

Rio Verde Fire District Five Year Strategic Plan

2020-2025



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Board of Directors

Board of Directors and Residents of Rio Verde Fire District,

The Rio Verde Fire District has progressed and increased the level of service provided to the community since it was established in 1994 under the direction of the Rural Metro Corporation, then becoming an independent fire district in 2004. Past Board Commissioners have worked diligently to assure that the Fire District obtained the people and tools to provide the best possible fire, medical, and rescue services to the community. To establish and maintain this quality of service, the Board of Directors is charged with setting administrative policy, tax rates and approving the annual budget and capital plan. In turn, the Board of Directors entrusts the management and staff of the District to provide quality services based on industry best practices and standards.



Maintaining cost-effective and quality service delivery to the community takes careful thought and planning. The Rio Verde Fire District Five Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020 brings together the input from board members, management staff and community leadership to establish a strategic plan that will support the organization and maintain high level quality services to the community into the future.

This strategic plan is a guidance document for use by the Fire Board with input from the community to address possible issues that may affect the District in the next five years. It does NOT give expenditure approval of any issue included in the plan. Issues will be individually addressed and come before the Fire Board with proper public notice for possible action.

I would like to thank everyone that provided input into this planning process.

Sincerely,

George Kattermann
Fire Board Chair

Comments from the Chief

I am pleased to present the updated Rio Verde Fire District 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. This plan encompasses the work of many members of the RVFD including, elected board officials, the RVFD leadership team and community leaders.

Our mission is ever changing and presenting new safety concerns. Safety considerations are always a top priority. We will continue to

work to ensure the safety of our residents and our personnel. Safety is part of our culture and will continue to be our number one priority. We must be prepared for the future, not only by continually addressing our known hazards but also by being very well trained, staffed and equipped.

A viable work force is critical to the success of any organization. Without this group a strategic plan would fail. The dedicated men and women of the RVFD are without equal in delivering excellent service to our community. This plan addresses the needs of these valued members and has the focus of providing the tools necessary for them to succeed. Together we will continue to serve our community well into the future.

I would like to thank the Rio Verde Fire District Board of Directors, the Rio Verde Fire District Employees, and the Rio Verde Fire District Strategic Planning Team for their hard work and input into this plan.

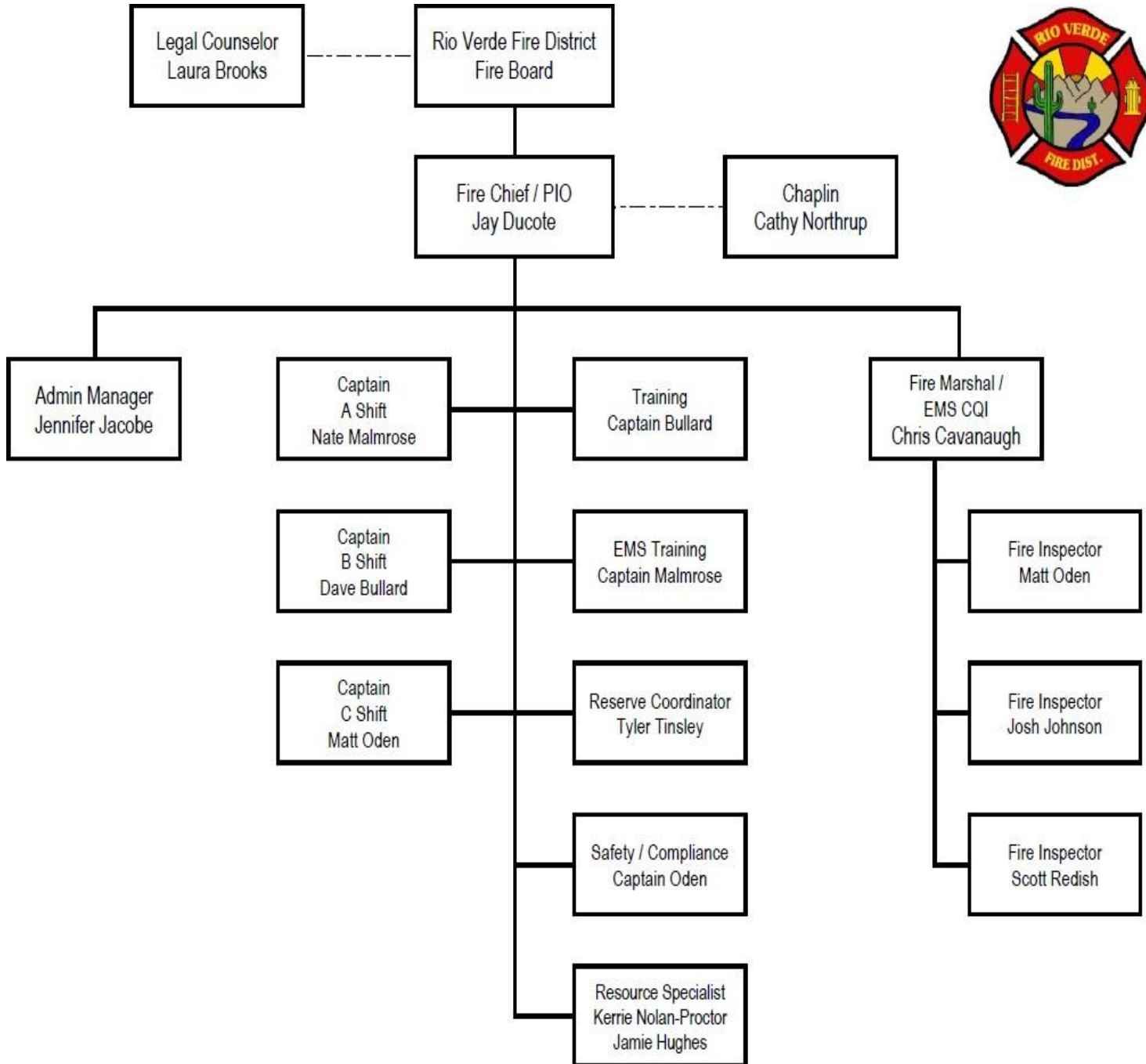
Sincerely,

Jay Ducote
Fire Chief



Rio Verde Fire District

Organizational Chart





Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide the best quality care for all Fire and Medical services to the Rio Verde Fire District communities.

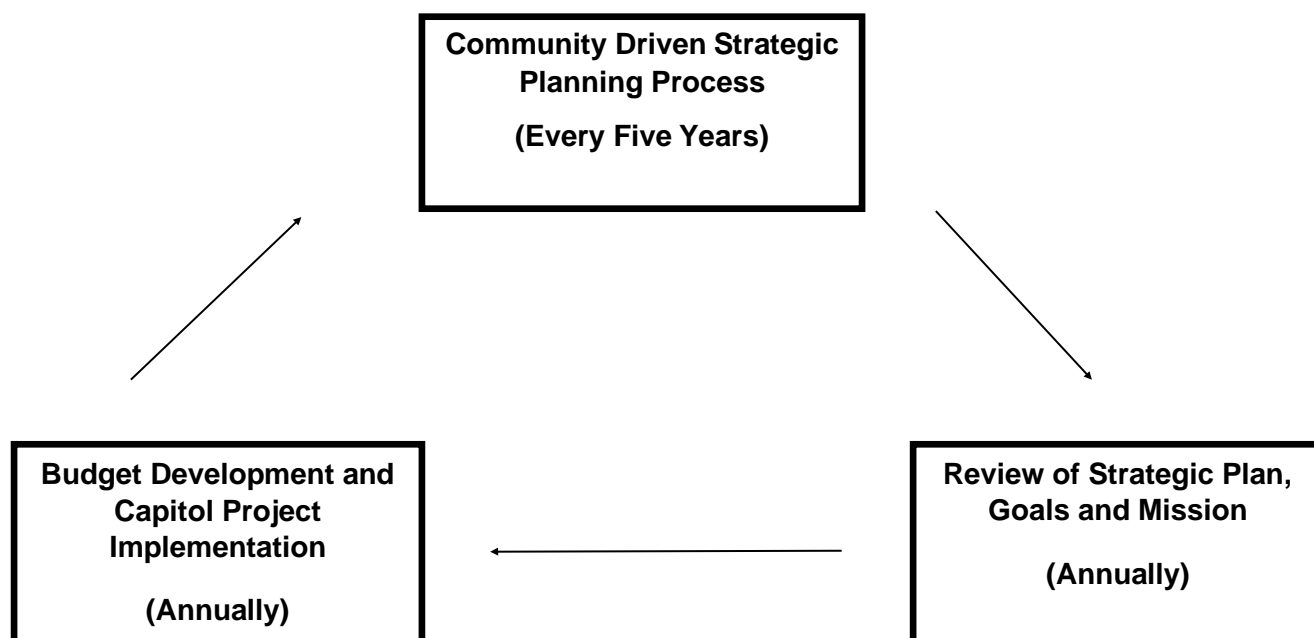
Strategic Principals

- Effectively communicate our role and value to our community.
- Create and maintain a culture with an emphasis on health and safety for all employees.
- Provide and maintain a fiscally sustainable, transparent financial management system.
- Ensuring appropriate and timely recruitment of new hires for all divisions.
- Develop succession plans and promote professional development opportunities.
- Implementation, and management of comprehensive and effective building and fire codes.
- Identify and address specific training needs that enhance the personal growth of our members.
- Enhance pre-hospital delivery of emergency medical services and align community healthcare resources.
- Maintain necessary equipment for effective and safe mitigation of an “all hazards” response.
- Implement fire station and support facilities that will function with current and anticipated operational and administrative needs to maintain the current ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating.
- Continue to develop and maintain our wildland fire management response.
- House, review, update and maintain all policies and procedures.

The Strategic Planning Process

The Rio Verde Fire District values both internal and external input throughout the strategic planning process. In order for the process to be effective, it needs to be embraced by the organization and its stakeholders. This continuous process is constantly fluctuating and evolving as the Fire District changes, as well.

The first Rio Verde Fire District Strategic Plan was developed in 2015 and was designed to offer guidance to the District for the next five years. As with the District's initial plan in 2015, the District again pursued input from Fire District members and community stakeholders to assist in the development of this document. The Rio Verde Fire District Strategic Planning Team reviewed the Mission Statement and conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. External Stakeholders and community members participated to help gauge community perception of the organization. The Strategic Plan will offer guidance for the Fire District through 2025. It will continually be reviewed by staff and stakeholders to ensure that the values and mission have not substantially changed.



RIO VERDE FIRE DISTRICT HISTORY

The Rio Verde Fire District was established in 1993 with services contracted through Rural Metro, a private corporation. In 2004 the District terminated the contract with Rural Metro Corporation and established staffing with District employees. The legal boundary of the District covers 4 square miles and includes the communities of Rio Verde, Tonto Verde and Trilogy at Verde River.

Emergency services are provided on a 24-hour basis with two emergency response units. Engine 441 is a Class 1 structural pumper, recognized by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), and is staffed as an advanced life support unit with two Paramedics. Rescue 441 is an advanced life support unit. Combined, these emergency units respond to over 900 calls for service annually. The District also operates two wildland fire units as needed to protect the community from the threat of wildland fire.

The Rio Verde Fire District has established an outstanding reputation for its quality service and provides its residents, businesses and visitors the highest level of protection against the loss of life and property. As we move forward with the community, we will continue to plan and prepare to meet the needs of the future.



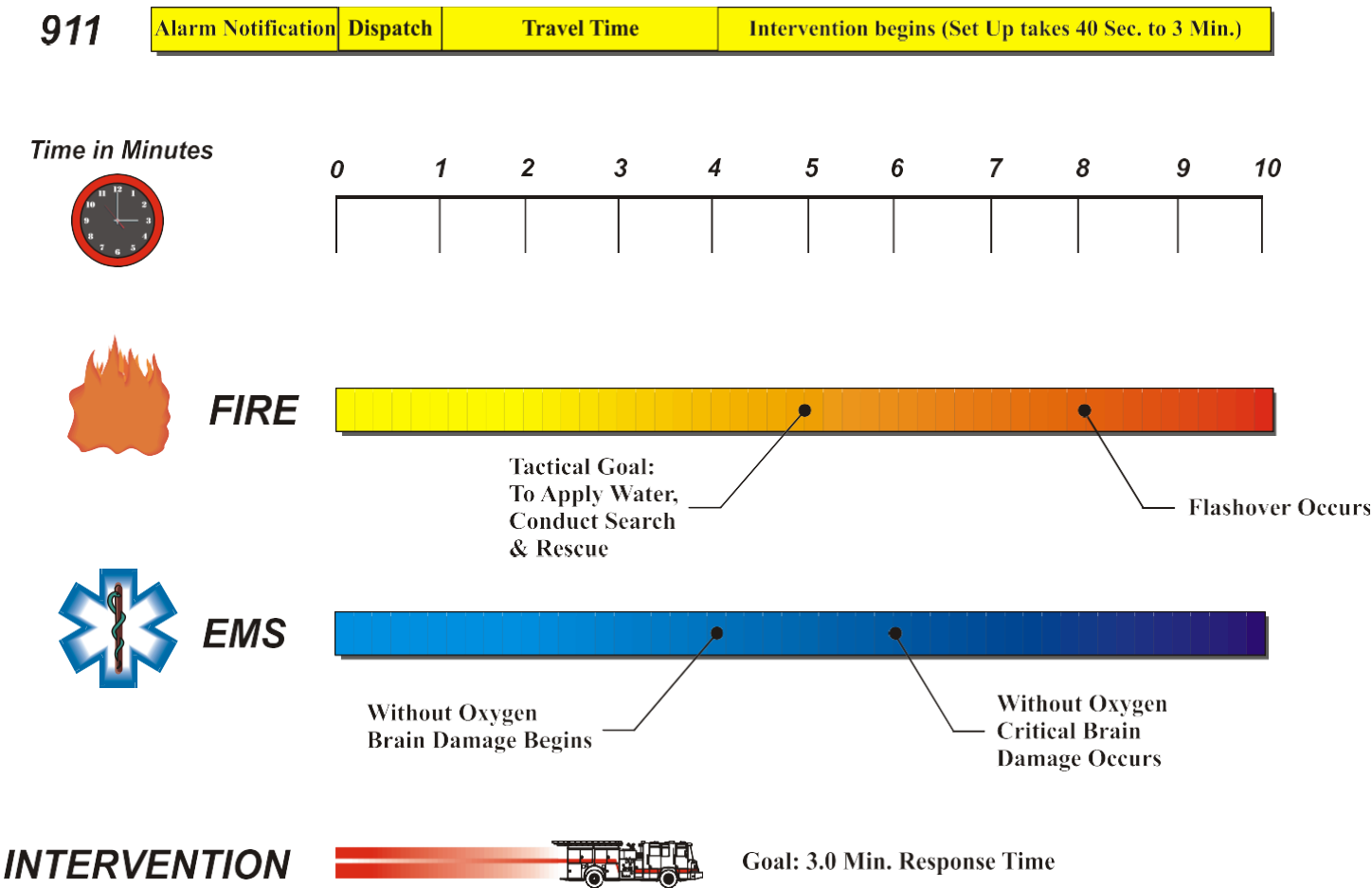
RIO VERDE FIRE DISTRICT OVERVIEW

While planning for the future we must also evaluate our current performance as an organization. Two key indicators are emergency incident response times and customer satisfaction.

Response time is a critical factor as it relates to the protection of life and property. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sets the standard response time for emergency incidents between four and six minutes. The Rio Verde Fire District currently maintains an average emergency response time (Code 3 Lights and Sirens) of four minutes. As our Fire District grows larger and emergency call volume increases, response times will increase.

Quick intervention time is critical for both fire and emergency medical service incidents and is often the determining factor supporting the positive outcome of these critical incidents. The Intervention time chart below illustrates the importance of a quick emergency response.

Intervention Time



RIO VERDE FIRE DISTRICT OVERVIEW (cont.)

Since 2004 the Rio Verde Fire District has sent out customer service surveys to all residents requesting and receiving 911 emergency responses. Overwhelmingly the responses indicate outstanding service delivery and customer satisfaction. The credit for this goes to our dedicated work force. As an organization we strive to obtain this level of support but know that it can be easily lost. Because of this, customer service and satisfaction will remain a top priority.

PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

Like with any business, proper planning and sharing of a vision are key to a successful future. The content of this plan is a direct result of the 2020 strategic planning process. The process brought together the collective interests of the community, the Board of Directors, and members of the organization to discuss critical issues and the overall organizational vision. Specific areas addressed included: Firefighter Wellness/Training, Public Safety Facilities and Equipment, Fiscal Management, and Community Services. From these discussions this strategic plan was finalized.

RIO VERDE FIRE DISTRICT OVERVIEW (cont.)

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

There are a number of ever-changing factors that guide the strategic planning process. The economy is a significant factor as it influences the rate of growth within our fire district and the surrounding area. This in turn drives the need and timeline of emergency services expansion. Community support and service demands also influence the direction of the organization over time. Action on all goals included in this strategic plan will require Board of Directors action and approval.

The Verde communities will continue to grow in population and increase the emergency services call demand. With the “West 36th” area still undeveloped and Trilogy @ Verde River at 1/4 of their capacity at build out, the number of homes will increase.

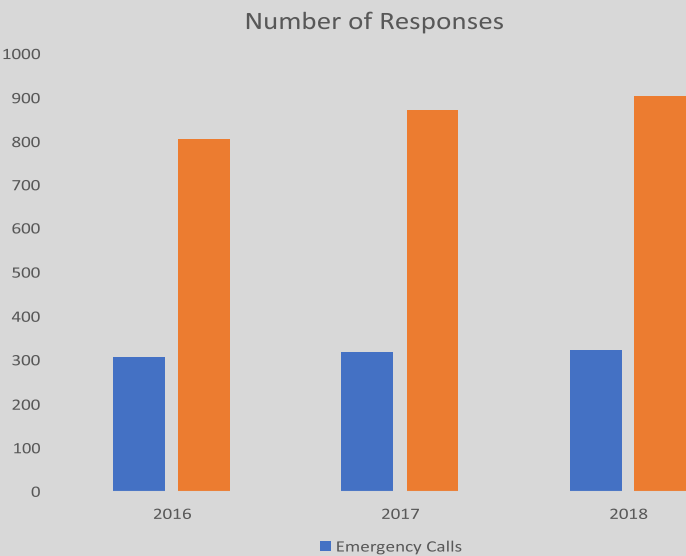
This expansion and the growth of the surrounding population will have a mirror effect on the requests for service demand and the maintenance of effective response times. The challenge for the Rio Verde Fire District will be to utilize these assumptions properly to maintain service levels

Emergency Call Volume Increase

2016
Emergency Calls 307
Total calls 805

2017
Emergency Calls 319
Total calls 872

2018
Emergency Calls 323
Total calls 903



SWOT Analysis

Since a SWOT analysis provides a look at the District's current situation and assesses its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, it plays an important part in the process of strategic planning.

Strengths

Rio Verde Fire District realizes the importance of identifying its strengths in order to assure that it is capable of providing the services requested by the community and to ensure that strengths are consistent with the issues facing the organization. Often, identification of organizational strengths leads to the channeling of efforts toward primary community needs that match those strengths. Programs that do not match organizational strengths, or the primary function of the organization, should be seriously reviewed to evaluate the rate of return on staff time. Through a consensus process, the Strategic Planning Team identified the strengths of the organization as follows.

- Current staff are skilled, diverse, qualified and cross-trained within fire management and emergency medical services and operations
- Trained and dedicated people
- Strong community support and respect
- Reserve program
- Access to statewide training assets
- Relationship with other fire agencies
- Good Healthcare, Vacation, Workers Compensation and Pension plans - benefits
- State of the art equipment
- Use current media outlets – local market
- Strong fire board / fiscally
- Medical director/Mayo support
- Fire code
- Firewise communities
- Ownership of 2-acre parcel for future growth
- Community Church and Verde Cares strong relationship

Weaknesses

Performance or lack of performance within an organization depends greatly on the identification of weaknesses and how they are confronted. While it is not unusual for these issues to be at the heart of the organization's overall concerns, it is unusual for organizations to be able to identify and deal with these issues effectively on their own. Rio Verde Fire District realizes that to continue to move progressively forward, it must not only be able to identify its strengths, but also those areas where it functions poorly or not at all. These areas of needed enhancements are not the same as threats to be identified later in this document, but rather those day to day issues and concerns that may slow or inhibit progress. The following items were identified by the Strategic Planning Team as weaknesses:

- Community does not fully understand the span/size of the district
- No strategic plan to communicate future fire station
- Current staff and resources may not meet future needs
- Funding comes from limited property taxes
- Need adequate funds to support pension fund
- One fire station
- Restricted/constrained career path/call volume (action) due to size
- Remote community location – hospitals & mutual aid
- Un-tested emergency management plan
- Using outdated fire code - 2003

Opportunities

Rio Verde Fire District understands that the opportunities for the District depend on the identification of strengths and weaknesses and how they can be enhanced. The focus of opportunities are not solely on existing service, but on expanding and developing new possibilities both inside and beyond the traditional service area. The Strategic Planning Team identified the following potential opportunities:

- Effectively use advocates ranging from local community groups to elected delegates
- Develop a multi-use facility when 2nd station is built
- District expansion / growth of community
- Marketing fire district (increasing public awareness)
- Trilogy community members becoming involved with RVFD
- Engage staff in internal sub-committees
- Bonding process allows temporary higher tax rate

Threats

To draw strength and gain full benefit of any opportunity, the threats to the organization, with their new risks and challenges, must also be identified in the strategic planning process. By recognizing possible threats, an organization can greatly reduce the potential for loss. Fundamental to the success of any strategic plan is the understanding that threats are not completely and/or directly controlled by the organization. Some of the current and potential threats identified by the Strategic Planning Team were as follows:

- Diminished future tax revenue
- Closing Mesa Community College VIC (Virtual Incident Command) and lack of available training options
- Diminished reserve firefighter recruiting pool
- Single-ended water supply
- Rural Metro fire station at 164th St and Rio Verde Rd. closing.
- Low new home sales precluding additional resources to ensure 4-minute response time
- Ambulance not able to respond to all community emergencies due to increased transports caused by aging population and growth
- Unknown support for building second fire station
- Unable to adequately grow PSPRS pension fund
- Future legislative restrictions
- Aging workforce, turnover and complacency

Service Goals and Strategic Initiatives

Service goals and strategic initiatives are based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges affecting the District's mandates, mission and values. They outline strengths and weaknesses in service levels, finance, equipment and risk reduction. These service goals and strategic initiatives provide a vehicle to take advantage of current opportunities and to build challenges into future opportunities.

Service goals are organization-wide benchmarks that detail the issues identified through the District's stakeholders who include the Board of Directors, residents and employees. Working toward these goals is the basis of becoming proficient in the fire and emergency service field.

Strategic initiatives are more specific components of the service goals and outline more detailed actions or tasks that support the goals. They are the basis of strategic management and are performance measurements that focus the Fire District on its strategic goals. As the organization worked to establish a vision and identify areas for improvement, five focused Service Goals emerged:

SERVICE GOALS

1. Maintain fully trained and capable workforce to meet future community needs
2. Budget-Manage fiscal resources to meet current and future needs
3. Maintain state of the art equipment and apparatus
4. Enhance Partnership/Value to Community and other Fire Agencies
5. Reduce risks from fire and medical exposure within our district

Service Goal #1

Maintain fully trained and capable workforce to meet future community needs

Strategic Initiatives

Our employees are our most valued resource. We recruit, hire and retain the most capable, confident and professional people to serve our community. We are committed to preserving their health and safety through programs and initiatives that support physical and emotional fitness.

The RVFD will continue the implementation of various health and wellness programs that promote productivity, fitness and well-being for employees and their families.

Implement more safety and survival training for firefighters and officers that highlight risk management, injury and infectious disease prevention.

Continuing with a comprehensive behavioral health program and peer support team for all employees is another essential component.

Continue with firefighter medical exams that meet or exceed industry standards and employ preventative medical screens capable of detecting serious medical problems before they turn deadly.

Maintain a dynamic training program that meets or exceeds the requirements set by the standards organizations.

Develop an updated training plan to support the district through 2025. Continue to develop the members of the RVFD through training and other professional education.

Identify other outside training opportunities such as State Fire School. Research and develop a human resource plan to proactively manage and support district expansion and employee succession planning.

Review employee benefit plans and conduct market comparisons for financial efficiency and employee retention.

Service Goal #2

Manage fiscal resources to meet current and future needs

Strategic Initiatives

Continue PSPRS pension funding objectives to comply with new statutory requirements of Laws 2018, Chapter 112. Maintain goal of 100% pension funding by the year 2036.

Maintain, update and contribute funds to the current capitol plan. Facilitate the review and evaluate budget decision packages from each division.

Submit a budget to the Fire Board for approval that accounts for projections, sustainability and the long-term financial health of the fire district.

Facilitate the annual audit in compliance with ARS § 48-253 for the previous year.

Facilitate the collection of payments for out of district responses.

Service Goal #3

Maintain State of the Art Equipment and Apparatus

Strategic Initiative

Conduct research and development on new equipment, personal protective gear, technology advancements and employee safety programs.

Investigate opportunities to purchase new equipment through grant funds.

Purchase and place in service equipment/technology designed to enhance the delivery of fire suppression services.

Purchase and place in service equipment/technology designed to improve personnel safety and reduce fire suppression related injuries.

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Strategic Goal #4

Enhance Partnership/Value to Community and other Fire Agencies

Strategic Initiative

In cooperation with all community leaders and stakeholders, continue to work with the Arizona Division of Emergency Management to update a comprehensive emergency management plan for the community. Continuing to test disaster plans serves as a guide to the community and its leadership in the event of an emergency.

Research, facilitate and support the Mayo Hospital stroke protocol.

Continue to collaborate with Verde Cares and Firewise stakeholders to enhance community outreach.

Continue to attend and speak at community association meetings and contribute to the Road- Runner, Tonto Times, Trilogy website and Fountain Hills times.

Continue free AED/CPR classes for Verde residents.

Service Goal #5

Reduce risks from fire and medical exposure within our district.

Strategic Initiative

As the District population increases a second fire station will be required.

Timing of this project is critical to meet the emergency response needs of the community. Plan and build public safety building (Fire Station 442) to maintain response times.

Move forward with bond and construction of the public safety building.

Continue talks with Maricopa County Sheriffs to locate an office in new public safety building.

Continue State and Regional wildland response to develop wildland firefighters and officers.

Maintain support of the Rio Verde Firewise program.

Maintain close relationship with Medical Director on new skills and emergency protocols.



Produced by the

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