

ROSS TOWNSHIP
FIRE DEPARTMENT



2016- 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

Ross Township

Fire Department



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning is essential for the success of any public or private organization. Strategic planning provides organizations with a collaborative, comprehensive plan to guide them. Without a well-designed strategic plan, an organization may waste valuable resources operating on a day-to-day basis without achieving results. Organizations embark on their strategic planning exercises by determining their vision for the future and addressing broad themes of common interest to all.

The Ross Township Fire Department has conducted an extensive revision of its strategic plan, which was first adopted in 2010. A core team of department members worked collaboratively to refresh the organization's commitment to excellence and has developed a path toward future success. It takes organizational and individual leadership to enter into and participate in a strategic planning process.

The commitment of the members of the Ross Township Fire Department to produce this document is commendable. The process does not end with the production of this document or by simply establishing goals and objectives. By nature, the strategic plan must become elemental in the day-to-day operations of the department. Each organizational unit and member must function in concert to effectively and efficiently implement the plan. It will require constant review and adjustment to assure continued relevance and focus. The elements of the strategic plan will be managed by the senior leadership of the fire department, but will be implemented by members at various levels of the organization.

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MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

As the Fire Chief, I am pleased and proud to present the revised and updated Ross Twp. Fire Department Strategic Plan. This plan builds on the success of our previous plans and sets the direction of the department for the next several years. It is the result from members of the department. I would like to thank everyone involved for their efforts in making this revision of the Strategic Plan a great success.

The Ross Township Fire Department has enjoyed tremendous support from the Board of Trustees, the township Administrator, and the citizens of Ross Township. This support has allowed the department to accomplish a lot of the goals set forth in the previous plans and I am sure we will continue to be successful in the future.

I encourage everyone to review this document and embrace the goals and strategies contained within. Doing so will ensure the department continues to challenge the status quo, break new ground, and remain a leader in the provision of emergency services. The fire department is known for providing great service to our citizens. With this plan as our guide, I am sure we will continue to do so.

I wish everyone good health and happiness and you continue to make the Ross Twp. Fire Department a great place to work. Keep up the good work and enjoy your career, but most important, stay safe.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chief Steve Miller, OFE

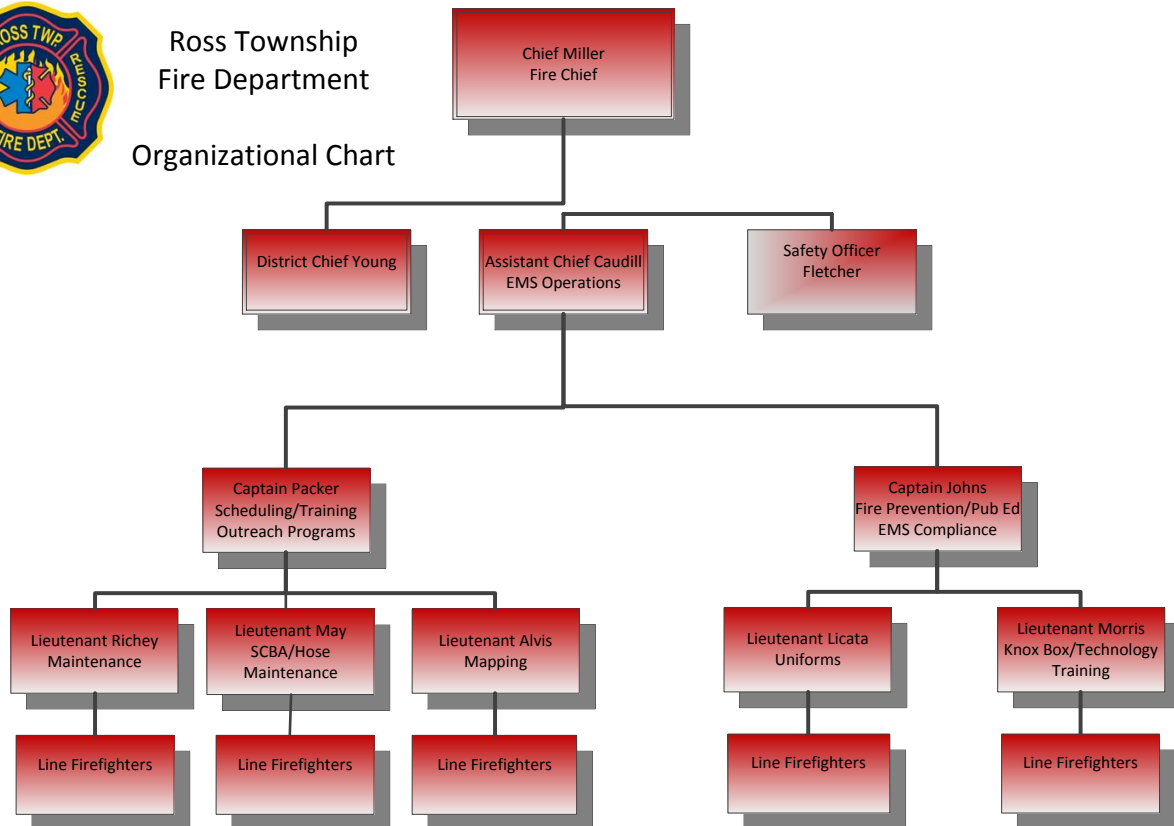
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Organizational Chart



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Current State

Since the last five-year strategic plan, the Ross Township Fire Department strived to be the best fire department it could be. During recent years the department tried to increase staffing, and revenue from state and local funds had continued to decrease. This impeded any and all progress, leaving the department to still rely on paid-on-call personnel to assist on-duty crews. Current staffing is five personnel during the day and four in the evenings, meaning paid-on-call personnel are very much a part of the primary response. This includes EMS calls that may require additional paramedics. There has been a steady decline in volunteer response. The current staffing level has made it difficult in complying with the “2-in, 2-out” standards and provides inadequate staffing for structural fire responses.

With minimal paid staffing and volunteer activity continuing to decline, the department relies greatly on mutual aid companies for multi-company details. Recently, the department has conducted trainings with neighboring departments. These trainings will become more frequent and cover more topics in the upcoming years. Operations with mutual aid companies run smoother and safer when there is familiarity and understanding of expectations amongst the crews.

In 2015, The Ross Township Fire Department was audited by the Insurance Service Office. The audit consisted of evaluating the operations of the department, the water supply and communications. The rating for the township improved from a Class 4/4B to a Class 3/3Y. This will provide a cost savings to the homeowners and business insurance premiums within the township.

Within the past 10 years, Ross Township has seen steady growth of both residential and commercial properties. Up until then Ross Township was mostly a rural township. This growth has brought on anti-growth sentiments from long term residents. This situation could possibly create problems for the department in the future when the department needs to improve funding in the way of tax levies,

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MISSION, VISION, and VALUES

Clearly stated and intentionally simplistic, the Ross Township Fire Department Mission accurately describes the organizations general purpose.

“The Ross Township Fire Department is an organization of dedicated professionals whose mission is to Save Lives, Protect Property, Protect the Environment, Provide the best services possible to the community and to treat people nice.”

Building on this mission, the department has developed **Vision** statements, thus establishing targets of excellence for the future. The following are our identified vision statements:

THE ROSS TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

- We will have adequate staffing available at all times to provide fast, safe, and effective operations for both a medium-risk structure fire and simultaneous EMS incident.
- We will respond from modern, adequate facilities that are located to the best advantage, blending both geographic and demand-based concepts.
- We will continually maintain the necessary skills and abilities to safely handle the challenges of emergency incidents now or in the future.
- We will be an active participant in shaping the regulations and standards of our industry and will be proactive in meeting the same.
- We will continue to maintain our effective teamwork, high level of professionalism and focus on personal improvement.
- We will use solid research and statistical data to provide the foundation for funding requests and organizational change.

Recognizing that its collective personality and the values of its members enhance the organization, the Ross Township Fire Department has declared a set of **Core Values** that include such statements as:

- We value honesty and integrity at every level of our organization.
- We value the dedication, commitment, and caring attitude of the people who make up our organization.

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- We value the teamwork, camaraderie, and mutual support that make our organization a family.
- We value a continuous spirit of professionalism, as it encourages respect from our peers and those we serve.

Summary of Mandates

The Ross Township Fire Department has formally adopted the following: Ross Township Personnel Manual, Ross Township Fire Department Standard Operational Guidelines, Ross Township EMS Protocol (Academy of Medicine Southwest Ohio EMS Protocol), Butler County Emergency Management Agency specific policies, and Butler County Fire Chief's Association specific policies. The department follows federal laws and guidelines that set employee hours such as the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Affordable Care Act. The department follows NFPA standards to the best of its ability. Although not mandated under OSHA regulations, the department incorporates many OSHA safety practices in its operations.

Priority of Services Provided by Ross Township Fire Department

The following are those services in priority order:

- Community Risk Reduction (Code Enforcement – Public Education)
- Advanced Life Support Emergency Medical Services
- Basic Life Support Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Suppression
- Basic Rescue (vehicle extrication, machinery entrapment)
- Advanced Rescue (confined space, high-angle, water, trench, collapse)
- Hazardous Materials Mitigation

Philosophy of operations

A key element of the Ross Township Fire Department organizational philosophy is a high level of commitment to our customers. The Ross Township Fire Department recognizes the importance of customer satisfaction.

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The **expectations** of the Ross Township Fire Department that were identified are:

- Maintain a positive attitude
- Always do what is right, influencing others to do the same
- Never stop learning or teaching others
- Treating our customers nice
- Proficient Skills and Knowledge
- Modern, Effective Equipment
- Keeping Pace With Change
- Provide Community With A Sense Of Security
- Financial Efficiency



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

STRENGTHS

It is important for any organization to identify their strengths in order to assure they are capable of providing the services requested by customers 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 business should be seriously reviewed to evaluate the rate of return on precious staff time. Through a consensus process, some of the *strengths* of the Ross Township Fire Department were identified as listed below.

- Unity and teamwork of personnel
- Effective governing policies and procedures
- Progressive training programs targeting new skills while maintaining proficiency in Fire & EMS operations
- Adequate apparatus and equipment for today's services
- High level of professionalism recognized by community
- Specialized equipment i.e... extrication, water and ice rescue
- Ability to obtain outside funding
- Support of Township Administration
- Emergency Medical Services (State of the art equipment, skilled personnel)
- Experienced Command Staff and Company Officers

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 problems, it is unusual for organizations to be able to identify and deal with these issues effectively on their own. For any organization to either begin or to continue to move progressively forward, it must not only be able to identify its strengths, but also those areas where it does not function well 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.



- Inadequate staffing (No minimal/maximum staffing plan)
- Personnel able to obtain EMS Paramedic certifications
- Difficulty in balancing training quantity with training quality
- Difficulty in complying with "2-in, 2-out" standards
- No medical benefits for part time personnel
- No outside live fire training facilities/fire training grounds
- No automatic mutual aid dispatch protocol
- No dedicated supervisor for each shift

OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities for an organization depend on the identification of strengths and weaknesses and how they can be enhanced. The focus of opportunities is not solely on existing service, but on expanding and developing new possibilities both inside and beyond the traditional service area. Many *opportunities* exist for Ross Township Fire Department.

- New standards / regulations lead to safer, more effective operation
- Federal funding opportunities (Assistance to Firefighters Grants)
- Maintaining a contract to provide Emergency services to the Village of Millville
- Potential water supply improvements can lead to ISO improvements
- Growth in the township leads to growth in tax base
- Strategic planning for organization's future
- New technology leads to safer, more effective work environment
- Potential for continuing partnerships in training programs
- Potential for our firefighters to advancing their careers in the fire service
- Social Media to promote the department and services we provide to the community



THREATS

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 future threats to the Ross Township Fire Department include:

- Staffing - Declining number of volunteer firefighters
- New standards and regulations funnel away funds from core service (Un-funded Mandates)
- Public opinion can be turned negative unexpectedly
- Federal funding can lead to greater federal regulation
- Instability of funding levies
- Fire protection in non-hydrant areas
- Anti-growth sentiments cause internal political friction
- Growth in community bringing increased service demand
- Employee Retention
- Butler Regional Interoperable Communications System (BRICS) charging for dispatch



CRITICAL ISSUES

Through both an internal and external analysis of the various issues facing the organization, the Strategic Planning Group identified a number of concerns that could ultimately affect the overall welfare of the organization itself. These issues, if ignored, have the potential to impact the ability of the Ross Township Fire Department to deliver its product to the level the customer desire.

These "critical issues" are identified as follows:

- Staffing: The ability to have sufficient personnel available, 24 hours per day, to safely and effectively handle the increasing service demand.
- Funding: The continuing need to balance the available funding resources with the increasing cost of doing business effectively.
- Capital Resources: Making certain the apparatus keeps pace with the changes in the community and assuring efficient, well-placed facilities are located to meet service demand.
- Training: Assuring the maintenance of existing basic skills while meeting the need for new technologically advanced training.
- Regulations and Standards: Keeping pace with an ever-increasing list of standards and legislation designed to govern the safety and efficiency of the fire service.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The customer-centered strategic planning process, to this point, has dealt with establishing the mission, vision, and values of the organization. In addition, identification of strengths, weaknesses and needs of both the organization and customer was accomplished. In order to achieve the mission of Ross Township Fire Department, realistic goals and objectives must be established. Goals and objectives are imperative to provide the individual members with clear direction. As goals and objectives are management tools, they should be updated on an ongoing basis to identify what has been accomplished and to note changes within the organization and the community. The attainment of a performance target should be recognized and celebrated to provide a sense of organizational accomplishment.

The goals and objectives should now become the focus of the efforts of the Ross Township Fire Department. Great care was taken to ensure that the critical needs and areas of needed enhancement previously identified were addressed within the goals and objectives.

By following these goals and objectives carefully, the organization will be redirected and guided into the future. They should also greatly reduce the number of obstacles and distractions for the organization and its members.

The strategic planning group set priorities for the accomplishment of specific objectives. Those that carried higher priorities are scheduled for completion first and lower priority objectives scheduled later. Overall these goals and objectives provide very specific timelines for the next several years and more general timelines beyond that. The leadership of Ross Township Fire Department should meet periodically to review progress towards these goals and objectives and adjust timelines and specific targets as needs and the environment change.

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Goal 1.0 Administration Goals

Objective 1.1 Enhance the leadership abilities within the department by providing opportunities to obtain the appropriate skills

Providing our personnel with skilled leaders is a vital element to the success of our department. By tradition, leadership training has been overlooked into departments of our size, and at times our operations have suffered because of a lack of leadership. As the demand for our services for fire and EMS continues, having our members thoroughly trained to lead, impacts not only emergency operations, but all areas of our department. Ross Twp. Fire Department is committed to providing our members and Officers with top-quality leadership training. To address the objective, the department will;

- ***Encourage and provide funding for member participation in outside training opportunities focused on command and leadership.*** Members can gain valuable education in these core areas by attending outside training courses and seminars, such as the FDIC, the State Fire School at Bowling Green University and leadership seminars given by the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association.
- ***Completion of OFE for Chief, Assistant Chief, and Captains.*** It had been a goal of the last strategic plan for all administrative Officers to complete the Ohio Fire Executive course through the Ohio Fire Chief's. Although not required it will be a goal to offer to any Lieutenant to attend this course. This will help them prepare for future promotions and promote growth as an officer with the department.

Timeframe and Cost

The majority of the action items under objective 1.1 can be accomplished within the first two years of this plan and within the operating budget. We currently budget \$4,000 per year in the training line item. The plan would be to alternate going from the State Fire School one year and sending members to other seminars dealing with leadership and command training. This would put no extra cost to the budget. The current tuition for the Ohio Fire Executive is approximately \$9,500



Objective 1.2 Increase the number of paid staff members to 5 per shift

The department currently schedules 4 part-time personnel each day, assigning 2 personnel to each station. There are 36 part-time employees either assigned to a unit day rotation, or submit availability to cover these shifts. In a 30 day month there are 2,880 hours that need to be covered. This equals 80 hours per employee. Some employees work up to 120 hours a month, others may only work 36 hours. The current problem facing the department is there is no differentiation between the normal staffing level and a minimum staffing level. Because of this, a station must close if someone calls off work and the shift is not filled. Closing a station has a negative impact on response times. It also means that we are unable to staff a second medic unit, or send an engine to auto accidents. The department needs to address this and increase the normal staffing level to provide a relief factor for personnel absences.

Reviewing literature and industry standards, a majority of departments set their daily staffing based on a 25% relief factor (1.25 times the minimum level). Setting aside NFPA standards for staffing fire apparatus due to the lack of funding and other resources, we know that our minimum staffing level is 4 to staff 2 personnel at each station. Using the relief factor formula above, this would put us at 5 personnel per shift for normal daily staffing. It should be our goal to begin staffing 5 personnel per shift in the upcoming year.

Timeframe and cost

The cost to add a 5th part-time employee on shift 24 hours a day and 365 days a year is \$148,920. This figure is based on the top pay of a part-time firefighter/paramedic, and would likely cost less than this in the end. If the funding isn't available for 24/7/365 coverage, the next option at a reduced cost would be to staff the 5th person nights and 24 hours on the weekends. This option would factor in the chief as the 5th person on weekdays. This option would cost \$95,676, based on the top pay of a part-time firefighter/paramedic. The addition of the 5th employee could be phased in so the department has at least a 3 month trial period to see how many additional personnel will need to be hired to fill shifts. Four out of the five positions each shift should be filled with personnel on unit day rotations, allowing personnel who submit availability to sign up for the fifth position.

Additional benefits:

Adding a 5th person to shift has several other benefits that will make a positive impact on fire and EMS responses. These additional benefits include:



- Operating a chase vehicle for EMS calls that reduces the cost of fuel and maintenance of medic units and engines; while keeping the second crew in station and available for a backup response (fire or EMS).
- Improves patient care for advanced life support calls that require two paramedics to treat the patient during transport. Staffing a 5th person will still keep a second medic unit or engine available in the township in this scenario.
- The 5th person could bring a second medic unit to an accident with multiple injuries if 2 transport units are needed (if a firefighter is free to move from the engine to medic on scene for transport).
- Improves overall firefighting operations for both suppression and rescue efforts on scene.

Objective 1.3 Policies and Procedures Review

To ensure the Policies and Procedures are applicable to our current mission and they can be consistently applied;

- Provide a review of 100% of all department policies and procedures each year to ensure they are applicable and are consistently applied.
- Provide Officer training of policies and procedures to ensure an understanding, the expectation of enforcement, and accountability
- Provide department training on all new and revised policies and procedures to all members through the daily trainings.

Objective 1.4 Implement an After-Action Report

A concept adopted from the military, the after-action report (AAR) is basically the informal curbside critique or kitchen table discussion that's common in nearly every firehouse after a significant fire or other alarm. It usually focuses on what actions were taken, what might have been missed, any corrections and any additional details that should be added to the accounts, which are re-told by those who were intimately involved in the action. AARs don't need to be led by an officer; any firefighter can initiate the AAR so long as the objective is focused on learning, solving problems and improving performance. Many firefighters will be surprised to know what an AAR is *not*. It's *not* a lecture or a gripe session, nor is it a time to gather and hand out blame, or to ridicule others. Instead, the AAR is informal, flexible and focused on *learning*. The AAR will be developed and will be placed on the department server and will be made

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available to all members of the department. The AAR will be a standard report and will have the minimal questions

- What was our mission?
- What went well?
- What could have gone better?
- What might we have done differently?
- Who needs to know?

Objective 1.5 Improve current member retention programs

Keeping volunteers and/or part time personnel once we recruit them is always a challenge. To bring someone on the department who has no training at all can take over an 18 month period. This is the time it takes to get them through fire and EMS certification classes. Often, once a recruit has obtained these certifications their lives might change during this time frame and their commitment to the department isn't a priority anymore. A positive work environment, socially and physically, go a long way towards maintaining future excellence. Creating a positive atmosphere, providing opportunities to serve, facilitating training and reducing the burden on volunteers will help meet this objective. To do so we will;

- ***Increase the amount of outside training available.*** Exposing our members to nationally recognized experts, trainings on best practices as well as providing networking opportunities with peers allow for professional development and personal growth.
- ***Increase recognition of accomplishments and positive involvement.*** Providing our staff with positive feedback and recognition of their accomplishments and commitment shows our concern for and appreciation of their time and effort. We will develop a commendation form and place it on the computer server. This form will be made available to all officers to fill out to recommend that employee for recognition.
- ***Keep current with employee salaries.*** The pool of part time Firefighter/Medic/EMT's in the Tri-state area is decreasing. Several reasons for this decrease in manpower are more and more volunteer departments are transitioning to part time status and several departments are hiring full time employees. In order to entice our employees to stay is to pay them a fair wage. It is obvious the department can't afford to pay a high pay scale but we can be average to what other surrounding departments are paying their employees. In 2012 the department conducted a survey to the tri-state fire departments on their pay scales. Ross Twp. was a little below the average pay. The board of trustees agreed to



adjust employee salaries above the average salary. It is the intent of this strategic plan to stay current with salary ranges by conducting another survey in 2018.

- ***Investigate and implement a better system of volunteer compensation.*** Currently Ross Twp. volunteers receive points for each run made and training they attend. Each member receives two points for each run and training and the points are valued at \$6.00 a point. Essentially they receive \$12.00 a run. If the incident is over an hour those points are adjusted to reflect the time they spent on the incident. Many departments have transitioned to a paid on call system to better compensate the volunteers for their time. An analysis will be conducted to the area departments to see if Ross is comparable to our neighboring departments.

Timeframe and Cost

These action items, with a few exceptions, can be implemented within the first year of the plan. The majority of these items are low cost and in most cases can be absorbed within our operating budget. Funding outside training will cost an estimated \$2,000 a year. Depending upon what type of system is implemented to better compensation, this option could cost up to \$25,000 per year.

Objective 1.6 Seek to renew our operating levy to adequately fund operations and needed capital improvements

Maintaining financial sustainability is a critical component to this plan. A fiscally responsible department with secure funding to cover its needs is a benefit to the community we serve. For years Ross Twp. has operated with its operating budget and has not been plagued by the cost overruns and deficits that seems to commonplace in local government. There are many challenges facing us in the future including staffing, apparatus replacement, facility issues and more. In 2014 we asked the voters in Ross Township to increase our operating levy by 2.75 mils. This request was passed and we now are in fairly good shape financially for the next 8 years. We will have our original 3 mil fire levy expire in 2016. We proposed that we place our original 3 mill levy on the ballot in 2016 for renewal. This renewal will not generate the 3 mil but will have an effective rate of 2.68. In 2019 it is projected that we will again ask for a renewal on the 2.75 mil levy. In 2021 will evaluate and if necessary ask for a replacement for this levy. We realize that the Ross Township community carries a large tax burden already and we will ask for exactly what we need.

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Objective 1.7 Celebrating the Departments Centennial

The Ross Township Fire Department has a long and storied history, battling fires and saving lives. 2017 will mark the 100th year that the department has been in operation. From the early days of the fire department utilizing a hand pushed ladder truck, to a 1928 Model "A" Fire Engine to today and the modern technology used to battle flames and respond to emergency medical calls. To plan for this historic event a committee will be formed in late 2016 to set goals and objectives. One major goal that will be addressed is to honor the past firefighters and EMS personnel that built the foundation of this department. Other ideas that could be developed are:

- Commemorative Patch
- Centennial decals for department apparatus
- Challenge Coins
- T-shirts

Timeframe and Cost

The timeframe for this objective will obviously take place throughout 2017. At the annual Township Open House the department will hold a celebration



Goal 2.0 Operations Goals

Objective 2.1 Maintain the apparatus prevention maintenance program in compliance with national standards.

Emergency apparatus are expensive to purchase and maintain. These are vehicles that can sit for long periods of time, and then expected to perform without fault under extreme conditions. Their maintenance is also a significant liability for the township. As we purchase new, more advanced vehicles; the maintenance becomes more difficult to perform. Currently our smaller apparatus maintenance is performed by our part time staff. Maintenance on a larger apparatus is also performed by dedicated on duty personnel. This has served us well, however, due to national standards, it is necessary to have certified emergency vehicle technicians (EVTs) maintain the fleet. In an effort to address maintenance and liability issues we propose the following;

- ***Renew contract with an EVT certified company to perform annual pump testing.*** This annual testing assures that the mobile fire pumps are performing to specifications and is completed by a third party for quality assurance.
- ***Renew contract with an EVT certified company to perform bi-annual safety inspections.*** These annual inspections of the entire fleet help to identify maintenance and safety issues before they become a problem and are required under National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.
- ***Certify our current members that are Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified to the Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT).*** We have a few members that are ASE certified and have shown interest in obtaining the EVT certification. By the department paying for these certifications these members can perform maintenance to their abilities and make repairs or maintenance for the tools that we have in the firehouse we will be compliant with national standards. For repairs that go beyond their capabilities or a lack of specialized tools, we will outsource to repair shops that currently repair the bigger jobs.

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Timeframe and Cost

To help alleviate liability concerns, these action items should be implemented within the first two years of the plan. We currently utilize certified contractors for bigger jobs. While the initial cost of this program may be higher than our current maintenance arrangements, as we progress through the Annual Safety Inspections and the identified repairs needed, we will save money and reduce the risk. ASTs will cost approximately \$3,000 per year and pump testing will cost approximately \$800. Certifying our current members to obtain their EVT certification will cost approximately \$1,000 initially.

Objective 2.2 Implement and maintain long range apparatus replacement schedule

Maintaining a modern state of the art fleet of emergency apparatus is of critical importance to our efforts to constantly improve our services and response to emergencies. As vehicles become obsolete, it is essential to replace them with a set timeframe. The department has set a lifecycle of 15 years for ambulance units, 20 years for fire engines, and 22 years for tankers and brush units. In order to maintain an efficient fleet we will recommend replacement of the following apparatus for the next several years. The development of a long range apparatus plan, tied to this plan, makes sense fiscally and operationally. This plan will take into consideration not only operational issues but deployment issues tied to growth forecast for the township. As the plan can be developed by department personnel, there is no cost involved. Listed below is the long range apparatus replacement schedule.

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Table 1: Engine/Tanker Replacement Schedule Example A (30 total years in service; 20 front-line, 10 reserve)

Unit	2017	2018	2020	2030	2037	2040	2050	2060
E-102 (1998)	RESERVE 1997 ENG							
R-101 (1998)	1998 ENGINE		RESERVE 1998 ENG					
2017 Engine	2017 ENGINE		2017 ENGINE	RESERVE 2017 ENG				
2020 Engine			2020 ENGINE	2020 ENGINE		RESERVE 2020 ENG		
2030 Engine				2030 ENGINE		2030 ENGINE	RESERVE 2030 ENG	
2040 Engine						2040 ENGINE	2050 ENG	RESERVE 2040 ENG
1993 Tanker		1993 TANK						
2012 Tanker					2012 TANK			



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Objectives

Purchase a medic unit every 5 years. With 3 medic units in our fleet, this will keep a medic unit in service as a primary unit for 10 years, and reserve status for 5 years.

This could be altered to any schedule deemed necessary by fleet maintenance personnel.

Table 3: Medic Unit Replacement Schedule

Unit	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037	2042
2010 Medic	RESERVE 2010					
2014 Medic	2014 Medic	RESERVE 2014 Medic				
2017 Medic	2017 Medic	2017 Medic	RESERVE 2017 Medic			
2022 Medic		2022 Medic	2022 Medic	RESERVE 2022 Medic		
2027 Medic			2027 Medic	2027 Medic	RESERVE 2027 Medic	

Table 2: Engine Replacement Schedule Example B (24 total years in service; 16 front-line, 8 reserve)

Unit	2017	2020	2028	2036	2044	2052
E-102 (1998)	RESERVE 1998 ENG					
R-101 (1998)	1998 ENG	RESERVE 1998 ENG				
2017 Engine	2017 ENG	2017 ENG	RESERVE 2017 ENG			
2020 Engine		2020 ENG	2020 ENG	RESERVE 2020 ENG		
2028 Engine			2028 ENG	2028 ENG	RESERVE 2028 ENG	
2036 Engine				2036 ENG	2026 ENG	RESERVE 2036 ENG



2.3 *Install new I-Pads in first-out apparatus*

Since 2004 the department has utilized Toughbook's computers in the first out Engines and Command vehicle. These computers hold the township fire preplans on commercial buildings, mapping programs, and Pictometry, a software that gives aerial views and various measuring tools. This software is licensed through the Butler County Auditor's office. These computers are over ten years old and are considered obsolete. The goal is to purchase Ipad's with a data package and to install in the first out engines and squads. With the installation of the iPad the department can begin to utilize the software Active911. Active911 is a digital messaging system that delivers alarms, maps, and other critical information instantly to first responders. Active911 also allows response efforts to be monitored in real time. Active 911 is being used by the majority of the members of the department already. With an annual department subscription each vehicle will be able to be tracked in real time

- Install mounting hardware and I-Pads in Engine 102, Rescue 101, Medic 101 and Medic 102
- Change license from the Toughbook computers for Firehouse Medic to the new Ipads in the Medic unit.
- Purchase department subscription for Active 911 for the entire department.

Timeframe and Cost

The estimated cost for the mounting hardware and I-Pads for four first out units is approximately \$4,000. There would be no charge to change the license for Firehouse Medic from the Toughbook computers. The annual cost for the data package for each I-Pad is estimated at \$20 per month. Estimated cost for the annual subscription for the Active911 program is \$600 per year. The timeframe for this project is for 2016.

2.4 *EMS Supply - Improve the inventory management system*

In this age of fiscal responsibility, it is critical for fire departments to manage supplies efficiently. EMS operating supplies take up nearly 70% of our operating supply budget line item. Using yesterday's approach to inventory management and supply and logistics is no longer an acceptable practice. Having a reliable, effective and efficient inventory management system can help our organization reduce costs, limit waste, improve employee relations and limit liability. It can also positively impact patient care by having the right supplies and drugs



available when needed. It is the intent of this strategic plan to improve the inventory management system for our Emergency Medical Services.

- Determine what medication and narcotic have been wasted due to the expiration date
- Determine what other EMS supply that is deemed invasive that has had to be destroyed.
- Research if those items can be kept to a minimum stock item as long as there were replacements available.
- How much carrying stock or inventory must we have in order to meet product demand, as well as replenishment demand?
- How our products are managed in order to limit loss.
- Research if any third party software is available for inventory control

Timeframe and Cost

Funding for this objective is unknown depending on a third party vendor for the software (operative IQ) if the department decides to go that route. Researching our inventory control management should start early in 2017.

2.5 Maintain Capital Improvement Plan

A **Capital Improvement Plan (Program)**, or **CIP**, is a short-range plan, usually four to ten years, which identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule and identifies options for financing the plan. Essentially, the plan provides a link between the fire department and the Board of Trustees to plan for the annual budget. The following items are identified in the Capital Improvement Plan for the next 5 years;

- 2017 – Engine – Replacing (E-101) 1994 Boardman
- 2018 – Tanker – Replacing (T-102) 1993 GMC Topkick
- 2018 – Hurst Tools – Replacing Hurst tools on both Rescue 101 and Engine 102
- 2020 – Engine – Replacing 1997 Ferrara (Old E-102)
- 2021 – Self Contained Breathing Apparatus – Replacing SCBA that will be 17 years of age



Timeframe and Cost

The timeframe is self-explain as noted above. Replacement cost is noted in the CIP during the annual budget. Every effort will be made to apply and obtain grant funding for the Hurst tools and the SCBA's

3.0 Fire Prevention Goals

3.1 *Fully implement comprehensive fire prevention inspection program*

Full implementation of a comprehensive fire prevention program demonstrates our commitment of creating a safe community through education, engineering, and fire code enforcement. A successful program focuses on fire prevention and protection for our citizens and the business community. To enhance our program we will;

- ***Increase the number of certified fire safety inspectors.*** Our program at times is hampered by the lack of certified inspectors. During the year when we conduct our annual inspections most of the time these inspections are conducted by our on duty crews. Although not required to be an inspector to conduct a survey of the business our credibility would improve if that person is certified.
- ***Implement computerized inspection tracking.*** This system is already available to us through Firehouse software. This will streamline our reporting and will give us the opportunity to analyze our inspection and violations throughout the year.
- ***Develop a Standard Operating Procedure for conducting inspections.*** Developing this SOP will assure that all business are inspected in a timely manner and a regular basis. This SOP will include provision for re-inspections.

Timeframe and Cost

The cost of the above items could vary from how many members would like to attend the fire safety inspector's class. The cost for each member being certified would cost approximately \$800 per student. There would be no cost to computerize our reporting, just the cost of setting the software up for use.



3.2 *Develop new Fire Prevention Programs*

The Ross Twp. Fire Department has been very proactive in promoting fire safety throughout the year. Each year we reach over 700 children through our fire prevention classes. In 2008 we received funding from the AFG Fire Prevention & Safety grant to purchase a 35 foot fire safety house. Every October we take the trailer "on the road". But teaching fire safety should not be the only thing that we are teaching our community.

- ***Conduct a community needs assessment.*** This needs assessment for our community is to develop new programs that would include a wide range of citizens that we serve on a daily basis.
- ***High School CPR programs*** - Schools are excellent places to offer CPR training, whether it's for graduation requirements, to help students with after-school or summer job requirements, or simply to improve cardiac survival rates in their community. When you teach kids CPR in high school, middle school, or elementary school, you're strengthening community safety -- and giving students skills they can carry into the future.
- ***Safe senior program*** – In 2013 the department initiated a Safe Seniors program. This program started well and was well received. Unfortunately this program seems to have fallen off. It is the intent of this strategic plan to revised this program
- ***Market Home Safety Inspections.*** Several times throughout the year we are asked to conduct a home inspection for either a group home or a resident that is going through adoption procedures. When requested by a resident, our members will conduct a safety inspection of the home. This plan will market our department through community newsletters and other print media available to conduct courtesy home inspection for our community residents.
- ***Smoke alarm Blitz Program*** – A grant was written in 2015 through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant to purchase 250 dual purpose smoke alarms. It is our intent if we are awarded this grant to conduct a smoke alarm blitz in certain areas of Ross Township. Blitzes are team of firefighters who will canvas the neighborhoods to check each home for working smoke alarms. For homes with no alarms, teams will install the alarm with a 10 year lithium battery.

Timeframe and Cost

Funding for this component of the plan is estimated at \$10,000 through the AFG grant. The plan would be to purchase 250 alarms. The NFPA programs mentioned above will cost approximately \$2,000 to implement and could be developed within the first two years of the plan. All items



mentioned in this objective could be funded through the AFG Fire Prevention and Safety grant program.

4.0 Training Goals

Objective 4.1 Strengthen Officer development program.

Developing a well-trained core of Officers is critical to maintain safe and effective operations. As the role of fire department personnel constantly expands, new training and supervisory challenges constantly await. The department will develop an Officers Training Development Program for current and other personnel that wish to become an officer in the future. To address this we will;

- ***Research current standards for Fire Officer i.e. NFPA 1021.*** Researching this standard will give the department a bookmark as to where we current stand and what areas of the standard would apply to our operations.
- ***Research current programs.*** Research other fire departments current Fire Officer programs for content and adaptability to our determined standards
- ***Design and edit a program to match our needs.*** Once a program is found design and edit the officers program to specifically serve the needs of the Ross Twp. Fire Department.
- ***Utilize Fire Studio Software.*** Fire Studio has been purchased to use for virtual command simulations. This program has proven valuable to officer training and will need to be utilized to its fullest potential.
- ***Encourage Officers and Require future Officers to obtain Fire Officer I Certification*** Fire Officer I training is designed to assist fire officers in solving varied problem and situations that they will be required to manage effectively in today's ever-changing fire service. Fire Officer I is taught locally at regional vocational schools, at the State Fire School in Bowling Green or on-line. It would be in the best interest of the department to require any new officer to obtain this certification before applying for the position.

Timeframe and Cost

It is estimated that it will take a year to research and develop a Fire Officer I program to fit the needs of our department. The cost associated to develop the program will be at a minimum. This can be accomplished by officers that are on duty. Once the program is developed, the program can be delivered by senior officers of the department.



4.2 Implement firefighter core competencies program.

Over the past several years we have made great strides to improving our training program. However, we still have a large area for improvement. To improve the quality of our training program and the training that our personnel receive, we will implement performance based testing. Performance standards allow our personnel to gauge their knowledge and skills and determine areas for improvement.

- ***Development of a core competency list.*** Develop a list of competencies for each job function needed to be safe and effective during emergency incidents.
- ***Notify all department personnel.*** Notify all department personnel of what the competencies are and the expectations which will be required of them.
- ***Conduct Testing.*** Conduct testing of all personnel to determine educational and skill level of personnel.
- ***Identify members who need assistance.*** By testing all personnel in their competencies this will set the gauge of which personnel are in need of assistance and to improve upon knowledge base.
- ***Conduct remedial training.*** Targeted training to improve those personnel which have deficiencies in their competencies.
- ***Develop a contingency plan.*** At the conclusion of the first phase of the performance base training, a plan will have to be developed to deal with personnel who cannot pass the competencies for their respective job functions.
- ***Develop a training plan.*** Development of a training plan to improve operational readiness and effectiveness based upon the outcome of competency testing.
- ***Re-testing of core competencies.*** After a period of time competencies will be re-tested to evaluate the effectiveness of training conducted by the staff.

Timeframe and Cost

Implementation of performance based training will begin the first year of the plan. The performance base drill sheets have been developed for some time and are used on periodically basis. The training schedule for 2016 will be developed using the performance base skill sheets throughout the year.



4.3 Improve the Fire Apparatus Operator Program.

Our current fire apparatus operators (FAO) currently undergo significant training in order to become certified. However, there is room for improvement and a need for standardization of this training.

- ***Development of classes.*** Research possible class structures and time-frames to conduct training classes using the same instructor and/or group of instructors to facilitate student learning.
- ***Standardize class instruction materials.*** Determine class material based on current practices and standards utilized by the department.
- ***Develop a core instructor group.*** Select personnel to become lead instructor to minimize different teaching methodology and practices.
- ***Conduct FAO training.*** Identify personnel which have completed current requirement to become operators, and conduct training based upon what was learned during research and development.
- ***Conduct Evaluation of Class.*** Evaluate FAO class to determine necessary changes needed to produce high quality learning environment.

Timeframe and Cost

The fire apparatus operator program will be revised during the first year of the plan to make any improvements needed. Cost for this objective will be at a minimum and will be absorbed through the annual budget for training

4.4 Improve overall training effectiveness and reach to personnel within RTFD and to outside agencies.

Over the last several years training has played a critical role in how personnel perform their duty on a daily basis. It has now become more important than ever to have a highly educational training program, and to provide that training to our personnel as well as our neighboring mutual aid departments. Ross Township Fire Department has a staff of well trained and highly motivated line and staff officers which has become a driving force for this community of fire professional. For the personnel to maintain the highest level of readiness training must be effective. To be effective our staff should;



- ***Develop a core of instructors which would act as a training staff.*** This core of instructors shall consist of highly motivated officers and senior firefighters willing to motivate our personnel to want to master the skills and knowledge of this profession.
- ***Develop a solid working relationship with outside agencies.*** There is a vast knowledge base outside of our department which can be used in for the purpose of achieving a higher standard and developing more skilled and knowledgeable personnel. Ross Township Fire Department also has leading instructors which could provide a wealth of knowledge and skills to other outside agencies.
- ***Develop a consistent training schedule.*** In this demanding profession it can be difficult to find time to train, but it is essential to find that time.
- ***Develop inspiring training courses.***
- ***Evaluate course content.*** Evaluation of courses maintains the relevance of the course as well as identifying needed changes to the courses.

Timeframe and Cost

Training improvements can be made within the first year of this plan. Cost for this objective will at a minimum and will be absorb through the annual budget for training

5.0 Safety Goals

5.1 Enhance the health, safety, and wellness of members

The health, safety, and wellness of our members are the guiding forces behind this plan. A healthy and safe workforce is beneficial in many ways. Over the past few years, we have taken significant steps to improve our health and safety. These steps included purchasing new fitness equipment that is now at both of our stations. Safety is also addressed by training and equipment that is responsive to our member's needs. Being in good physical condition is a vital part to our job. 60% of Line of Duty Deaths in the fire service every year are cardiac related. In January of 2010, Ross Township lost Police Chief Carl Worley to a cardiac related line of duty death. Every member of this department should take this as an incentive to getting in good physical condition in the memory of Chief Worley. To continue to enhance our health and safety we will;

- ***Develop a fitness program.*** Currently, we do not have a structured program for physical fitness. We have several members both part time and volunteers that take advantage of

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the physical fitness equipment. A fitness program will be developed during the first year of the plan to encourage all members to participate in the program.

- **Physical fitness trainer.** A physical fitness trainer can be brought in to conduct training on our equipment and give the department training on "showing us the ropes" and what programs we can develop to match the needs of the members of the department.
- **Require Stress Testing.** Implement a program that requires all members over the age of 40 years old to get stress testing every two years. This type of testing could discover a problem before it occurs on the fire ground.

Timeframe and Cost

The cost of the above items is very little compared to someone losing their life in the line of duty. There will be no cost associated with the first two items.. These two items can be conducted by the members while they are on duty. For the volunteer members this can be conducted during a monthly training session. The bi-annual stress test can be performed at a cost of approximately \$300 per testing session. All of the items listed above are expected to be taken place during the first year of the plan

5.2 Complete an evaluation and revise our adoption of NFPA 1500

In 2004 the department adopted the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1500 Occupation Safety & Health Program for the fire service in to the departments Standard Operating Guidelines. In the appendix section of the standard is a worksheet that lists the requirements set in the standard. These worksheets address each section of the standard and list whether we are: in compliance, partial compliance, compliance with administration action, expected compliance date, and expected target date for completion.

- **Develop Worksheet.** As a template, use the worksheet in NFPA 1500 in developing a suitable worksheet for Ross Twp.
- **Complete the worksheet.** Completing the worksheet to see where the department is complying with NFPA 1500 and what improvements are needed to come into compliance
- **Compile written report.** Once the worksheet is completed compile a written report along with a cost estimate to bring us in to compliance

Timeframe and Cost



Once the worksheet is completed a cost estimate will be calculated. There will minimum cost in developing the worksheet. Conducting an audit of the department will be minimum cost as well. This action item will be completed within the second year of the plan.

5.3 *Revise the department risk management plan*

It is the policy of the Ross Township Fire Department to provide and to operate with the highest possible levels of safety and health for all its members. The prevention and reduction of accidents, injuries, and occupational illnesses are goals of the fire department and shall be primary considerations at all times. This concern for safety and health applies to all members of the fire department and to any other persons who might be involved in fire department activities. This department's risk management plan is intended to comply with the requirements of NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program.

- ***Evaluation conducted by an outside source.*** Experience has shown that there is often a significant difference between a written occupational safety and health program and the actual program that has been implemented. Periodic evaluations are one method that can use to measure how the program is being conducted. This evaluation should be conducted by a qualified individual from outside of the fire department, as outside evaluators provide a different perspective, which can be constructive.

Timeframe and Cost

Completion of this objective should be made during the first year of the plan. The evaluation of the risk management plan can be conducted by the townships Health & Safety Committee and will be of little cost to the township.

5.4 *Provide adequate staffing to structure fires – Unit Dispatching*

It is the responsibility of the fire chief to provide sufficient staffing at working structure fires. This is not to be an argument for the number of personnel on an apparatus or on duty within the department. The department should have the ability to provide at least 15 firefighters at a structure fire within a reasonable time. Mutual aid plays an important role in providing these additional resources. Almost all jurisdictions rely to some extent on mutual aid from surrounding areas to provide firefighting resources on a routine or major emergency basis. Some

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department use automatic mutual aid on initial response. Often mutual aid departments are called to the scene once our first arriving apparatus reach the scene. To help resolve this issue, the plan will develop and implement a unit dispatching with our neighboring departments on reported structure fire. The concept of unit dispatching will be an advanced and faster response times to our most critical calls; structure fires and cardiac arrest, the chances to provide for life-saving maneuvers are increased. To implement this unit dispatching we will;

- ***Establish zones in the township.*** The township will be divided into 9 different zones and in each zone will be determine what fire departments are available to response accordingly.
- ***Enter information into CAD system.*** Once the zones have been established and we have determined what automatic aid departments are to respond, the information will be entered into the Butler County Communications Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD).

Timeframe and Cost

The above list objectives will be dependent on the Butler County Communication Center. The CAD system has the capability to place this information in. It will be depend on whether the county will be willing to take the time to enter the information in. The will be no cost for this objective to the township. It is hoped that this action item will be implemented by the end of 2016.