the organization knew of the current Mission Statement, but were noticeably detached from it. The group also agreed the current Mission Statement was too wordy and it was not etched in the hearts and minds of the end-users. There was considerable discussion on making the distinctions between a Mission and a Vision Statement. The Mission statement essentially conveys what the department does in a very concise manner, while the Vision Statement conveys what the department hopes to become. The decision was made on this historic day to create and establish a new Mission Statement, a set of RFD Values, and Vision Statement.

Conclusion

From the start the group bought into the idea that they could help facilitate change within the department and help mold it into something very special and successful. They then had to determine what does success look like? What do we want our Department to look like? They tackled that problem through the S.W.O.T exercise, establishing goals and objectives, the establishment of both Vision and Mission Statements as well as Department Values. The next logical step will be to establish a Management Plan that will measure results with established timelines. The goals establish at the session are very attainable. However, if there is no mechanism put into place that will ensure completion and accountability, the goals are no more valuable than a set of well-defined dreams. The group is to be commended for taking time from other priorities and dedicating a full day to establishing the framework for what will be the next steps in the process. On a personal note it was a pleasure playing a small part in what promises to be some very exciting changes for this organization. Questions or concerns regarding information within this document can be directed to Chief Tom Jenkins, or any other member of the department's Command Staff.

Strategic Priorities and Action Items

Priority 1: Care for, train, and ensure the safety of our employees

1. **Action Item: Refine company training**
 - a. Develop a comprehensive annual training calendar (4TH quarter 2009)
 - b. Establish a monthly review of training and scheduling (3rd quarter 2009)
 - c. Empower company officers to conduct mandatory company training and skill assessments (1st quarter 2010)
 - d. Refine our system of record keeping for training (3rd quarter 2009)
2. **Action Item: Increase technical services (hazardous materials and technical rescue) education**
 - a. Establish minimum technical services standards for all personnel (1st quarter 2011)
 - b. Provide regular educational opportunities for special operations personnel both inside and outside of the fire department (1st quarter 2010)
 - c. Increase the number of special operations positions and the stipend for such training (4th quarter 2010)
3. **Action Item: Attend training and educational opportunities outside of the Northwest Arkansas area**
 - a. Advertise the National Fire Academy and Emergency Management Institute schedule using department email (3rd quarter 2009)
 - b. Utilize IAFC and FDIC conventions to educate firefighters (2nd quarter 2010)
4. **Action Item: Refine promotional track approach**
 - a. Establish a future company officers and future chief officers curriculum to prepare up and coming members (3rd quarter 2010)
 - b. Continuously develop promotional requirements to “raise the bar” for officers (ongoing)
 - c. Develop the assessment center process to include real-world skills and scenarios (3rd quarter 2010)
5. **Action Item: Pursue succession planning and officer development**
 - a. Through future company officers coursework, prepare future leaders of the department (3rd quarter 2009)
 - b. Develop leadership through regular and systematic training and meetings (1st quarter 2009)
 - c. Require that other staff officers develop and mentor leaders in their command (ongoing)

- d. **Aggressively anticipate vacancies and attempt to maintain a current list for Firefighter and Company Officer positions (ongoing)**
- e. **Where possible, select replacements in advance of vacancies to allow for mentoring (ongoing)**
- 6. **Action Item: Develop a training plan**
 - a. **Through the training committee regularly review training needs and deficiencies (1st quarter 2009)**
 - b. **Include a wide spectrum of topics including: emergency medicine, fire suppression, incident command, hazardous materials, technical rescue, and officer development (3rd quarter 2009)**
 - c. **Bring at least 80% of the membership to Haz-Mat Technician Certification (1st quarter 2011)**
- 7. **Action Item: Provide regular department updates**
 - a. **Produce a quarterly department newsletter (2nd quarter 2010)**
 - b. **Meet with command staff weekly (ongoing)**
 - c. **Meet with company officers monthly (1st quarter 2009)**
 - d. **Meet with the entire membership quarterly (1st quarter 2009)**
 - e. **Provide a state of the department address at the annual banquet (1st quarter 2009)**
 - f. **Ensure that employees check email each working day (ongoing)**
 - g. **Publish agendas in advance for all formal meetings (ongoing)**
 - h. **Ensure that those in the Chain of Command are given appropriate, timely, and complete information relevant to their duties (ongoing)**
- 8. **Action Item: Establish a dynamic process to review policies**
 - a. **Review selected policies and implement updates quarterly (1st quarter 2010)**
 - b. **Encourage informal mandates to be written and officially adopted (ongoing)**
 - c. **Ensure all policies are reviewed by command staff and stakeholders (ongoing)**
- 9. **Action Item: Update training facilities**
 - a. **Provide an on-site burn building (1st quarter 2013)**
 - b. **Increase the number of props available for training evolutions (3rd quarter 2009)**
 - c. **Work with allied beneficiary agencies to improve training props (Benton County, Rural Firefighters Association, etc)(2nd quarter 2011)**
- 10. **Action Item: Manage traffic safety issues**
 - a. **Ensure all personal are issued ANSI compliant traffic safety vests and use them on roadway emergencies (4th quarter 2009)**
 - b. **Provide traffic control devices on newly purchased response apparatus (ongoing)**

- c. Update apparatus warning devices, when appropriate, to LED technology (ongoing)
- 11. Action Item: Improve emergency communications**
- a. Ensure all emergency communications devices are tested weekly (1st quarter 2011)
 - b. Provide additional batteries for adequate back-up supply (4th quarter 2009)
 - c. Review 12% of all emergency medical E911 calls for National Academy of Emergency Dispatch Accreditation (1st quarter 2013)
 - d. Review all fireground communications for clarity and purpose (ongoing)
 - e. Provide a new fire station alerting system that can serve as an alternate alerting system in case of radio system outage (4th quarter 2010)
 - f. Increase reliability of Mobile Data Computers and reduce non-emergent radio traffic using their status changing capability (2nd quarter 2012)
- 12. Action Item: Establish a healthy workforce**
- a. Establish a wellness physical evaluation program to access personal health of firefighters (1st quarter 2010)
 - b. Provide workout equipment that is safe, modern, and easily accessible (3rd quarter 2011)
 - c. Educate firefighters on healthy eating habits and other life skills (ongoing)

Priority 2: Develop our organization to lead the fire service

- 1. Action Item: Maintain awareness of issues that affect the city**
 - a. Provide command staff attendance at all City Council and Planning Commission meetings (ongoing)**
 - b. Participate voluntarily in the special functions of the city: LPGA, FLW, etc (ongoing)**
 - c. Communicate in a formal and informal manner with other city department heads, especially the police department (ongoing)**
 - d. Track and share information regarding budgetary status, monthly sales tax reports, and alternative funding streams (ongoing)**
 - e. Distribute information on fire department activities to the City Council, monthly (4th quarter 2009)**
- 2. Action Item: Pursue accreditation**
 - a. Actively pursue accreditation with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (4th quarter 2009)**
 - b. Actively pursue accreditation with Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) (4th quarter 2011)**
- 3. Action Item: Pursue an improved ISO rating of one**
 - a. Review ISO audit as part of the budget preparation process (1st quarter 2010)**
 - b. Prepare documentation and other fire department requirements for a 2012 audit (1st quarter 2012)**
- 4. Action Item: Maintain leadership in the region, state, and nation regarding fire service issues**
 - a. Actively participate in FDIC and IAFC conferences (1st quarter 2010)**
 - b. Pursue Chief Fire Officer Designation for Chief Officers (1st quarter 2010)**
 - c. Participate in IFSTA validation committees and other emergency response organizations (4th quarter 2009)**
- 5. Action Item: Participate in training delivery at a national level**
 - a. Send firefighters to regional and resident National Fire Academy courses (4th quarter 2009)**
 - b. Utilize Homeland Security funding for participation in hazardous materials and terrorism-related courses (1st quarter 2010)**
 - c. Support opportunities for RFD members to teach in a national venue (ongoing)**

Priority 3: Deploy and manage our resources effectively

- 1. Action Item: Review and control costs of our services**
 - a. Review costs monthly and determine budgetary needs prior to a crisis (3rd quarter 2009)
 - b. Solicit input on ways to improve our service to the public, while reducing cost (1st quarter 2011)
 - c. Review equipment contracts and seek opportunities to work regionally with equipment purchasing (1st quarter 2010)
 - d. Review workers compensation claims monthly to include information on the type and causes of injury (3rd quarter 2009)
 - e. Ensure the use of proper purchasing practices (ongoing)
- 2. Action Item: Find innovation ways to increase funding**
 - a. Develop a standing alternative funding strategy to prepare for economically difficult times (1st quarter 2010)
 - b. Collaborate with other departments on ways to seek funding (ongoing)
 - c. Review the current false alarm ordinance and billing system (4th quarter 2009)
 - d. Analyze the need for an ambulance subscription program for county and city residents (1st quarter 2010)
- 3. Action Item: Complete a standard of coverage assessment**
 - a. As part of the accreditation process, complete a standards of coverage assessment (3rd quarter 2009)
 - b. Review E911 information to determine call processing and call dispatch times (4th quarter 2009)
 - c. Actively participate in city growth planning and anticipate fire protection / emergency medical needs prior to development (ongoing)
 - d. Maintain an updated resource allocation assessment for additional fire stations or the relocation of current facilities (4th quarter 2009)
- 4. Action Item: Explore response alternatives**
 - a. Analyze EMS transport alternatives (2nd quarter 2010)
 - b. Collaborate with Bentonville and Lowell Fire Departments on automatic aid or other working opportunities (1st quarter 2010)
 - c. Collaborate with smaller volunteer fire departments on the opportunity to consolidate services (1st quarter 2012)
- 5. Action Item: Develop a master plan that addresses facilities and fleet**
 - a. Complete a thorough fleet assessment each year (ongoing)
 - b. Establish service life expectations of all department vehicles (4th quarter 2009)
 - c. Obtain property for new facilities (ongoing)
 - d. Retrofit all facilities to meet requirements involving vehicle exhaust and contamination control measures (4th quarter 2010)

- e. **Address the need for a city emergency operations center (EOC) (4th quarter 2013)**
 - f. **Ensure strategic placement of facilities that address:**
 - i. **Response times**
 - ii. **Traffic issues**
 - iii. **Plans for future development**
 - iv. **Other city departments (recycling, Police Dept, etc) (4th quarter 2012)**
- 6. Action Item: Review design of apparatus to standardize fleet**
- a. **Standardize specification on apparatus (ongoing)**
 - b. **Standardize equipment on apparatus (4th quarter 2009)**

Priority 4: Reach out to our community

- 1. Action Item: Enhance our public education program**
 - a. Define the scope of purpose of our public education program (4th quarter 2009)
 - b. Train all staff to deliver public education presentations (4th quarter 2009)
 - c. Refine materials available for fire station tours (4th quarter 2009)
 - d. Evaluate other agencies' presentation against those provided by Rogers Fire (4th quarter 2009)
 - e. Target audiences with developed programs (4th quarter 2009)
 - i. Age 65 and older
 - ii. Elementary age children
 - iii. High School age children
- 2. Action Item: Promote the Rogers Fire Department**
 - a. Regularly update the RFD website (4th quarter 2009)
 - b. Develop and update the department's brochure (4th quarter 2009)
 - c. Standardize the department's apparatus and uniform (3rd quarter 2009)
 - d. Promote fire station logos, t-shirts, and clothing (3rd quarter 2009)
 - e. Seek weekly press releases on incidents, events, and accomplishments (4th quarter 2009)
 - f. Develop and evaluate a Citizen's Fire Academy (4th quarter 2010)
 - g. Write and distribute a quarterly newsletter to department members – post newsletter on the website (3rd quarter 2009)
 - h. Recruit new staff (3rd quarter 2009)
 - i. Meet with homeowners associations (2nd quarter 2011)
 - j. Continue to promote the Rogers Fire Explorer's Post (2nd quarter 2009)
- 3. Action Item: Participate in special events**
 - a. Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure (annually)
 - b. Offer flu shots in fire stations (1st quarter 2012)
 - c. Meet with Main Street Rogers staff annually (ongoing)
- 4. Action Item: Survey our customers**
 - a. Determine methods to be used for surveys (4th quarter 2010)
 - b. Create a database of information gathered (4th quarter 2010)
 - c. Design a survey card and distribute to customers (2nd quarter 2011)
- 5. Action Item: Increase outreach to other city departments**
 - a. Educate city departments on the services we provide (1st quarter 2011)

- b. Provide assistance and training to other city departments on subjects we have expertise in (1st quarter 2011)
 - c. Co-sponsor community events and projects (4th quarter 2010)
 - d. Coordinate with other departments on a regular basis (2nd quarter 2009)
 - e. Design future fire stations to increase areas for police officers to write reports or take breaks (1st quarter 2013)
6. Action Item: Enhance the website
- a. Consider use of a website committee (3rd quarter 2010)
 - b. Include:
 - i. Messages from the various Division leaders and Fire Chief
 - ii. Special events information
 - iii. Survey cards
 - iv. RFD Newsletter
 - v. List of programs and services we provide
 - vi. List of fire station locations and coverage areas
 - vii. Recruitment information
7. Action Item: Reach out to the Non-English speaking community
- a. Analyze our needs in dealing with non-English speaking Hispanics (1st quarter 2011)
 - b. Provide training to staff on ways to deal with non-English speaking citizens (2nd quarter 2011)
 - c. Coordinate with the police department to increase efficiency and identify other issues not yet encountered by the fire department (2nd quarter 2011)