

# Wheat Ridge Fire Protection District 5 Year Strategic Plan



Steven Gillespie, Fire Chief  
Wheat Ridge Fire Protection District  
2010

## Table of Contents

Mission Statement .....	iv
Message from the Fire Chief.....	v
Strategic Plan: The Roadmap for Success .....	- 1 -
Improve Emergency Preparedness .....	- 2 -
Insurance Service Organization (ISO) evaluation:.....	- 2 -
Service Delivery Model (SDM): .....	- 3 -
Funding to support department operations:.....	- 3 -
Partnerships: .....	- 3 -
Facility Relocation Study .....	- 4 -
Vehicle Efficiency Assessment: .....	- 4 -
Vehicle and Equipment Inspection & Maintenance Program: .....	- 4 -
Vehicle Replacement Program: .....	- 5 -
Facility Maintenance Program:.....	- 5 -
Informational Technology (IT): .....	- 5 -
Workload Analysis:.....	- 6 -
Enhance the Health and Safety of Department Members .....	- 7 -
Compliance with Federal Regulations, Rules, and Recommendations:.....	- 7 -
NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program:.....	- 8 -
16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives: .....	- 8 -
Departmental Training Practices: .....	- 8 -
Strengthen Management and Organizational Development .....	- 10 -
NFPA 1021: Standard for Fire Officer Professional:.....	- 10 -
Employee Development:.....	- 10 -
Firefighter Probationary Training Program:.....	- 11 -
Employee Appraisal System:.....	- 11 -
Corrective Action Procedures: .....	- 11 -
Clearly defined job descriptions and expectations for each position within the organization: .....	- 11 -
District Handbook: .....	- 11 -
Financial Procedures:.....	- 11 -
Improve Fire Prevention and Safety Education .....	- 12 -
2006 International Fire Code: .....	- 12 -

---

Annual Building Inspection schedule: .....- 12 -  
Annual Pre-Fire Plan schedule: .....- 13 -  
Tracking of inspection and fire trends: .....- 13 -  
Arson Investigations:.....- 13 -  
Public Education:.....- 13 -

## **Mission Statement**

DOING THE RIGHT THINGS AT THE RIGHT TIMES FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

## Message from the Fire Chief

Founded in 1926, the Wheat Ridge Fire Department Inc. was organized to meet one objective: the Service-of-Others. With the establishment of the Wheat Ridge Fire Protection District in 1946, the two organizations “merged” and together provided fire protection and related services to the residents, guests, and property owners of the fire district. Since 1926, our organization has never wavered in this commitment. As such, I am pleased to announce that our commitment to the Service-of-Others has never been stronger. By leveraging equipment, resources, and our single greatest asset: *OUR MEMBERS*, the fire department continues to meet an ever-increasing demand for service during a very difficult social-economic period in our nation’s history.

Since January 2005, the District has experienced a 33% increase in calls for service. As such, the fire department must continue to look for additional ways to leverage resources to increase safety, efficiency, and proficiency of our operations while simultaneously performing in a fiscally prudent manner.

As a demonstration of our organization’s commitment to the service-of-others; Tuesday, December 1, 2009, reflective a paradigm shift when the members of the Wheat Ridge Fire Protection District (District) adopted the new mission statement:

*Doing the Right Things at the Right Times for the Right Reasons*

The adoption of this mission statement embodies the mindset and operating principles of our organization.

In adhering to our new mission statement, the senior leadership team of the fire district met in the fall of 2009 and developed a guidance document to serve as the foundation for current and future service enhancements. As such, the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan was developed. The Strategic Plan encompasses the major functional aspects of our organization: Administration, Fire Prevention, Operations, Emergency Management, and Support Services.

For over 83 years, our organization has answered the call for service. With the implementation of the goals outlined within the framework of the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan, the District shall continue to answer the call for service for the next 83 years and beyond.

Yours Truly,

Steven M. Gillespie

## Strategic Plan: The Roadmap for Success

The Strategic Plan for 2010-2014 identifies the District's (a.k.a. Fire Department) key goals and objectives during the next five fiscal years. The Strategic Plan is the result of a comprehensive review of the Fire Department's operations using various organizational assessment models and utilities to evaluate the Department's overall systems and processes. Completed by the Fire Department's Command Staff, this review is testimony to the spirit and dedication of every department member who continually strives for new and innovative ways to increase safety, efficiency, and proficiency of department operations.

As outlined within this document, the main goals of the Fire Department shall be:

- I. Improve Emergency Preparedness**
- II. Enhance the Health and Safety of Department Members**
- III. Strengthen Management and Organizational Development**
- IV. Improve Fire Prevention and Safety Education**

In addition to the Fire Department's main goals, the list of critical initiatives is included within the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan to identify the primary utilities that the department members will employ in achieving the four main goals of the Fire Department.

## Improve Emergency Preparedness

*Enhance the department's preparedness to respond to calls for service.*

A FIRE DEPARTMENT CRITICAL INITIATIVE IS THE ENHANCEMENT OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS. FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, THE DEPARTMENT HAS IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING CRITICAL INITIATIVES:

Insurance Service Organization (ISO)  
Service Delivery Model  
Funding  
Community Relations  
Facility Relocation Study  
Vehicle Efficiency Assessment  
Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Program  
Vehicle Replacement Program  
Facility Maintenance Program  
Informational Technology (IT)  
Workload Analysis

A FIRE DEPARTMENT CRITICAL INITIATIVE IS THE ENHANCEMENT OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS. FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, THE DEPARTMENT HAS IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING CRITICAL INITIATIVES:

To meet the aforementioned District initiatives to improve Operational Preparedness, the District shall:

### Insurance Service Organization (ISO) evaluation:

- a. Conduct an Operational Assessment study to determine the department's current operating practices as measured against the ISO Public Protection Classification (PPC) matrix.

**Completed**

- b. Develop the systems and processes necessary to improve the fire department's operations as related to the PPC and improve the department's current ISO rating from and Class Four (4) to Colorado's first ISO Class One (1) Fire Department.

**Completed and Ongoing- System enhancements to the communications, training, records management, annual service testing have been implemented. Staffing factor is being addressed with the hiring of 11 fulltime employees to serve in the capacity of engineers and officer. In addition, six (6) apprentice firefighters will be introduced into the**

organization as well as 18 part time employees to begin staffing a third unit by the end of 2011.

### Service Delivery Model (SDM):

- c. Transition the current SDM to a model that utilizes career and volunteer firefighters.  
**Completed-** In February of 2011 the District was awarded a SAFER Grant to introduce career personnel into the organization.
- d. Develop and administer a selection process for the ranks of engineer, lieutenant, captain, and chief officer.  
**Completed**
- e. Actively recruit certified firefighting personnel and train all entry-level personnel to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001: *Standard for Professional Firefighter Qualifications; Firefighter II*.  
**Completed and ongoing-** In addition, all entry-level personnel are required to obtain Firefighter II and NIMS 100, 200, 700, & 800 certifications within one year of appointment.

### Funding to support department operations:

Develop and implement a sustainable plan to secure additional funding through the collection of property taxes, user fees, and grants.

**Completed and ongoing-** In May of 2010 the District received voter authorization to increase the operating mill levy by 3.8 mills. In addition, the District has received a Federal Grant to hire 11 career firefighters. Furthermore, the initial research and development process for introducing non-emergency transports into the service delivery model has been completed. Non-emergency transports is scheduled to begin in 2013.

### Partnerships:

- f. Continue to build relationships within the industry and community alike to increase operational efficiency and maximize the Department's ability to leverage resources in a fiscally prudent manner.  
**Ongoing-** The District continues to develop partnerships with public safety partners as well as community and civic leaders through cooperative efforts (e.g., memorandum of understanding for Arson Procedures). In 2010, the District entered into an Auto-Aid agreement

with the Fairmount Fire Protection District for reported and confirmed structure fires.

- g. Solicit community involvement in the planning and development of future operations.

Not yet implemented

- h. Develop formal community relations document.

Not yet implemented

### Facility Relocation Study

Conduct a feasibility study using routing and travel time technology to identify the most effective location to position department facilities and sources of funding to achieve this goal.

Completed- Two GIS analysis have been conducted. Data from these studies has indicated that the current placement of both stations provides adequate first response coverage and overlapping coverage for secondary responses (e.g., NFPA 1710).

### Vehicle Efficiency Assessment:

Conduct a Vehicle Assessment to determine size, type, and response location of the department's apparatus fleet needed to maximize resources in a fiscally prudent manner.

Completed- The District has developed and apparatus replacement schedule for all vehicles. In addition, based upon the data yielded in this study the, the District was able to surplus two reserve apparatus.

### Vehicle and Equipment Inspection & Maintenance Program:

- a. Institute program whereby all apparatus and equipment is inspected at predefined service intervals.

Completed- Standard Operating Procedures have been developed outlining the daily, weekly, and monthly inspection procedures of all suppression vehicles.

- b. Institute program whereby all apparatus and equipment is serviced by certified Emergency Vehicle Technicians.

Completed- The District entered into a maintenance agreement with West Metro Fire Rescue to provide all repair and maintenance to the District's fleet.

- c. Create vehicle rotation and replacement program to reduce maintenance costs and extend fleet service life.  
**Completed-** The District has developed and apparatus replacement schedule for all vehicles.

### Vehicle Replacement Program:

- a. Identify the life cycle for apparatus based on the projected needs of the community served.  
**Completed-** The District has developed and apparatus replacement schedule for all vehicles.
- b. Develop the processes to use the Economic Theory of Vehicle Replacement to balance the cost of purchasing fire apparatus with the cost of maintaining fire apparatus to minimize overall fleet related expenses.  
**Completed-** The District has developed and apparatus replacement schedule for all vehicles.

### Facility Maintenance Program:

- a. Conduct a needs assessment of current facilities as they relate to operational efficiency (accommodating current and future staffing needs, gender, etc.) and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.  
**Ongoing-** A facilities committee has been created. This committee is responsible for conducting a space needs analysis of the District's Administrative and operational workspaces.
- b. Institute program whereby all facilities are inspected at predefined times to ensure optimal performance.  
**Not yet implemented.**
- c. Identify a service and replacement schedule for all capital facility items, (e.g., heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC), roofs, etc.).  
**Completed-** A replacement schedule has been created for all capital facility items.

### Informational Technology (IT):

- a. Maximize current technology to reduce redundancy and streamline operations.  
**Ongoing-** the District has changed IT vendors and initiated the process of updating servers and workstations.

- b. Manage electronic record keeping.  
Ongoing- in the spring of 2011 the District purchased a new records management system. All personnel will be training on this system in May of 2011.
- c. Implement electronic tracking of all capital equipment.  
Ongoing- the District has identified a bar coding tracking system that is compatible with the new records management software. This tracking system will be available from the vendor in the summer of 2011.
- d. Use available technology to develop benchmark for response times and the systems and processes to identify trends in responses.  
Not yet implemented- this will be an ongoing process through the use of the new record management software.
- e. Develop a new and "user-friendly" website for public and member access to relevant operational information.  
Ongoing- the District is currently in the second phase of the development process for a new user-friendly website.

### Workload Analysis:

Conduct monthly evaluations of department operations to ensure the productivity and efficiency of the department operations.

Ongoing- The District uses a database project tracker to manage all "major" assignments. In addition, the new record management software will complement the existing processes and improve overall coordination and information sharing of District related activities.

## Enhance the Health and Safety of Department Members

*Enhance and expand programs to monitor and improve the health and safety of our members.*

A FIRE DEPARTMENT CRITICAL INITIATIVE IS THE ENHANCEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY OF DEPARTMENT MEMBERS. TO INCREASE HEALTH AND SAFETY, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

1. Achieve and maintain compliance with Federal Regulations governing Fire Departments Operations.
2. Adopt the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program.
3. Adopt the National Fallen Firefighters Foundations 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.
4. Increase safety, efficiency, and proficiency of operational procedures through advancements in departmental training practices.

TO MEET THE AFOREMENTIONED DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND SAFETY, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

### Compliance with Federal Regulations, Rules, and Recommendations:

- a. In accordance with applicable Federal Laws, Rules, etc., to develop and implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) outlying procedures and practices for compliant operations (e.g., fit testing, medical screening, etc.).

*Completed and Ongoing- The District has developed and implemented a variety of Standard Operating Procedures to provide guidance to the membership. In addition, procedures are being updated or developed on an ad needed basis to continue to improve the District's efficiency.*

- b. Develop a standardized system for reviewing and updating SOP and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) to ensure continuity of operations and adherence to all applicable Laws, Rules, etc.

*Ongoing- Procedures are being updated or developed on an ad needed basis to continue to improve the District's efficiency*

### NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program:

- a. Conduct department safety survey using NFPA 1500 as the baseline for implementing safety standards/procedures into SOP, SOG, and daily operations.

Not yet completed

- b. Develop and implement SOG to serve as the principle foundation for emergency response and mitigation procedures and practices for compliant operations.

Ongoing- The District is in the developmental stages for introducing Standard Operating Guidelines to provide guidance to the membership.

### 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives:

Draft 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives in SOP and use as baseline, in addition to NFPA, for implementing safety standards and procedures into SOP, SOG, training programs, and daily operations.

Completed.

### Departmental Training Practices:

- a. Conduct a Needs Based Analysis of departmental operations and develop sequential learning modules in accordance with NFPA recommendations and operational necessities that are position specific.

Completed and Ongoing- This process was successfully introduced into the organization in 2010. This process will be utilized for all successive years.

- b. Conduct multi-company drills with surrounding agencies.

Completed and Ongoing- This process was successfully introduced into the organization in 2010. This process will be utilized for all successive years.

- c. Expand collaborative training programs with other emergency service providers.

Completed and Ongoing- This process was successfully introduced into the organization in 2010. This process will be utilized for all successive years.

- d. Develop and deliver a Safety Officer training program for all Chief, Captain, and Officer Ranks by an accredited Training Group, i.e. National Fire Academy.

Not yet implemented.

- e. Develop a comprehensive vehicle driving/certification program.  
**Completed and Ongoing-** This process was successfully introduced into the organization in 2010. This process will be utilized for all successive years.
- f. Develop a comprehensive officer development program.  
Not yet implemented.
- g. Develop and distribute a training program manual with defined training expectations.  
Not yet implemented.
- h. Develop measurable performance benchmarks for specific positions within the organization and methods for increasing proficiency levels for members who may not meet the identified performance benchmarks.  
Not yet implemented.

## Strengthen Management and Organizational Development

*Promote Organizational effectiveness and develop Leadership Capabilities.*

A FIRE DEPARTMENT CRITICAL INITIATIVE IS TO STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. TO INCREASE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

1. Compliance with Span of Control Recommendations contained within NFPA 1021: Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications and National Incident Management System (NIMS) guidelines
2. Employee Development Program to mentor and prepare members for career advancement within the organization
3. Firefighter Training program that covers probationary periods.
4. Employee Appraisal System
5. Corrective Action Procedures
6. Defined job descriptions and expectations for each position within the organization
7. District Handbook
8. Financial Procedures

To improve Management and Organizational Development, the Department shall:

### NFPA 1021: Standard for Fire Officer Professional:

- a. Develop a fluid modular organization chart to reflect current organizational needs and functions.  
**Completed.**
- b. Delegate divisional responsibilities and day-to-day operational supervision to Command Officers.  
**Completed.**
- c. Authorize the creation of additional company-level supervisor positions through the creation of a new promotional ladder within the department reducing span of control to three (3) to seven (7) members per supervisor.  
**Completed.**

### Employee Development:

- d. Perform needs assessment regarding minimum skill sets for each position within the department and develop training modules specific to the identified skill sets.

Not yet implemented.

- e. Support members' pursuit of higher learning.  
Ongoing

### **Firefighter Probationary Training Program:**

Create a specific training program that outlines and tracks a probationary member's development during their probationary period.

Not yet implemented.

### **Employee Appraisal System:**

Develop employee evaluation and appraisal systems designed to enhance the development of employees throughout the organization.

Completed- This program will be officially launched in the fall of 2011.

### **Corrective Action Procedures:**

Develop corrective action procedures which encompass a "Coaching to Success" and sequential progression of corrective action.

Completed.

### **Clearly defined job descriptions and expectations for each position within the organization:**

Completed.

### **District Handbook:**

Review and update the District Employee Handbook to reflect current organizational structure and operating practices.

Completed- Adopted by the District Board of Directors in the fall of 2010.

### **Financial Procedures:**

Develop procedures that outline the financial policies, procedures, and practices governing the department's fiscal management.

Completed- Adopted by the District Board of Directors in the fall of 2010.

## Improve Fire Prevention and Safety Education

*Enhance and develop additional fire prevention and educational outreach programs to make the community safer.*

A FIRE DEPARTMENT CRITICAL INITIATIVE IS TO IMPROVE FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY EDUCATION. TO INCREASE FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY EDUCATION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

1. Encourage the adoption of the 2006 International Fire Code
2. Implement an Annual Building Inspection schedule
3. Implement an Annual Pre-Fire Plan schedule
4. Implement a system for tracking of inspection and fire trends
5. Standardize Arson Investigations procedures and recruit new personnel
6. Enhance and strengthen the Public Education component of fire prevention

To improve Fire Prevention and Safety Education, the Department shall address the following:

### 2006 International Fire Code:

Work with City of Wheat Ridge Officials to adopt the 2006 International Fire Code.

Completed- Adopted by City Council

### Annual Building Inspection schedule:

- a. Organize hardcopy files for buildings within the Fire District and enter records into the electronic database to populate annual inspection schedule.

**Completed.**

- b. Conduct annual fire inspections in accordance with NFPA recommendations.

**Ongoing- A plan has been developed, however, with limited resources (i.e., staffing) Fire Prevention is still working towards completing 100% of all required annual inspections. Fire Prevention will be requested a part time inspector be appointed by the Board of Directors in the summer of 2011.**

- c. Develop a plan to utilize non-operational members to work in the Fire Prevention Division.

Ongoing- With the introduction of career staff, on duty personnel will begin conducting annual inspections beginning in 2012.

### Annual Pre-Fire Plan schedule:

- d. Organize hardcopy files for buildings within the Fire District and enter records into the electronic database to populate annual pre-fire plan inspection schedule.  
**Completed.**
- e. Conduct annual pre-fire plans in accordance with ISO and NFPA recommendations.  
**Completed.**
- f. Work with the Operations Division to format procedures and address training needs for on-duty crews to conduct annual pre-fire plans.  
**Ongoing- With the introduction of career staff, on duty personnel will begin conducting annual inspections beginning in 2012.**

### Tracking of inspection and fire trends:

Create or purchase software program to conduct trend analysis regarding correlation between inspection violations, fire hazards, and fire occurrences.  
Not yet implemented.

### Arson Investigations:

- g. Develop a standardized process to conduct Arson Investigations that is comparable or compatible with the Department's multiple public safety partners.  
**Completed- The District has created in house Arson procedures as well as entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Wheat Ridge.**
- h. Identify process to encourage additional participation for the membership in the Fire Investigation Bureau.  
Not yet implemented.

### Public Education:

Coordinate Fire Safety Message with data retrieved from trend analysis.  
Not yet implemented.