



PAGOSA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Strategic Plan

2017-2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than two months ago, the Pagosa Fire Protection District initiated a strategic planning process to develop its first formal strategic plan. Plan development was facilitated by a Strategic Planning Team, which consisted of both career and volunteer staff of varying ranks and tenure. The plan's goals and objectives were all derived from community and staff input solicited during the planning process. Procedures utilized in the development of the plan included numerous staff and community focus groups, a facilitated retreat of department chief officers and staff feedback on the draft plan. Through the strategic planning process, the department identified its core strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. It also clarified the department's mission, vision, values and expectations.

The plan established eight strategic goals for the department:

1. Continue to improve service delivery to the community
2. Improve organizational effectiveness
3. Continue to support effective community outreach and involvement
4. Provide and maintain quality equipment and facilities
5. Be fiscally proactive and responsible
6. Improve leadership of the department
7. Improve communications
8. Develop a department master plan

The strategic plan is designed to guide the department over the next three years. However, this document should be viewed as merely a first step toward effecting change through implementation. The strategic plan should be reviewed and updated annually to assure currency and allow for adaptation to changing circumstances. Further, a department master plan, which outlines the specific action steps, costs, timelines and implementation priorities of the objectives stated in this plan, needs to be developed.

The Pagosa Fire Protection District (PFPD) has a proud history of exceptional community focused service delivered by a highly trained and professional staff of career and volunteer firefighters. The department membership looks forward to an even greater future as a result of this planning effort.

PFPD works in cooperation with other local and regional agencies with regard to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Plan published by the Pagosa Springs Department of Emergency Management.

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The Pagosa Fire Protection District, located in the town of Pagosa Springs, Colorado, Archuleta county, is served by a combination fire department consisting of 7 career and 52 volunteer firefighters serving a population of approximately 12,350. The protection district spans 319 square miles consisting of mostly residential and commercial properties. The department has 6 equipped stations which are not manned due to staffing constraints. The fire department operates out of a single manned fire station with 1 engine, a ladder truck, rescue truck and a water tender. The department responded to approximately 619 calls of service in 2016 and participates in hundreds of hours of community-related activities each year.

A combination fire department blends the advantages of an all-career department and an all-volunteer department. The primary advantages of an all-career department includes immediate response to emergencies and the ability to deliver other essential services to the community. The primary advantage of an all-volunteer organization is the availability of a large manpower pool at little cost. In combination fire departments, a limited full-time staff is on duty. The staff quickly responds to emergencies and provides training, inspections, public education, maintenance and other community-related services between alarms. The volunteer members are called out to emergencies in addition to attending and assisting with community service activities.

Today, response to emergencies represent only a fraction of the total activities of the fire department. Functions such as fire safety inspections, public education, building plan review community outreach and fire prevention have become the foundations of the new fire service. Other areas of involvement now include technical rescue, hazardous material response and emergency and disaster preparedness.

In accordance with the department's mission and fundamental values, each of the career staff is assigned a great deal of responsibility. In fact, the two rank designations within the career department - captain and lieutenant - do not accurately represent the jobs being performed. In reality Pagosa Fire Protection District Captains are assigned responsibilities commensurate with those of a deputy or division chief in larger departments while lieutenants' roles are equal to or greater than those of the captains.

The core duties of all fire department staff are threefold: fitness, training and equipment readiness. Each individual must be physically fit, be well versed in a wide variety of emergency response skills and have functional equipment in order to safely and effectively mitigate emergencies of all types. A portion of every work shift is dedicated to these three essential functions. In addition to these fundamental responsibilities, every career member is assigned to one of six platoons within the Prevention or Operations Divisions, each of which is responsible for a specific staff function. These staff functions include: Fire Prevention & Inspections, Emergency Management, Training, Resource Management, Community Services & Outreach and Fire & Life Safety Education and Fleet Management.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS PROCEDURES

The following procedures were utilized in the development of the strategic plan:

1. Survey of volunteer staff
2. Survey of career staff
3. Business and facility focus group
4. Career staff focus groups
5. Career staff Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) discussion
6. Volunteer staff SWOC discussion
7. Department mission / values discussion
8. Department review and comment on draft plan

RESULTS

SWOC Analysis

Strengths

- Level of training, education, and experience of staff
- Training standards
- Support of outside training opportunities
- Quality of equipment
- Newer facility
- Involvement in community
- Customer service focus
- Immediacy of response from on-duty crew (M-F during business hours)

Weaknesses

- Staffing of night and weekend automatic alarm responses
- Volunteer staff not fully utilized
- Lack of succession planning for volunteer company executive roles
- Program and project planning
- Communication between companies and with volunteer staff
- Restructuring of drill credit to a continued education model with requirements for subject areas
- Volunteer mentor program
- Define community expectation of the fire department's role in EMS response

Challenges

- District budget constraints
- Availability and participation of members
- Retirement of senior volunteer staff

- Shift of volunteer response from full alarm to more automatic alarm and duty shift based
- Training requirements potentially driving volunteers away
- Lack of career staff promotional opportunities
- Improving esprit de corps

Community Input

Survey Findings

- Maintain current programs with a focus on community priorities (Table 1)
- Residents are not fully aware of the scope and number of department emergency and non-emergency activities
- Citizen satisfaction with the department’s delivery of emergency and nonemergency activities is excellent

Table 1 Priority Ranking of Fire Department Services

Service/Program	Ranking
Emergency Response	Very High
Emergency Planning	High
Fire Code Enforcement (Inspections & Plan Review)	High
Facility Staff Training	High
Alarm System Monitoring	High
Public Education (School Program, Senior Program)	High
Special Needs Database	Medium
Fire and Life Safety Outreach (Smoke Detectors, Home Safety Inspections, Chimney Inspections, Safety Fairs)	Medium
Car Seat Program	Low
Citizen's Fire Academy	Low
Public Relations Activities (Community Events, Scout Projects, Station Tours, Block Parties, Fire Truck Rides)	Low

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION

The mission of the Pagosa Fire Protection District is to provide the highest level of service to our community by protecting and preserving life, environment and property with honor.

VISION

It is our vision to be leaders in delivering the highest quality and cost effective prevention, education and emergency response services.

VALUES

Respect – for those we serve, for myself and those I serve with

Integrity – always do the right thing

Loyalty – we support our organization and each other

Courage – act safely and responsibly

Stewardship – of community resources and public trust

ORGANIZATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Everybody Goes Home

To the Residents:

We owe the residents of Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County the highest quality of service possible, characterized by pride, professionalism, community-focused delivery and public trust.

We will strive to improve productivity; remain fiscally responsible in our decision making; treat every resident with the utmost dignity and respect; ensure our equipment is always in superior working order and ready to respond to meet the customer's needs; learn our profession to the best of our abilities; strive to deliver a personalized "WOW" customer service experience on every response; and maintain the public trust through the highest levels of responsibility and accountability. We will be untiringly proactive in the fields of education, engineering and enforcement, resulting in continuous improvement of the fire prevention initiatives. We will use every resource available to help our customers recover in the fastest and least disruptive manner.

- Be humble, be tactful, be responsible, and be nice
- Be fiscally responsible
- Learn your profession
- Perform daily and monthly truck and equipment checks
- Ensure your personal protective equipment is in good condition
- Continue to develop and deliver proactive programs that meet the changing demographic needs of the community
- Strive to meet or exceed expectations defined in Department Standards of Cover
- The customer is the reason we are here
- Welcome members of the community

To the Fire Department:

We owe the Pagosa Fire Department our fullest commitment and dedication. We will always look beyond the traditional scope of our individual positions to promote teamwork, innovation and organizational effectiveness.

We will work through the chain of command to resolve issues at the lowest possible level of the organizational structure; prioritize our goals and objectives to most effectively meet the fire department mission; demonstrate the highest levels of personal integrity; be accountable for our decisions; and strive to learn our profession to the best of our abilities.

- Curtail any culture of negativity
- Work together as a unified entity
- Work within the chain of command
- Set high standards
- Maintain the appearance of equipment and facilities
- Place the good of the department ahead of personal gains

- Follow rules, regulations, and procedures
- Look professional
- Respond to 10% of all alarms
- Attend all of departmental drills
- Get involved with a committee of shift activity
- Perform one duty shift per month
- Be adaptive to the changing needs of our customers, internal and external

To Each Other:

We owe each other a working environment characterized by trust and respect for the individual, fostering open and honest communications at all levels, and personal accountability for our actions.

We will work hard to develop a culture of unity, treating one another with dignity and respect, leading by example, promoting participative management, fostering open and honest communications at all levels. We will be accountable to one another and do our best to recognize and reward those who go beyond our day to day expectations. We will treat our second family as we treat our first.

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Be tolerant of other people's thoughts, opinions and differences
- Mentor and help train new fire fighters
- Recognize the contributions of others
- Reward the contributions of others
- Open and honest communications and feedback
- Be on time
- Perform your daily duties, do not leave them for someone else
- Lead by example
- Don't ask someone if they need help, help them. If you mess it up, clean it up.

To Ourselves:

We owe ourselves personal and professional growth. We will seek new knowledge and greater challenges, and strive to remain at the leading edge of our profession.

We owe it to ourselves to be the best we can be, striving to gain greater knowledge and experience in our profession, going beyond meeting minimum standards but striving to meet departmental expectations. We realize we are an extension of the fire department in our personal and professional lives and shall always act in a manner that is consistent with the values of the organization, demonstrating the highest levels of pride, professionalism, integrity, and accountability.

- Maintain firefighting skills and update regularly
- Get involved
- Become a certified FFI
- Communicate effectively
- Be physically and mentally fit

RECOMMENDED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1 — Continue to improve service delivery to the community

Objective 1-A: Prepare for and request a re-evaluation of the current Insurance Services Organization Public Classification of the municipality.

Recommendations:

- Gather required information
- Identify improvement opportunities
- Implement improvements in advance of the rating visit
- Request and support the rating visit

Objective 1-B: Achieve accreditation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence.

Recommendations:

- Utilize accreditation standards as a guide for improving department effectiveness.
- Increase volunteer awareness of the benefits of accreditation.
- Gather required information
- Identify improvement opportunities
- Implement improvements in advance of the peer review
- Request and support the peer review

Objective 1-C: Update district maps and pre-incident plans for target hazards

Recommendations:

- Identify target hazards
- Assign responsibility to do surveys and develop maps
- Provide training to those assigned to do surveys and produce maps
- Conduct pre-incident plan surveys
- Develop pre-incident plans
- Provide training to members on target hazard features
- Develop a program to include a schedule to review and revise as needed
- Annually review and update map books and pre-incident plans

Objective 1-D: Update the local emergency plan that includes the four phases of emergency planning

Recommendations:

- Identify and coordinate with other planning partners

- Conduct a hazard assessment
- Develop response annexes to address identified hazards
- Exercise the plans
- Continue refining Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (Current Program)

Objective 1-E: Increase the reliability of volunteer staffing for emergency responses.

Recommendations:

- Explore, evaluate and implement options for improving volunteer response

Objective 1-F: Increase utilization of volunteers in departmental operations

Recommendations:

- Identify workload appropriate for volunteer personnel and develop job descriptions accordingly
- Utilize special skills and talents of department members
- Create a skills inventory
- Recruit responding and non-responding members who can provide specialized skills to the department
- Investigate implementation of a point system for volunteer to better balance activities (emergency and non-emergency)

Objective 1-G: Continue to Support an active Explorer program

Recommendations:

- Investigate and develop a plan to charter and host an Explorer type program for teenager to involve them in the department's mission.
- Provide support as needed
- Develop a recruitment partnership with the school district

Objective 1-H: Improve post-emergency victim support

Recommendations:

- Review and revise as needed Occupancy Support Sector Procedures
- Provide training to all department members for victim support
- Investigate expanding the program to include support services for businesses

Objective 1-I: Determine the extent to which the Department will provide Technical Hazardous Materials responses and mitigation.

Recommendations:

- Determine the availability of these services from other sources
- Conduct needs analysis to determine the level of need in the community
- Develop partnerships with other sources as needed
- Identify service gaps remaining
- Identify resources required to fill gaps
- Develop specification and a funding plan for resources needed to fill the gaps
- Review and revise policies and operating guidelines as needed
- Provide needed training to meet the service requirements

Objective 1-J: Determine the extent to which the Department will provide a Technical Rescue response.

Recommendations:

- Conduct needs analysis to determine the level of need in the community
- Determine the availability of these services from other sources
- Develop partnerships with other sources as needed
- Identify service gaps remaining
- Identify resources required to fill gaps
- Develop specification and a funding plan for resources needed to fill the gap
- Review and revise policies and operating guidelines as needed
- Provide needed training to meet the service requirements

Objective 1-K: Determine the extent to which the Department will provide Emergency Medical Services

Recommendations:

- Conduct needs analysis to determine the level of need in the community
- Determine the availability of these services from other sources
- Develop partnerships with other sources as needed
- Identify service gaps remaining
- Identify resources required to fill gaps
- Develop specification and a funding plan for resources needed to fill the gaps
- Review and revise policies and operating guidelines as needed
- Provide needed training to meet the service requirements

Objective 1-L: Develop and adopt an operational plan for the Department

Recommendations:

- Identify elements needed in an operational plan
- Develop draft plan for approval
- Implement the Plan
- Provide needed training to all personnel

Objective 1-M: Develop and implement a post-incident analysis program

Recommendations:

- Identify best-practices with regard to post incident analysis
- Develop a procedure to collect post incident analysis data
- Develop procedures to review and recommend changes based upon post incident analysis data.

Goal 2 — Improve organizational effectiveness

Objective 2-A: Review, reorganize and revise Policies and Operating Guidelines

Recommendations:

- Review, revise and implement policies and guidelines for consistency and currency (Current Program). Maintain controlled updates.

Objective 2-B: Develop desk manuals for critical functions.

Recommendations:

- Identify critical functions
- Draft step-by-step procedures to accomplish critical functions
- Publish and maintain desk manuals for critical functions

Objective 2-C: Improve availability of support mechanisms to all members.

Recommendations:

- Provide training to all members on the employee assistance program (EAP) and available resources to support members and how to access EAP.
- Provide training to all members of the family assistance unit (FMLA) and available resources to support members and their families and how to access FMLA.
- Develop and train members to a guideline for access to critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) services.

Objective 2-D: Develop a competency evaluation system to comply with NFPA training standards.

Recommendations:

- Identify required skill sets by department position (Current Program)
- Establish performance criteria for various skill sets (Current Program)
- Develop a schedule for a competency evaluation
- Conduct competency evaluations

Objective 2-E: Manage the increasing training requirement impacts on members' time.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate and implement a training program, allowing for individualized, flexible training to meet identified needs
- Ensure good communication for changes in upcoming training offerings

Objective 2-F: Review, revise and implement an annual training plan based upon a needs analysis.

Recommendations:

- Implement a training program evaluation system
- Continue to improve the quality of training facilities, props and resources
- Ensure training is specific to departmental mission and values
- Maintain support for outside training that meets department training standards
- Increase the use of simulation in the training program
- Increase the number of multi-company, scenario based training sessions
- Utilize typical staffing for crew assignments in training rather than standard crew size of 2 to 4 members.
- Continue emphasis on hands-on training as opposed to classroom training.

Objective 2-G: Create an organizational environment that will promote member commitment and loyalty and improve participation.

Recommendations:

- Review and revise the recognition programs as needed
- Continue to support social activities
- Continue to publish an internal newsletter with information to connect members to the organization
- Foster team building through the use of appropriate training methods.

Objective 2-H: Redundancy/Succession Planning

Recommendations:

- Conduct a Job Task Analysis & Job Task Matrix
- Develop a primary and a secondary Job Task Matrix
- Evaluate distribution of Job Tasks to make sure more than one individual is competent at any given Job Task.

Objective 2-1: Redistribute resources to match community priorities and department workload.

Recommendations:

- Create a Job Task Matrix to determine current workload and to aid in planning how to redistribute the workload to match the priorities and capacity availability.
- Review and reassign shift alignment volunteers to better balance activity levels.
- Review and reassign shift duties to better balance activity levels between career staff.
- Investigate alternate staffing models (On call paid volunteers)

Objective 2-J: Develop a recruitment and retention plan.

Recommendations:

- Identify required daylight, night and weekend volunteer turnout needs.
- Develop a target volunteer recruit profile, with a focus on availability and commitment
- Conduct exit interviews with volunteers who resign.

Objective 2-K: Evaluate department standards with regard to volunteer availability, commitment and time constraints.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate all Department requirements for consistency and validity of Department mission, values and goals.
- Implement changes as needed.

Objective 2-L: Establish and annually update an Accident Prevention and Risk Management Plans

Recommendations:

- Establish risk management plan to include on and off scene strategies to manage risk and minimize potential for injury and death.
- Establish an accident prevention plan to comply with statutory and other legal requirements.
- Train department members in the risk management model according to the training needs identified in the accident prevention plan.

- Research and purchase safety equipment as appropriate.

Goal 3 — Continue to support effective community outreach and involvement

Objective 3-A: Maintain positive relations with local, regional and national media, through the use of a Public Information Officer.

Recommendations:

- Identify and establish a Public Information Officer
- Provide news releases to the media on significant incidents, prevention topics and Department activities
- Prepare a fire department fact sheet for distribution to the press
- Encourage members to submit articles to national trade magazines
- Provide media relations training to staff

Objective 3-B: Increase public awareness of department activities.

Recommendations:

- Provide open communication with the community through the use of publications, public meetings, community events, and electronic media as needed
- Conduct service user surveys
- Investigate the use of the community "welcome wagon" to introduce department services to new residents.

Objective 3-C: Review and revise department involvement in community outreach activities based upon effectiveness and cost efficiency.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate the relativity of all outreach activities ranked in the planning process to the departmental mission. Eliminate any that do not support the department mission.
- Evaluate ability of the department to provide proper resources to continue provided a current menu of services/programs.
- Revise program delivery to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Redistribute department resources to match community priorities.

Goal 4 — Provide and maintain quality equipment and facilities

Objective 4-A: Develop a comprehensive asset management plan.

Recommendations:

- Develop a comprehensive apparatus needs assessment

- Develop an apparatus replacement program
- Develop a small equipment replacement program
- Seek alternate funding sources when appropriate

Objective 4-B: Conduct a comprehensive facilities assessment

Recommendations:

- Conduct a facilities assessment
- Identify improvements needed
- Develop a schedule and funding plan to complete improvements

Objective 4-C: Continue to provide quality maintenance for facilities, apparatus and equipment

Recommendations:

- Ensure adequate funding for facilities, apparatus and equipment maintenance programs
- Ensure daily and monthly apparatus inspections are completed
- Evaluate outsourcing maintenance tasks to provide for better time-utilization and fiscal efficiency
- Acquire quality reserve apparatus

Objective 4-D: Continue to support advanced information management systems and practices

Recommendations:

- Continue to provide maintenance of departmental network and its associated hardware and software.
- Maintain a data protection plan

Goal 5 — Be fiscally pro-active and responsible

Objective 5-A: Explore and implement partnerships with other emergency response agencies and other service providers.

Recommendations:

- Review and update mutual aid agreements, including regional agreements to provide services
- Identify joint purchasing opportunities
- Identify opportunities to share training and physical resources such as equipment and facilities

Objective 5-B: Continually explore revenue enhancement opportunities

Recommendations:

- Apply for grants as available and appropriate (Current Program)
- Apply for Safer grant for staffing analysis
- Utilize state surplus program if appropriate
- Utilize local and state purchasing consortiums as appropriate
- Continue to explore other revenue opportunities (Current Program)

Objective 5-C: Develop and adopt a financial plan for the Department

Recommendations:

- Identify elements needed in a financial plan
- Develop draft plan for approval
- Approve and implement the plan

Objective 5-D: Examine all departmental operations for cost efficiency

Recommendations:

- Review all department functions on a cost-benefit basis
- Redistribute resources to match community priorities and department workload
- Consider outsourcing when appropriate

Objective 5-E: Examine and restructure employee compensation to make the department more consistent and competitive with other departments in Southwestern Colorado.

Recommendations:

- Modify insurance benefits to provide a cafeteria style program ensuring all employees have basic health coverage, but allowing employees to select what additional coverages they want, while limiting the expense incurred by the department.
- Create a career path that offers competitive compensation to attract high quality candidates and insure high rates of retention.

Goal 6 — Improve leadership of Department

Objective 6-A: Expand leadership opportunities at all levels of the organization.

Recommendations

- Continue to provide Lieutenants opportunities for professional growth and increased responsibility for high profile projects.
- Expand leadership opportunities (line and staff) for volunteers.

Objective 6-B: Provide leadership training to staff

Recommendations:

- Provide career officers, regular leadership and management training having a focus on volunteer issues, time management and project management.
- Conduct "team building" exercises between career and volunteer staff.

Objective 6-C: Develop a culture that supports appropriate leadership behavior

Recommendations:

- Define leadership expectations and department philosophy
- Incorporate into performance appraisal systems where appropriate

Objective 6-D: Research, develop and implement a staff rotation plan

Recommendations:

- Research and develop a plan to rotate career staff amongst companies to prevent stagnation
- The plan would also support the goal of providing necessary redundancy of operations

Goal 7 — Improve communications

Objective 7-A: Review and revise the policies, guidelines and media used for internal communications and the decision making process.

Recommendations

- Clarify and enforce proper use of the chain of command
- Explore, evaluate and implement a variety of communications tools that encourage open expression of issues, concerns and suggestions.

Objective 7-B: Improve communications via appropriate methods and/or media

Recommendations:

- Identify an official forum for the submission and consideration of new ideas
- Discussion and training of policy and procedure changes at drills and meetings, accompanied by e-mail and newsletter notification prior to implementation
- Posting official Department communications in a central location
- Weekly company meetings with the Chief Officer
- Implement written monthly company reports
- Post training notices in a more public location

Objective 7-C Develop appropriate feedback mechanisms to promote professional development

Recommendations:

- Revise the career staff performance appraisal form to better match job description, pare back subject areas and subjectivity.
- Develop an informal performance appraisal system to provide feedback to volunteer staff based upon job description.
- Train all members in the uses of feedback systems.

Goal 8 — Department Master Plan

Objective 8-A: The department shall develop a three-year Master Plan that addresses the Strategic Goals and Objectives identified in the Strategic Plan and establishes responsibility for completion and timelines.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The ability to define "great" service requires a set of tools that can be used to measure the performance of an organization. These tools allow an organization to evaluate its performance through observation of changes in key performance indicators. They also allow an organization to compare itself with other similar organizations to identify opportunities for improvement.

In addition to the objective measurements inherent in the Strategic Plan, the Pagosa Fire Protection District has identified the following Performance Objectives as critical to maintaining "great" service to the community and will strive to meet these benchmarks. Pending the writing of the Standard of Cover required for the Accreditation process, some of these benchmarks may change, be eliminated or additional benchmarks be identified.

First engine en-route in 90 seconds or less 90% of the time during business hours

Arrive on the scene in 7 minutes or less 90% of the time in the town of

Pagosa (In initial response zones)

Contain fire to the compartment of origin 75% of the time

Maintain per capita fire loss under \$25 per capita

0 fire deaths annually

0 Fire Fighter deaths annually

0 time-loss fire fighter injuries annually

Volunteers will respond to 10% of all alarms on average

All members will attend 75% of Department training sessions

Volunteers will perform 1 duty shift per month

All combat fire fighters will be certified Fire Fighter I