

GREENWOOD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES  
VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE



OVERVIEW  
8 YEAR MASTER PLAN

MAY 26, 2015

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## Greenwood County Fire Services

### *History*

Prior to the formation of volunteer fire departments, the City of Greenwood provided contracted fire service (purchased by the homeowner) for protection outside the city limits. In the early 1970's, the Greenwood County Rescue Squad and the Towns of Ninety Six and Ware Shoals began to provide fire response to some areas of the County. In the late 1970's, individual volunteer fire departments were formed and operated throughout the county.

Fire protection today is supplied by the City of Greenwood, inside the city limits, and the Greenwood County Volunteer Fire Service, comprised of 12 districts, two volunteer Town departments (Ware Shoals and Ninety Six), and 10 self-managed volunteer stations.

Today's fire service faces many challenges due to decades of inconsistent practices and operations within the different volunteer departments.

Below is the list of the critical issues, in order of priority, that have been identified:

- Funding
- Staffing
- Apparatus
- Logistics (Stations)
- Training
- Community Relations
- Organizational Culture
- Equipment (originally number 1 priority - 2014 expenditure solved many issues)

**Funding** - For many years, the volunteer fire departments were self-sufficient for funding, raising revenue through fundraisers such as hash sales, community fairs, and postal solicitation. There are many reasons why this is no longer feasible, e.g.: time constraints, reduced manpower, a struggling economy, and the high cost of maintaining a fire department.

Currently, the county provides \$810,000.00 annually to operate the departments. This money is generated through a fire fee that was implemented in 2008, which excludes the City of Greenwood, Ware Shoals, and Ninety Six. Ware Shoals and Ninety Six departments receive funding from their respective town budgets.

Greenwood County pays the basic bills for the volunteer departments, such as utilities, equipment repair, fuel, and training costs, along with all insurance premiums for buildings, vehicles, and Worker's Compensation. However, there are many capital improvements, such as apparatus replacement, building renovations, and paid staffing, that are not being supported. Many of the departments have lost vital community donations since the inception of the fire fee. The present system is not adequate to support the financial needs of the service.

We researched other counties across the state and found ourselves to be on the bottom of published fee schedules. Unlike millage-generated funds, there is no adjustment to fees based on property reassessment or tax increases. The cost of providing fire protection grows every year; but the money generated by our fee is static. Our fee structure needs to be based on square footage or value. A singlewide mobile home valued at \$5,000.00 should not pay the same amount as a 5,000 square foot stick-built home valued at \$500,000.00. An Industry with 10 employees, housed in a 100,000 square foot building, should not pay the same fee as an industry with 1,500 employees in a facility of 2.5 million square feet. (See Appendix A for current schedule.)

## County Comparisons

Laurens: Population: 66,228.

Millage-based (20 mills) \$2,675,000.00 budget for fire protection. The fire service consists of 31 current operating fire stations and 4 more have been approved for 2016 budget. They employ 12 full-time firefighters, 2 part-time firefighters, 1 administrative assistant, and 1 part-time mechanic dedicated to a fleet of 116 fire apparatus.

- \$500,000 home value - \$400.00 fire charge on tax bill
- \$400,000 home value - \$320.00 fire charge on tax bill
- \$300,000 home value - \$240.00 fire charge on tax bill
- \$200,000 home value - \$160.00 fire charge on tax bill
- \$100,000 home value - \$80.00 fire charge on tax bill
- \$50,000 home value - \$40.00 fire charge on tax bill

Lancaster: Population: 80,458.

County-wide system comprised of 18 volunteer fire departments funded through a tiered system.

- \$1,300,000.00 is obligated to the departments from the county general operations budget.
- 3 full-time administrative positions in Fire are paid through the Emergency Management Division.
- The Town of Kershaw pays a contract price to the Lancaster County Fire Service to provide protection at a cost of \$143,000.00 annually.

- Pleasant Valley Fire Department receives \$370,798.00 annually in operating funds through a separate fire fee. Indian Land Fire department receives \$539,000.00 annually in operating funds through a separate fire fee. (Reference South Carolina Property Tax Rates by County 2013, Page 14 - \$75.00) The \$75.00 fee is per 2,500 square feet on residential property with commercial and Industry paying a negotiated price per property. They both also receive a share of the \$1.3 million from the operating budget. These two areas are the most populated and developed areas in the County.
- Paid fire suppression personnel are paid from a separate account from the general operating budget.
- This year \$400,000.00 was supplied in grant money and \$113,000.00 was supplied by a separate account in the general operating budget. This is used to fund full-time fire suppression personnel. Lancaster County has agreed to fund the entire cost of personnel beginning in 2015.
- Capital projects, such as apparatus and fire stations, are funded through a General Obligation Bond, generally, on a 7-year cycle.

Greenwood City Fire Dept. & Greenwood County Fire Services Comparison

	<u>City of Greenwood</u>	<u>County of Greenwood</u>
2014 Budget	\$2,657,000.00	\$810,000.00
2014 Capital	\$933,680.00	\$301,934.18 (used fund balance)
Funding Source	Millage	Fire Fee
Personnel	48 paid	1 paid, 214 volunteers

	<u>City of Greenwood</u>	<u>County of Greenwood</u>
Covered Structures	8,500	17,500
Call Volume	1,120	2,044
ISO Rating	2.00	Varies from 4 - 10
Population	23,379	46,621
Land Area	15 Sq Miles	463 Sq Miles (7 Sq. Miles of Lake)
Pop. Density/sq ml	1,440	106 (Average County-wide)

Population Density by Response Area

<u>Dept.</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Area (Sq Miles)</u>	<u>Pop. Density/Sq MI</u>
Callison	1,725	57.77	30
Coronaca	9,625	51	188
Epworth-Phx.	1,641	60.9	27
Hodges-Ckby.	3,562	49.45	72
Highway 34	4,723	26.62	180
Lower Lake	2,400	53.14	45
Ninety Six	1,992	1.81	1,100
Northwest	14,754	24.20	610
Promised Land	2,734	46.45	59
Tri-County	250	25.6	10
Troy	308	24.4	13
Ware Shoals	2,919	26.12	112

**Staffing-** 214 volunteer firefighters, of which 34 members serve in administrative roles such as secretaries, treasurers, or board members. 75 members that provide limited fire ground activities, such as driver/engineers, outside fire suppression, and rehab staffing. 105 firefighters are certified to enter a burning building and perform interior firefighting and rescue operations.

The Volunteer Fire service is declining across the United States. Studies sponsored by the National Volunteer Fire Council have shown a 12% decline in volunteers across the nation in the last twenty years. In Greenwood County, we have dropped from approximately 400 members in the early 1980's to our present level of 214. (See Appendix B for yearly numbers)

This drop in recruitment and retention can be attributed to several factors:

- Time Constraints related to two-income families
- The amount of training required
- Economy
- Changing values of society
- Commuting distance to primary jobs
- Extended work hours on primary job
- Personal time is devoted to family activities

The average age of a volunteer firefighter in Greenwood County is 40.7 years. The age of our firefighters is of even greater concern in the rural areas of our county, as there are limited numbers of young adults available to replace our aging personnel.

Due to the shortage of adequate staffing, especially during the daytime hours, we routinely do not meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards on a structure fire response. Volunteer departments are allotted a much longer response time due to many volunteer fire fighters having a primary day job. We now dispatch 3 stations on every fire call in the county to ensure that we have a response. There are incidents weekly in which we have no response by the primary station to respond to an emergency within their call area. Even with three

stations being dispatched on every call, in most cases we will not meet any of the NFPA standards listed below:

\* If a volunteer fire department is in an urban area (1,000 or more people per square mile), the department should dispatch 15 people, within 9 minutes, 90% of the time. While we usually have personnel on the scene within 9 minutes, we do not have 15 during daylight working hours.

\*Suburban areas (consisting of 500-1000 people per square mile), should respond to a fire in 10 minutes, with 10 fire fighters, 80% of the time. We generally reach the 10 firefighter standard in the 12 to 14 minute mark.

\* Rural areas (less than 500 people per square mile), should respond with 6 people, in 14 minutes, 80% of the time. During normal daylight working hours in our rural stations, it may take up to 20 minutes to reach 6 firefighters.

Typically in Greenwood County, on a structure fire that is in the free-burning stage, 5 stations will be toned to generate sufficient manpower. This is necessary to meet manpower issues associated with OSHA regulations that require rescue teams consisting of firefighters fully equipped and ready to enter the building standing by to rescue the firefighters trying to extinguish the fire. This is commonly known as the OSHA 2-In, 2-Out rule. Unfortunately, this creates a situation during the daytime working hours where manpower resources have been exhausted. This severely hampers our ability to respond to other emergencies in the County.

Lack of staffing severely impacts equipment and apparatus maintenance, record keeping, pre-fire plans, station maintenance, and a host of other duties that are essential to station operations. Failure to properly maintain records and address essential maintenance issues will negatively impact Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings and increase our liability risk. The simple truth is that our firefighters do the best they can with their limited available time.

Statistics compiled by the National Volunteer Fire Council and the National Fire Protection Association state: areas with populations of 40,000- 50,000 citizens are best served by a paid or paid/volunteer service. Greenwood County would fall

into this category, and the service received by the community would be improved substantially with the addition of paid personnel. According to NFPA, the number of paid career firefighters has increased by more than 50% across the country since 1985. The following areas would show immediate improvement with paid personnel:

*Response Time* – The advantage of immediate response by a fire unit versus the response of a unit that must consist of notification of volunteers, travel time to the station, transition from personal vehicle into the apparatus, and then response time to the scene is obvious. Greenwood County’s average response time is 23.55 minutes to arrival on scene. The national average response time of fully paid departments is 4 minutes. The national average response time of volunteer fire services is 14.5 minutes. (See Appendix C for fire scene averages.)

If a department wants to confine a fire to the room of origin, arrival on scene should be within 8 minutes of receiving the call. Fire doubles in size every minute it free burns without an extinguishment effort once it leaves the room of origin. Active fire ground suppression needs to be underway within 10 minutes for life-saving actions to be successful. As a general rule, you will have full involvement of a structure at the 16 minute mark.

*Fire Inspections* – The creation of a Codes Enforcement division is a necessity. The primary deterrent of fires in commercial and industrial buildings is the enforcement of national fire codes. Code officials can also be a source of pre-fire plans that are required by ISO regulations.

*Administration* – An immediate effect on all clerical duties, such as accounting, training records, bill processing, maintenance records, etc., would be evident. It would bring all information into one central office, instead of some records being maintained by the County Fire Service and some being maintained by the individual departments. The County Coordinator’s office only keeps track of financial records for bills that Greenwood County is responsible for paying. We do not keep track of pre-fire plans, training records, hose tests, fire reports, and other records that should be readily available upon public request.

Preventive Maintenance and Repair – Paid firefighters would ensure that apparatus would be checked regularly for potential mechanical issues, maintain the cleanliness of the vehicles and equipment, and perform routine cleaning and maintenance on the stations.

A part-time mechanic/firefighter would control costs of minor repairs, and also enhance response capabilities while on duty. (See Appendix D for 2014 costs on Preventive Maintenance and Repairs)

Return to service – This would ensure the prompt cleaning and restoring of equipment and apparatus to full duty status after use at emergencies.

Improve medical response times – Personnel will be cross-trained as first responders to assist the EMS division on life-threatening calls.

Fire Prevention and Service Calls – Personnel could present fire safety programs in schools and aid citizens with special needs in matters such as smoke detector installation and battery maintenance.

Improved ISO score – Having paid personnel helps the ISO rating review. Generally, it takes 3 volunteer members to equal 1 paid position. Paid personnel ensure that all yearly testing required by ISO and/or NFPA is completed: hose testing, pump testing, and ladder testing. Improving ISO ratings will supply the homeowners with a potential savings on insurance premiums.

*Description of how ISO influences your home owners insurance cost:*

Fire service responses to life-safety and property issues are evaluated by the ISO through an audit known as the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). The rating earned on this audit is called the Public Protection Classification (PPC). Ratings are classified numerically 1-10. Classification is an assessment of risk in order to determine property insurance premiums for residential, commercial, and industrial property owners within a fire district. Simply stated, a lower PPC rating helps to lower property insurance premiums, if the insurance companies use the ISO criteria to develop their premiums. Classes are as follows:

- Classes 1-3 are *Commercial* ratings. Areas that have a significant amount of commercial or industrial property should strive for at least a class 3 rating.
- Class 4 is the best possible *Residential* rating.
- Class 5 or 6 could provide a considerable savings.
- Class 7 or 8 typically has good financial benefits.
- Class 9 has some benefit. Generally, a homeowner with a 9-10 rating will pay up to twice as much in premium costs as a homeowner with a 4-6 rating.
- Class 10 could be turned down for coverage by some companies, or the homeowner will pay extremely high rates to obtain coverage.

ISO ratings are not playing the role they once had in determining insurance costs. After interviewing several local insurance agencies the following trends were discovered:

- State Farm has developed a system of cost being associated with fire loss in a geographic area. This would call for better service, as the fire loss associated with higher rates would decrease with improved fire protection.
- Credit score is a factor in your insurance cost.
- Claims history is important in determining cost.
- 5 mile road distances from fire stations and within 1,000' of a water point.

At the present time, we have several areas within the county that some insurance companies consider to have no fire protection due to their distance from a fire station. We also suffer from large areas of inadequate water source availability due to these areas having no fire hydrants. To be eligible for an ISO rating, a residence should be within 1,000' of a fire hydrant or be covered by a department that can supply 250 gallons of water per minute for 2 hours.

Paid part-time personnel would also allow us to begin developing a Special Operations division within the service that would include hazardous material incidents, trench rescue, high angle rescue, confined space rescue, and water operations. The City of Greenwood is our primary resource for these types of emergencies. There is no written agreement between the City and the County. If

the City is already committed to another incident inside the city limits, we would rely on the Anderson County Team for response. We propose hiring a pool of part-time personnel that would work from 07:00-19:00 Monday – Friday, placing (3) two-man teams stationed in 3 areas around the county. Personnel would be cross-trained, certified Interior Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians, and would utilize the mini-pumpers asked for under our apparatus replacement plan.

Part-time employee costs would be approximately \$300,000 a year in salary, workers compensation benefits, and uniforms. They would be employed by the Greenwood County Fire Service as County employees and under the direct supervision of the Fire Coordinator. The Chief Officers of our volunteer services view this as a natural progression of the system. They are in complete agreement- *part-time personnel are needed to help maintain their stations and equipment.*

**Apparatus-** Greenwood County Fire Service apparatus fleet immediate needs were established by the following:

- National Fire Protection Association
- Yearly repair costs
- Third party evaluations made by our preventive maintenance contractor
- Visual Inspection

Significant changes in NFPA Standards (1901, 1906, 1911, 1912, 1914 and 1915) in the past 13 years have resulted in dramatic new safety improvements in fire apparatus. NFPA outlines the basic requirements for a first-line response apparatus vs. reserve apparatus. Fire departments should audit their fleets in comparison to the following new definitions and should be aware of legal issues that could impact the decision-making process of in-service apparatus:

*First-line fire apparatus:* must be manufactured to NFPA 1901, 1991(2003 edition 1901, 1991) and must be maintained in accordance with NFPA 1912 and 1915. Fire service providers should use extreme prejudice in using any apparatus built before 1991 as a first-line unit.

*Reserve fire apparatus:* apparatus manufactured to applicable NFPA 1901 editions, after 1979 and prior to the 1991 edition. Such apparatus must have been upgraded to include as many of the features as possible found in 1991 or newer units.

*Obsolete apparatus:* apparatus built before 1979 and/or not manufactured to meet NFPA 1901.

Apparatus needs should be based on population density, water flow calculations/availability, zoning, and service needs. According to NFPA standards, fire service apparatus should be placed in reserve after 20 years and retired after 25 years.

*Greenwood County Fleet Inventory:*

Engines- 27

Tankers- 6

Brush Trucks- 7

Aerials- 2

Service Trucks- 5

Boats- 3

Station	Engines	Tanker	Brush	Rescue	Squad	Aerial	Boat
10 Troy	2000	1976		1990			
	2007						
20 Promised Land	1997	2003	1985	2000			
	2014						
30 Northwest	1991	1985	2000	2003	2006	1998	
	1992						
	2011						
40 Hodges	1996		1986	2002			Boat 40
	2000						
45 Ware Shoals	1991						
	2001		2013	2005			
50 Coronaca	1995					1989	Boat 50
	1997						
	1999						
	2005						
60 Lower Lake	1980			1986			Boat 60
	2002						
	2014						
70 Epworth Phoenix	1999	2000	1995				
75 Hwy 34	1999			1988			
	2000						
	1985						
80 Ninety Six	1990			1998			
	2007						
90 Callison	1998	2000	1986				
	2003						
95 Tri-County	1998	2001	1986				

**Green – First Line**

**Yellow – Reserve**

**Red – Immediate Retirement** *(Due to age and/or not meeting NFPA Reserve Status Requirements)*

## Fleet Status:

### Retirement Status

- 2- Tankers
- 3- Engines
- 4- Brush Trucks
- 1- Aerial
- 3- Rescue Trucks
- 2- Boats

### Reserve Status

- 4- Engines
- 1- Brush Truck

### Impending Status Changes (within the next 5 years)

- 1- Aerial
- 13- Engines
- 2- Rescue Trucks
- 2- Tankers

We have concerns that a rust problem on the Tankers at Epworth-Phoenix, Callison, Promised Land, and Tri-County will cause tank failure before they can reach reserve status. The 2,000 gallon Tanker at Epworth-Phoenix is presently out of service waiting for repairs. According to the contractors that we are accepting bids from on the Epworth Tanker, all of these units have tanks that are built out of a thin gauge, inferior grade of stainless steel that leaves them susceptible to early tank failure.

To meet NFPA & ISO standards, we have an *immediate* need of:

- 4- Tankers at a cost of \$1,030,000.00 (Hodges, Troy, Lower Lake, Epworth)  
(An additional 3 tankers will be needed over the course of our 6 year plan to be placed at new stations.)
- 1- Aerial at a cost of \$1,200,000.00 (Coronaca)
- 3- Mini-pumpers at a cost of \$750,000.00
- 1- Engine at a cost of \$450,000.00  
(*These are approximate costs*)

**Logistics (Stations/Districts)** – ISO requires a property owner to be within 5 road miles of a fire station to receive a Public Protection Classification insurance rating. We currently have 14 stations that cover the Greenwood County Fire Service area. To improve ISO ratings, we need to build 7 fire stations, remodel EMS Station M30 to house a fire unit, and redraw the fire district boundaries. Building stations and redistricting coverage areas will place 99% of homeowners within the 5 road mile requirement.

Currently, 1,720 structures in Greenwood County are classified as having no fire protection due to their locations being greater than 5 miles from a fire station.

- 457 mobile homes with a tax value average of \$9,600.00 for a total of \$4,387,200.00.
- 1,263 stick-built homes at an average tax value of \$43,200.00 for a total of \$54,561,600.00.
- Total property values of \$58,948,800.00
- Potential Cost Benefit: If we were able to drop the average homeowner's insurance policy by \$100.00 a year, the combined savings would be \$172,000.00 a year for the 1,720 affected properties.

If we spend \$2 million to build 7 stations and remodel EMS Station M30, which would protect almost \$60 million of property, the insurance savings would equal the expenditure in 7.2 years. With additional stations and/or redistricting, it would satisfy the requirement by ISO that states a property must be within 5 road miles of a fire station.

Example:

Recently, a request was made from a property owner on Johnston Rd in Ninety Six to evaluate what we could do to help with their insurance rate. Because this residence was 7 miles from its primary fire department, the ISO rating was a 10. Many insurance companies will not issue homeowner's coverage if the property has a 10 rating. We have proposed changing the district boundaries, which will place this residence into a district with an ISO 5 rating. This property is a 3 bedroom, 1 bathroom, single-family dwelling of 1,150 sq. feet. The cost for insurance was reduced from \$850.00 a year to \$600.00. This expanded coverage area was due to the construction of the Eddy Road Station. There was no negative impact on any property that was changed by expanding this district.

Only 4 of Greenwood County's stations would be considered modern, updated, and code compliant. These stations are:

- \* Sta. 61, Lower Lake/Eddy Road (County-Owned)
- \* Sta. 31, Northwest Hwy 72 (Joint Fire/EMS duplex)
- \* Sta. 80, Ninety Six Town (Joint County/Town)
- \* Sta. 51, Coronaca Hwy 246 (Joint County/Volunteer)

The remaining 8 stations are 30-year-old buildings in need of major repair, renovation, or replacement. Building codes are updated every 3 years, so most of these stations were built using codes that have since gone through 10 revisions. This does not make them non-compliant, as the code in force at the time of construction was the standard. However, through the years, volunteers have made repairs, renovations, and additions to the stations. In most cases, the work performed was not by a licensed contractor, nor inspected by code officials. This was done with good intentions in an effort to save money; but in most cases this has caused situations that need to be corrected. We recommend the stations be inspected by building officials and needed repairs performed. Final cost estimations cannot be determined at this time without an inspection. We are aware of needed repairs in excess of \$150,000.00, consisting of roof repairs, foundation repairs, and water damage repairs.

We recommend the original Lower Lake station (Hwy 702) be closed. This station has fallen into disrepair beyond its worth and is only 1.2 miles from the newer Eddy Road station. There will be no negative effect on this service district due to this station being closed. Building a new station in the Aull Mill Road area would help reduce our ISO areas that are more than 5 miles from a fire Station.

We also recommend and ask for an Emergency Services Headquarters. Currently, the EMS, Fire, and Emergency Management departments are all located in different areas of the courthouse. All departments also have equipment scattered around other facilities. For example, EMS has units and equipment stored behind the Sheriff's Department, while Fire and Emergency Management also have equipment located within EMS storage, making it difficult at times to access resources in an emergent situation. Having all equipment and departments centrally located would ease in daily operations from a logistical as well as administrative standpoint.

**Training** - During our most recent ISO inspections, we were uniformly shown to be deficient in training hours and documentation. Currently, individual departments choose their training schedule and topics. There is very little cross-training between departments. The only way for departments to work together safely on the fire ground is to be trained to the same standard, using the same techniques. ISO requires a dedicated training facility with a drill tower and a live fire burn room. This facility must be at least two acres in size. Per training standards, firefighters in the county should make use of this dedicated facility for 18 hours on a yearly basis. Each firefighter is required to do a yearly refresher burn at a fixed facility. (See Appendix E for ISO Requirements)

All Greenwood County Public Safety agencies would benefit from a public safety training facility, to include a training complex, 4-story training tower with an attached burn room, paved driver training areas, shooting ranges, and a classroom facility. This would allow us to achieve consistent, safe, and effective performance through a comprehensive training program. It would significantly cut the cost associated with training a firefighter to our minimum level of IFSAC Firefighter 1, increase the ability of our volunteer force to receive specialized

training without the time limitations associated with travel, and help with our ISO rating county-wide. The Sheriff's office and the EMS service would like to explore the possibility of a joint training facility as well. The lack of a county-wide training facility has several ramifications:

- Volunteers must travel to Columbia or Anderson to use a facility. This produces travel cost and the personnel are not available for duty here.
- No facility for multi-station cross training
- No realistic props available for training
- No county-wide training officer
- Liability issues with lack of training
- Without a consistent, scheduled, and well-taught program in place, our membership has declined steadily over the past 10 years. A good training program is vital to maintain our numbers, and is necessary for us to recruit and retain any new members. (*Estimated cost - \$1,000,000.00*)

**Community Relations** - The Greenwood County Fire Service is primarily a fire suppression service. We provide community fire safety education, missing person searches, drowning victim recovery, and assist EMS with limited medical help at their request. In the past ten years, the trend has been that the fire service has evolved into an all hazards response organization. Most departments are responsible for the following:

- Fire Suppression
- Fire Codes Enforcement
- Community Fire Education
- Hazardous Material Incidents
- Technical Rescue – Confined Space, High Angle, Extrication, Trench Rescue, Building Collapse
- Drowning Victim Recovery
- Missing Person Search
- Medical Response (First Responder)
- Service Calls – Smoke Detectors, water removal, animal rescue

The public expects the fire department to respond in a timely manner, and with the resources needed to handle whatever situation arises. As we explained in the Funding section, the current fire fee structure makes this an unobtainable goal to achieve. We should educate the public on what we are tasked with and the cost associated with providing these services. Representatives of the fire service will develop a presentation explaining our service to be presented to civic organizations, senior groups, neighborhood watch teams, and church groups.

We have left the public completely unaware of the present state of our departments. By continuing to provide a service with aging equipment and dwindling manpower, our department infrastructure will continue to deteriorate.

**Organizational Culture** –Volunteer fire departments have always acted independently from each other, with each having their own bylaws, boards, rules/regulations, and standards. With this type of culture, there has been little or no cooperation or support for one another. This arrangement in itself leads to confusion and conflict. If the departments are to continue to receive the bulk of funding from county government, the natural direction would be to fall under the guidance of the County of Greenwood. With a combined system, all departments would be operating under one business system, administrative duties would be centralized and consistent, training would be uniform and consistent, etc. However, forming a combined system should in no way diminish the identity and heritage of the individual departments. Presently, the departments are receptive to the idea of becoming a combined fire service.

**Equipment** - Many of our critical fire fighter safety issues have been addressed in the past year with the purchase of new equipment and gear. To maintain safety standards and not allow the gear to age beyond its recommended life span, equipment needs will be a reoccurring budget item.

# Strategic Goals

## Funding

Establish a method of funding best suited for uniform fire protection and implement a sound business model to dispense the operating funds. We request that council choose and develop the best plan from these options:

- Revise the present fee schedule and set fee costs based on square footage or property value, with adjustments scheduled every three years.
- Create a special tax district combining all of the departments into the Greenwood County Fire Service.
- Develop a hybrid system using fees and millage-based funds coming from the general operating budget.
- Create a bond fund every 7 years for capital improvements.
- Create a sales tax option for capital improvements for Public Safety.

## Staffing

1. Transition the volunteer service into a paid/volunteer service.
2. Hire a pool of part-time personnel to staff 6 positions daily.
3. Hire 2 fire marshals.
4. Hire 1 part-time firefighter/mechanic.
5. Develop a recruiting and retention program – The County must look at some type of benefit program for our Volunteer Firefighters. According to the NFPA, Volunteer firefighters save communities an estimated \$140 billion a year in salaries and benefits across the USA. Some communities provide their Volunteers incentives, such as:

- Pay per call

- Property tax relief
- Life insurance
- Supplemental insurance
- Workers Compensation
- Training stipends

## **Apparatus**

1. Continue with a county-wide program of yearly preventive maintenance to increase the longevity of our apparatus. Employ a part-time mechanic to perform preventive maintenance and make minor repairs.
2. Develop a financial plan to replace units based on criteria including age, condition, and recommendation from the shop superintendent, Fire Coordinator, and the Emergency Services Director.

Immediately replace retirement-age apparatus with:

- 4 Tankers at a total cost of \$1,030,000.00. (Hodges, Troy, Lower Lake, Epworth)
- 1 Aerial at a cost of \$1,200,000.00. (Coronaca)
- 3 Mini-pumpers at a total cost of \$750,000.00
- 1 Engine at a cost of \$450,000.00

## **Logistics**

1. Assume responsibility and maintenance for all of the volunteer stations.
2. The county and the individual departments need to reach an agreement on a long-term lease of the stations or the stations being deeded to the county.
3. The county engineering department needs to perform a maintenance assessment study on all of the volunteer stations.

4. A replacement station for Lower Lake needs to be moved to a new location, as it is only 1.2 miles from the Eddy Road station. (Projected cost would be approximately \$150,000.00 + the cost of land.)

5. Consider partnering with the Town of Ware Shoals to build a station inside their city limits as close to Hwy 25 as possible. Emergency Services could also consider using this building as a secondary 911 center and EOC. (Projected cost would be \$400,000.00)

6. Build 7 stations over 6 years and remodel M30 to house a fire unit. Costs for these stations would be in the \$75,000 - \$100,000.00 range. (This does not include the cost of the land.)

7. Build an Emergency Services Headquarters. (Projected cost \$3,500,000.00 + cost of land.)

## **Training**

1. Provide improved and consistent service.

2. Create a safe and effective training program at a centralized location.

3. Partner with all emergency services in Greenwood County to plan and construct a multi-use, multi-agency training facility.

4. Partner with Greenwood County School District 50 Vocational School for fire fighter training.

## **Community Relations**

1. Develop a county-wide fire prevention and education program.

## **Organizational Culture**

1. Adopt an ordinance to create a single fire service.
2. Reach an agreement with the towns of Ninety Six and Ware Shoals on their participation within the system.
3. Adopt an ordinance redefining the Fire Coordinator's job position and his duties.
4. Combine resources to become more cost effective.
5. Further develop and implement Standard Operating Procedures.
6. Adopt an ordinance defining and authorizing fire marshals.

## **Equipment**

1. Develop an equipment replacement program.
2. Inventory all equipment and adopt a redeployment policy to address areas in need.

## Appendix A

### 2008 Greenwood County Adopted Fire Fees

<b>FIRE FEES</b>				
<b>Single Family Residential Properties:</b>				
\$ 35	less or equal	5,000	sq. ft	
\$ 50	more than	5,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 6,000 sq ft.
\$ 75	more than	6,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 7,000 sq ft.
\$ 150	more than	7,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 8,000 sq ft.
\$ 175	more than	8,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 9,000 sq ft.
\$ 200	more than	9,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 10,000 sq ft.
\$ 250	more than	10,001	sq. ft	
<b>Multi-Family Residential Properties:</b>				
\$ 35	less or equal	1,000	sq. ft	
\$ 35	more than	1,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 2,000 sq ft.
\$ 50	more than	2,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 3,000 sq ft.
\$ 75	more than	3,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 4,000 sq ft.
\$ 100	more than	4,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 5,000 sq ft.
\$ 125	more than	5,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 6,000 sq ft.
\$ 250	more than	6,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 7,000 sq ft.
\$ 250	more than	7,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 8,000 sq ft.
\$ 300	more than	8,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 9,000 sq ft.
\$ 300	more than	9,001	sq. ft	but less than or equal to 10,000 sq ft.
\$ 350	more than	10,001	sq. ft	
<b>Non-residential properties assessed at 6%:</b>				
\$ 50.00	less or equal	1,000	sq. ft.	
\$ 100.00	more than	1,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 2,000 sq ft.
\$ 125.00	more than	2,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 3,000 sq ft.
\$ 175.00	more than	3,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 4,000 sq ft.
\$ 200.00	more than	4,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 5,000 sq ft.
\$ 225.00	more than	5,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 6,000 sq ft.
\$ 250.00	more than	6,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 7,000 sq ft.
\$ 250.00	more than	7,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 8,000 sq ft.
\$ 275.00	more than	8,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 9,000 sq ft.
\$ 300.00	more than	9,001	sq. ft.	but less than or equal to 10,000 sq ft
\$ 350.00	more than	10,001	sq. ft.	
<b>Manufacturing properties assessed by DOR:</b>				
\$750	All Properties			
<b>Properties exempt from ad valorem:</b>				
\$100	All properties			

## Appendix B

### Declining Numbers in Volunteer Firefighters by Year

*(Time donated by volunteer firefighters saves localities across the country an estimated \$139.8 billion per year.)*

<u>Year</u>	<u># of Volunteers</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Volunteers</u>
1984	897,750	1999	785,250
1985	839,450	2000	777,350
1986	808,200	2001	784,700
1987	816,800	2002	816,600
1988	788,250	2003	800,050
1989	770,100	2004	795,600
1990	772,650	2005	823,650
1991	771,800	2006	823,950
1992	805,300	2007	825,450
1993	795,400	2008	827,150
1994	807,900	2009	812,150
1995	838,300	2010	768,150
1996	815,500	2011	756,400
1997	803,350	2012	783,300
1998	804,200		

*3 The Total Cost of Fire in the United States. National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA, March 2014.*

*4 U.S. Fire Department Profile, through 2012. National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA, October 2013.*

**Appendix C**

Average Call Times for Greenwood County Fire Service

Year	Calls	Average Arrival Time	Average Completion Time
2013	1675	23:55	57:10
2012	1693	25:39	54:26
2011	1701	26:57	48:41

Stations include: Callison, Coronaca, Epworth-Phoenix, Hodges/Cokesbury, Highway 34, Lower Lake, Northwest, Promised Land, Tri-County, & Troy.

## Appendix D

### Costs for Vehicle Repairs & Preventive Maintenance

#### Budget Year 2014

Department	Preventive Maintenance	Repairs	Labor	Travel
Callison	\$900.00	\$2,559.21	\$1,925.00	
Coronaca	\$7,500.00	\$11,989.97	\$2,320.00	\$65.00
Epworth/Phoenix	\$1,450.00	\$2,526.28	\$1,951.00	
Hodges/Cokesbury	\$1,500.00	\$2,248.49	\$1,285.00	
Highway 34	\$2,400.00	\$1,085.00	\$2,311.76	
Lower Lake	\$1,350.00	\$3,320.75	\$447.50	
Northwest	\$2,574.90	\$22,039.83	\$5,749.59	\$1,137.25
Promised Land	\$1,500.00	\$8,643.55	\$2,532.80	
Tri-County	\$750.00	\$369.82	\$165.00	
Troy	\$1,800.00	\$535.00	\$220.00	
<b>Totals per category</b>	<b>\$21,724.90</b>	<b>\$55,317.90</b>	<b>\$18,907.65</b>	<b>\$1,202.25</b>
			<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>\$97,152.70</u></b>

**Preventive Maintenance**- Yearly check of all fluids, filters, tires, running gear, pump, pump packing, primer oil, lights, emergency lights, gauges, belts, hoses, etc.

**Repairs**- Consists of any *unscheduled* maintenance repairs

**Labor**- These costs were taken from the vendors that itemized their charges on the invoices; some did not document labor costs.

**Travel**- Some vendors charge a labor fee and a travel fee to do work onsite.

## Appendix E

### ISO Training Requirements

The following is a summary of the items ISO considers when reviewing a community's training for firefighters:

Facilities and aids

Drill tower: Fire building with smoke room

Combustible-liquid pit (In areas where federal, state, or local officials prohibit the use of combustible-liquid pits, credit may be available for a video depicting extinguishment of flammable-liquid fires.)

Library and training manuals

Slide or overhead projectors

Movie projector or VCR

Pump cutaway

Hydrant cutaway

Use of Drill Tower: 18 hours per member per year

Company training: at fire stations, 16 hours per member per month

Classes for officers: 12 hours per year

Driver and operator training: 12 hours per year

New-driver and operator training: 60 hours

Training on radioactivity or hazardous materials: 6 hours per year

Recruit training: 240 hours per recruit

## SUMMARY

### Greenwood County Fire Service Facts

- Greenwood County is fortunate to have 214 dedicated volunteer fire fighters.
- The Volunteer Fire Departments were developed many years ago, based on a need for public safety. This was done at no cost to the County.
- These departments were self-sufficient for many years, with the exception of communications support.
- They are no longer capable of generating sufficient funds to support themselves.
- The Greenwood County Fire Fee and the donations the departments receive from homeowners within their district are competing with each other. Several stations still receive donations. Other stations receive no financial support other than County monies.
- The Greenwood County Fire Protection Plan developed in March 1988 suggested implementing a unified system supported by county financing.
- Through the years, different Fire Coordinators have offered plans or recommended changes to the same effect.
- The service is suffering from aging equipment and apparatus. Both of these are now safety and financial issues.
- Stations are in need of upgrading and some need major repairs.
- The system is suffering from a declining and an aging personnel pool.
- Response times and on scene personnel numbers are not meeting guidelines.
- Administrative functions are not meeting requirements.

- The Fire Coordinator's position has no real supervisory power.
- While we can point to good ISO ratings by several departments, the majority of the volunteer stations have little manpower available from 7:00am – 5:00pm, Monday-Friday.
- We request that council take into consideration the suggestions put forward by the Emergency Services Department.