



Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS



Strategic Plan

January 2018

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Strategic Planning.....	5
Stakeholders.....	6
Department Mission.....	7
Department Vision.....	8
Core Values.....	9
Services Provided.....	10
Accomplishments.....	11
Critical Issues.....	12
Strategic Initiatives.....	13
Ongoing Initiatives.....	18
Performance Measurement.....	19
Works Cited.....	20

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Introduction

The Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS (LCDFEMS, “the department”) remains ever committed to providing the highest level of service to our community. As our community continues to grow and change, so does the demand for services. Meeting the changing needs of our community and maintaining a framework for continuous improvement is of paramount importance.

No longer do we simply respond to fires or EMS calls. Nor, is the way we did business twenty years ago or, “because that’s the way we’ve always done things” a legitimate reason to continue those management and operational practices. In today’s climate it is imperative that we improve on a “systemic” approach to meet the needs of the citizens and visitors while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Today’s fire-EMS service requires an "all hazards" approach to emergency response with equal focus on safety, prevention and education. The department, the current structure of which was adopted by ordinance in 2010, consists of 46 career field staff, 4 administrative positions and a listed 384 volunteer personnel operating out of seven fire stations and four EMS stations located throughout the County, which is home to a population of approximately 34,602 throughout its 514 square miles. The department also has responsibility of Emergency Management and works closely with businesses such as Dominion Power, and outside agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

This plan maintains a formalized and comprehensive approach to our commitments and provides focus and direction for the department. In order for any organization, public or private, to reach its full potential, it must have a plan. An organization that knows where it is going, knows the internal and external environment in which it must operate, and identifying how to get there will provide the best chance of meeting the needs of the community and achieving its goals. A plan also refreshes the organization’s commitment to excellence, building upon its strengths, improving where necessary and sets a path for

future success.

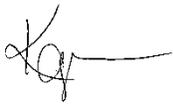
The strategic plan is more than the creation of a document. It challenges the department to look critically at paradigms, values, philosophies and beliefs and inspires individuals to work together in the best interest of the community.

The department's vision and mission statements define our priorities and provide our team with a clear framework to provide capable fire/EMS services that meet the current and future needs of Louisa County.

Additionally, this plan identifies the core values that embody how our department will strive to operate collectively as we carry out our mission. The goals, strategies, and tactics presented will allow us to work toward a shared vision and be in sync with the priorities of the County.

We extend our thanks and appreciation to the Louisa County Board of Supervisors for their consideration of our continuous efforts to meet or exceed the expectations of those that we serve. I'm pleased to present LCDFEMS's updated 2018 strategic plan.

Keith Greene – Fire/EMS Chief _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kg', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

January 25, 2018

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Strategic Planning

According to the Alliance for Non-profit Management, strategic planning is a management tool that helps an organization to focus its energy, to ensure that members of the department are working toward the same goals and, to assess and adjust the department's direction in response to a changing environment.

Strategic planning has been described as a flexible, dynamic, and continuous process that:

- provides short-term direction,
- sets goals and objectives,
- optimizes use of resources
- builds a shared vision.

For the Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS, the establishment of a strategic plan is a deliberate effort to prepare for the future with a variety of goals, actions, and activities intended to unify system management, employees, stakeholders and customers as well as identifying our strengths and weaknesses.

A successful strategic plan is the result of extensive input, assessment, discussion, evaluation and prioritizing.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Stakeholders

Internal Stakeholders - The input of all department personnel is valued and actively sought for the developing of plans and identifying direction. Quarterly staff meetings are held to share information, progress, and accomplishments and to discuss issues and, to review expectations and goals. Senior staff meetings are conducted bi-monthly in addition to monthly meetings with representatives of the volunteer component of the system, the Management Oversight Group (MOG).

Specific to the strategic plan, a county-wide study conducted by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) and the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (VaOEMS) in 2010 revealed a number of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. This was followed by an ordinance, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in December 2010 that combined the career component, each of the seven (7) volunteer fire stations and four (4) volunteer EMS stations to form the recognized Department, the Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS.

External Stakeholders - LCDFEMS' external stakeholders are citizens, businesses, non-governmental support agencies, mutual aid agencies, fellow county department's, their directors and employees, and the local governing body. Citizens frequently share feedback directly to LCDFEMS members and/or with Administration and County Board members. There is also regular interaction with regional and state entities to review legislative policies, training standards, industry standards, trends and best practices.

County department heads meet bi-monthly as a group and individually as necessary with the County Administrator, in part to ensure that each department understands and supports the goals and objectives established by the administration and governing body, which are reflected in the department's goals.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

The Department Mission

According to Mark Wallace in *Fire Department Strategic Planning*, an effective mission statement must contain three components:

- o what functions the department performs
- o for whom those functions are performed and,
- o how those functions are performed.

The modern day fire-EMS department is expected to provide far more than fire suppression and emergency medical services. The Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS' mission statement, although simplistic, speaks loudly in its intent.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

The Department Vision

A successful organization can describe its optimal desired future state. In an article for Smart@Work, CEO Jannell Evans says a vision statement should "provide guidance and inspiration as to what an organization is

focused on achieving”. The department’s vision statement as well is simplistic but speaks loudly to encourage personnel to focus on what's important.

VISION

To build the most safe, and efficient Fire, EMS and Emergency Management System possible to meet the needs of our community

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Core Values

To better understand an organization and its strategic issues, it is critical to first identify the values shared within the organization. Shared values shape an organization and influence how its members face plans and challenges, both immediate and future.

Although the department's Core Values basically boil down to "doing the right thing at all times", We share a dedication and commitment to the following core values:

Integrity and Transparency

We value the trust and confidence of the public and of our department. We are committed to serving with honesty, trustworthiness, honor, loyalty, and ethical behavior. We strive to keep each other, the County and the public well informed with frequent and accurate communication.

Safety and Valor

We value life, property and the environment. We take every precaution to prevent harm while facing threats, danger, and discomfort with courage. We treat each other as family, and we view the community as an extension of our family.

Customer Service and Community Focus

We value timely and exceptional service to the public, to our department, and to the county. We will serve all in a caring, courteous, respectful, compassionate, timely and reliable manner. We work hard daily to improve the community's health, safety, and well-being.

Peak Performance

We value effective and efficient service at the individual and departmental levels. We support each other in being capable, knowledgeable, skilled, responsible, and accountable. We foster success and improvement.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Services Provided

Though the citizens of the county are aware of the department's "emergency services" in a general sense, many have little knowledge of the specialized services and extensive public education programs provided. These services align with the department's mission, core values, and objectives.

- Emergency Communication
- Emergency Management
- Fire Suppression
- Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Services
- Hazardous Materials
- Hazardous Conditions
- Technical Rescue
- Public Services
 - o Non Emergency Assistance
 - o o Blood pressure checks

- o Smoke Alarm inspection
Fire-EMS Prevention, and
Emergency Preparedness
education

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Accomplishments

The following objectives (among many others) have been achieved since July 2012.

Developed and implemented a Professional Development Program which went into affect July 1, 2017 to assist staff in furthering their career with the department as firefighters/EMT's.

Improved communications with the community. Customer satisfaction surveys are distributed after incidents, at community events as well as the Department's web-site, and the results are used to evaluate the effectiveness of services offered, to rate customer satisfaction and, to refine survey content. Surveys are also mailed out to patients chosen from the QA/QI Weekly Call Report and an on-line version is now available on the website.

Improve Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating. ISO conducted an extensive investigation of the County's services during April and May 2011, the results of which improved ISO ratings within the County significantly over previous ratings, assisting with lowering home/business owner insurance rates.

Created and implemented EMS Training and Fire Training committees who have successfully provided training over the past year with a year's worth of training already planned for 2018. This also includes outside training such as radiological training to plan ahead for the upcoming North Anna Drill in 2018 as well as actual events that may occur.

Established and strengthened community and regional partnerships. During the 2014 update of the County's Emergency Operations Plan, letters of agreement and memorandums of understanding were reviewed and updated with external agencies. Additionally, the department hosts multiple multi-agency exercises annually, many of which are evaluated and graded by FEMA and NRC representatives and, Louisa has continued to receive high ratings in its Emergency Management role regarding planning and operations.

mes to requests for service. Monthly reports summarizing call activity and performance were expanded with 90th percentile statistics and are submitted to the Board of Supervisors from the department to maintain awareness. Actual year to date performance is summarized monthly within the reports to the Board. Response times have continued to improve annually. Through the addition of new personnel, reassignments of existing personnel and strategic placement; the current average response time within the County is below 11 minutes.

Improved records management systems. With the implementation of the ImageTrend System, reporting has greatly improved. Fire Reporting is expected to begin in January 2018 which will greatly assist with accuracy in fire reporting for volunteer stations..

Maintain and update annually department rules, regulations, guidelines, and policies which meet industry standard, best practices and current regulations. An annual review is done of the department's SDP's.

Continual evaluation to ensure Fiscal Responsibility – Consolidations of volunteer insurance policies resulting in cost reduction for these services in excess of 100,000 annually. Ensuring that purchase and procurement guidelines are adhered to result in best pricing for equipment, apparatus, etc..

24 hour on-duty Supervision – provides effective leadership, services and immediate points of contact during nights, weekends and holidays.

Defining “Operational” volunteer members resulted in reduced costs for LODA Insurance. Mandated annual physicals for operational volunteer members assist to ensure the safety and well being of the county's providers by ensuring that members are physically fit to perform operational fire-EMS functions. This has been a requirement for career staff since 2009..

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Critical Issues

A strategic plan involves intentionally choosing a desired future, setting goals that describe that future, and developing an approach to achieving those goals. Therefore, an organization must first be aware of its internal and external environment as well as the potential issues and threats which may delay or prevent that future. Understanding the issues is the main purpose of strategic planning and is therefore a key component.

The following have been identified within local, state and national assessments and surveys as key issues:

- o Federal, state, and local mandates
- o Improve transport availability and response times
- o Obtaining uniformity in apparatus and equipment
- o Budget and revenue limitations
- o Traditional tactics and strategies, Reluctance/opposition to change
 - o Positive Public perception
 - o Need for uniformity in apparatus and equipment.
 - o Staffing and adequate qualified response

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Strategic Initiatives

A plan cannot succeed without clearly defined priorities and achievable outcomes. The following initiatives provide department personnel with clear direction, addresses known and anticipated issues, and responds to the concerns of the community.

Louisa County
Department of Fire
and EMS

1. Advocate for a safer community.
2. Personnel health and safety.
- 3.
4. Assess and evaluate needs for additional staff and/or facilities in order to maintain availability and reasonable response times.
5. Be recognized in the community and throughout the region as a leader in excellence for fire and EMS service delivery.
6. Practice good leadership and governance.
7. Implement a formal workforce development plan.

Specific strategies, tactics, and anticipated outcomes for each goal are also identified within this plan.

Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify ways to use social media and news media to educate the community on preparedness. Website updates.2. Update website content on emergency preparedness.
Leadership:	Asst. Chief-Operations; Capt. Training-Prevention-Education, CERT coordinator
Review:	Media releases and website updates regarding emergency preparedness.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Goal 2: Be recognized in the community and throughout the region as a leader in excellence for fire and EMS service delivery.	
Strategy 1:	Maintain a Class 6/8b or better rating with the Insurance Services Office.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stay informed of ISO requirements via seminars and the internet. 2. Monitor department compliance. 3. Work with the ISO department of survey services to improve commercial and residential property ratings through ISO assessments as available.
Leadership:	Senior Staff
Review:	Written Summary.
Strategy 2:	Establish and strengthen community and regional partnerships.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain current involvement and identify additional opportunities with industry peers and professional networks. 2. Modify statements of understanding with support agencies to include conflict resolution procedure.
Leadership:	Senior Staff
Review :	Written summary of organization memberships, positions chaired, conference/seminar attendance, and inter-agency agreements.
Strategy 3:	Ensure compliance with nationally recognized standards for call processing, turnout, and response times.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the analysis of response data and regularly share the results with the department and County administration. 2. Assess the need for additional facilities and/or staffing in growth areas identified by the County .
Leadership:	Senior Staff
Review:	Twelve month summaries of performance at full staff meetings.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Goal 3: Practice good leadership and governance.	
Strategy 1:	Maintain and update department rules, regulations, guidelines, and policies which meet industry best practices and current regulation.
Tactics:	1. Evaluate, revise and update the department's current "Policies" and "Standard Operating Guidelines" annually and as as needed
Leadership:	Senior Staff; Training Division; SDP/SOG Committee, lieutenants
Review:	All department rules, regulations, guidelines, and policies shall be reviewed, revised, updated, documented, and posted within 12 months.

Goal 4: Implement a formal workforce development plan.	
Strategy 1:	Provide increased training and mentoring which continues to promote career development and ensure peak performance.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare for department attrition by identifying potential career paths, encouraging mentorship, and creating a formal succession plan. 2. Manintain and revise training programs that identifies and maintains basic job skills while also providing opportunities for advanced skill development. 3. Maintain the tracking of training hours and the management of certifications.
Leadership :	Asst. Chief-Operations, Capt. Training-Prevention-Education, Senior Staff
Review:	Review professional development program and develop succession plan to be distributed within 12 months; training will be summarized
Goal 5:	
Develop department health and wellness plan	
Strategy 1:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop fitness standards. 2. Ensure time for dailt PT 3. Conduct an annual physical ability testing for all staff. <p>Implement a health and wellness policy with the assistance of a department Health and Wellness Committee</p>

Tactics:	4. 3. Develop a cancer prevention initiative.
Leadership:	Asst. Chief-Operations, Health and Wellness Committee
Review:	Complete and distribute fitness standards and a health and wellness policy by December 2018

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Goal 6: Assess and evaluate needs for additional staff and/or facilities in order to maintain availability and reasonable response times.	
Strategy I:	1. Continual monitoring of call statistics and response times. Continue to research available grant funding for additional staffing. Revise and evaluate Recruitment and Retention plan for both volunteer and career members.
Tactics:	1. Analyze and evaluate statistical information for determination of additional needs within specific response areas of the county. 2. Continue to research grant funding.
Leadership:	Asst. Chief-Operations, Senior Staff
Review:	Monthly monitoring and evaluation, providing annual recommendation to the County's Administration, Planning commission and Board of Supervisors.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Ongoing Initiatives

In the process of updating the Strategic Plan, several of the previous strategies which were identified/achieved should become ongoing initiatives in which the department continues to implement and monitor.

1. Continue to foster open communication within the department.
2. Continue to improve communications with the community.
3. Continue to evaluate personnel on clearly defined job-specific competencies.
4. Continue to aggressively research and identify alternative funding opportunities.
5. Maintain a process to attract and recruit a competent and diverse workforce.
6. Continue to develop a long-term physical resources improvement plan to evaluate facilities, apparatus and equipment to ensure safe and efficient services.
7. Maintain community preparation for and coordination during emergencies.
8. Maintain high quality, efficient emergency communications.
9. Continual monitoring and evaluation of county wide response times
10. Continue to Evaluate needs in response areas and needed facilities.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

Performance Measurement

The overall success of a strategic plan is not measured solely by accomplishment of initiatives. Instead, success is evident in the support of personnel, the cooperation of the authority having jurisdiction (County Board of Supervisors), and the satisfaction of the community served. Most importantly, services and programs that continue to benefit the community in a safe, timely, efficient, and effective manner.

The Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS has chosen to use a combination of the following measures to evaluate performance against the plan:

- **Inputs:** Number and capacity of physical resources and personnel available; budget and financial resources
- **Outputs:** Number and types of services provided
- **Efficiency:** Comparison of inputs to outputs
- **Service Quality:** Measure of customer satisfaction
- **Outcomes:** Noticeable or measurable consequences associated with a program/service

The Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS is committed to reviewing the progress of initiatives annually and to publishing a revised, updated strategic plan in 24 months.

Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS

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