

Rockford Fire Department



Strategic Plan 2015

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Introduction

The City of Rockford, county seat of Winnebago County, is located in north central Illinois approximately 70 miles northwest of Chicago. According to the United States Census Bureau, Rockford is the largest city in the area with a population of 152,871. The jurisdiction covers approximately 64 square miles.

The Rockford Fire Department was established in 1855 as a volunteer organization. The first paid firefighters were hired in May of 1881 and consisted of a Fire Chief and five firefighters with a steam-powered, horse-drawn apparatus. The organization has grown to be the second largest fire department in the State of Illinois, staffed with 333 (sworn, support and Emergency 9-1-1) members, responding to 26,011 incidents in 2014 (4.85% increase from 2013). Throughout its history the Department has consistently worked to achieve the highest level of professionalism and efficiency on behalf of those it serves.

The Department achieved accredited status through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) in August of 2011, and was one of only 160 departments throughout the world to receive final accreditation at that time (currently the number of accredited agencies has risen to 196 worldwide). The process required years of preparation and work from a core group of individuals who spent countless hours credentialing the Department through several individual documents. In December 2014, the Department once again received approval for its Annual Compliance Report (ACR) required by CPSE for accreditation.

The group developed a five-year strategic plan, conducted a comprehensive risk analysis and standards of coverage study, and developed a comprehensive self assessment document. Each of these components had to meet strict criteria and rigid standards within a very narrow set of parameters in order to be deemed compliant and achieve accreditation. The Department has continued to annually update the strategic plan in an effort to identify new issues, maintain relevancy, and to ensure that our goals reflect the Department's mission. It is important to note that the accreditation process is a continuous and dynamic progression of improvement for an organization. The process does not stop after achieving accredited status; instead, it demands commitment and flexibility as an organization navigates the present and future.

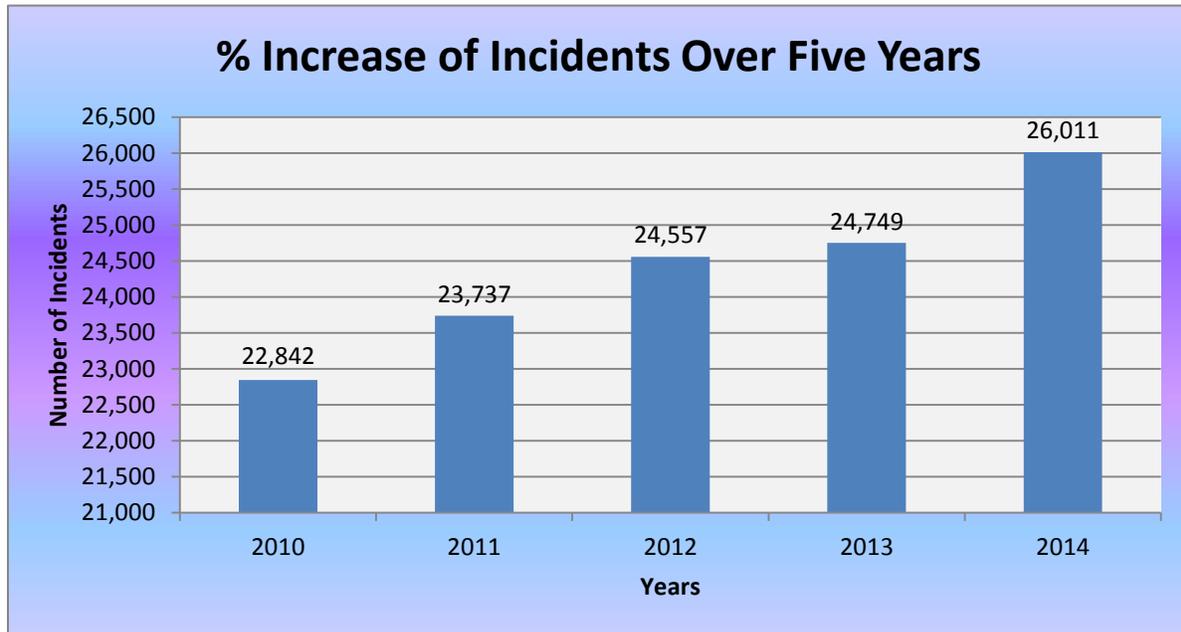
In addition to achieving accredited status, the Department currently holds an Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating of "Class 2."



Organizational Background

The Department currently provides services through the work of four (4) divisions: Administration Division, Fire Prevention and Training Division, Operations Division, and 9-1-1 Division. The Department's incident history over the past five years shows an overall increase of 12.18% and is depicted in the following graph:

Figure 1: Increase of Incidents Over Five Years



Utilizing eleven (11) fire stations, the Department operates with nine (9) engine companies, two (2) quint companies, one (1) ladder/quick response company, one (1) quint/quick response company, seven (7) advanced life support (ALS) ambulances, and two (2) district chiefs. All fire companies have the capability of providing ALS emergency medical care.

The Department also provides many special operations capabilities. These include the following: hazardous materials; water rescue and recovery; extrication; trench; confined space; structural collapse; and high/low angle rope rescue. The Department provided airport rescue and firefighting services for the Chicago Rockford International Airport until February 2014, at which time the airport contracted these services with another provider.

Additionally, the Department is a member of Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) Division Eight. There are twenty-five (25) fire departments that belong to MABAS Division Eight sharing resources on a regular basis. The Department responds to MABAS Division Eight requests and has the potential to respond for assistance to over 794 square miles. In addition, the Department has written agreements with five (5) other MABAS Divisions, which cover 5,000 square miles, to provide assistance with water rescue, hazardous materials and technical rescue.



Community-Driven Strategic Plan

Planning Process

The strategic planning process is an opportunity to unify the Department's administration with the internal and external stakeholders through a common understanding of the organization's direction, how those involved can work to that common purpose, and how progress quantifies and measures success.

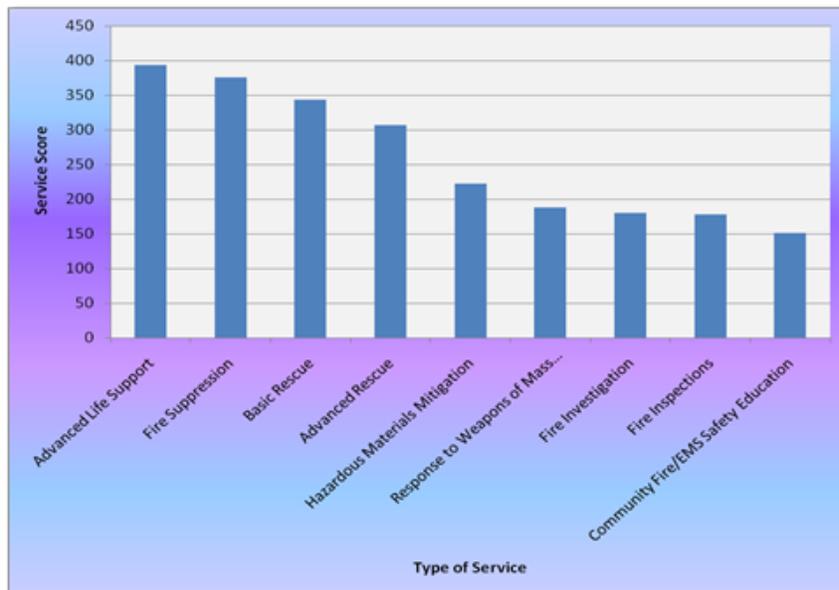
External Stakeholders

As part of the Department's original strategic plan development, the external stakeholders consisted of various business and community organization leaders. The current strategic planning process has solicited the direct input of citizens through various neighborhood organizations and user surveys.

Customer-Prioritization Surveys

The CPSE Customer-Centered/Prioritization of Services survey was used as a tool to gather input from the community. In an effort to include a wide variety of citizens, the Department targeted neighborhood organizations over a period of five months. The prioritization of services results are depicted in the graph below. In addition to the CPSE-developed survey, the Department also included five service-related questions to solicit customer expectations. Results of the surveys have been tallied and posted on the Department's SharePoint website.

Figure 2: Customer Service Prioritization Results



The following table is a summary of the top five responses from each service question contained in the Customer Prioritization Survey.



Figure 3: Customer Questionnaire Summary

<p><i>List expectations, in priority, of your fire department:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt response (25) • Serving those in need by putting out fires and saving lives (10) • Educating the community regarding our services and fire safety (9) • Well-trained and prepared personnel (4) • Professional and dedicated personnel (4)
<p><i>List concerns regarding your fire department:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing cuts (18) • Reduction in funding (4) • Too many trucks on scene based on call type (4) • Better/updated equipment and apparatus (3) • Quick response (2) • Firefighter safety (2) • Too many personnel on apparatus (2) • More community involvement (2)
<p><i>List feedback or strengths you would like to share regarding your fire department:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department provides professional services (7) • Fast response times (6) • Personnel are kind (5) • Appreciate community involvement (4) • Well-trained personnel (3)
<p><i>List general remarks for your fire department:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing a good/great/excellent job (18) • Thank you (6) • More public education (3) • Need more diversity/minorities (2) • Have questions regarding new QRV program (2)
<p><i>Based on City's budget concerns, are you worried about reduction of fire/emergency services?:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Do not reduce staffing (16) • No. Not necessarily (reason not given) (7) • No. Budget cuts may be necessary (5) • Yes. Concerns about infrastructure/apparatus (4) • Yes. Make cuts elsewhere (4)

The Department also examined the external stakeholders' responses from the 2007 Customer Prioritization survey to find that both the prioritization of services and the service-related questions revealed similar results as those found in the recent surveys.



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Customer Service Surveys

The Department also seeks input through customer surveys regarding emergency medical services and fire suppression. The results are maintained in a database that generates customer satisfaction reports, which are then used for RockStat presentations with other City departments.

Figure 3: Customer Service Survey Results 2014

Question	Answer	Total Answered	% of Total Answered	Outstanding or Excellent	
<i>The 911 call was handled in a prompt, courteous, and competent manner:</i>	Outstanding	368	59.93%	585	95.28%
	Excellent	217	35.34%		
	Average	24	3.91%		
	Fair	4	0.65%		
	Poor	1	0.16%		
	Total Answered	614			
<i>The 911 instructions given prior to the arrival of the paramedics were:</i>	Outstanding	276	48.51%	523	91.92%
	Excellent	247	43.41%		
	Average	38	6.68%		
	Fair	4	0.70%		
	Poor	4	0.70%		
	Total Answered	569			
<i>The paramedic crew acted in a concerned, caring, and professional manner:</i>	Outstanding	621	67.43%	881	95.66%
	Excellent	260	28.23%		
	Average	22	2.39%		
	Fair	8	0.87%		
	Poor	10	1.09%		
	Total Answered	921			
<i>The paramedics clearly explained the procedures performed:</i>	Outstanding	368	57.77%	594	93.25%
	Excellent	226	35.48%		
	Average	32	5.02%		
	Fair	3	0.47%		
	Poor	8	1.26%		
	Total Answered	637			
<i>How would you rate the overall quality of the care provided:</i>	Outstanding	479	66.25%	692	95.71%
	Excellent	213	29.46%		
	Average	18	2.49%		
	Fair	6	0.83%		
	Poor	7	0.97%		
	Total Answered	723			
<i>How would you rate your overall experience with our services:</i>	Outstanding	471	65.51%	688	95.69%
	Excellent	217	30.18%		
	Average	19	2.64%		
	Fair	6	0.83%		
	Poor	6	0.83%		
	Total Answered	719			



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The results of the customer service surveys for 2014 demonstrate that the Department delivers outstanding or excellent service at least 91.92% of the time in each of the categories. Additionally, customers rated service delivery as fair or poor 1.26% or less of the time in each of the categories.

Internal Stakeholders

With great success, the Department engaged in a strategic planning process that was a departure from previous strategic planning endeavors and goal-setting processes. The Department utilized a third-party who conducted a three-day workshop in 2011 with a cross-section of personnel spanning all divisions and ranks within the organization, and included members from the internal accreditation workgroup.

Howard Cross, from Howard Cross and Associates, conducted his workshop entitled Strategic Planning: Embracing the Future. Over the course of the three days, the participants (as a whole) developed new mission and vision statements, and identified the Department's core values and critical issues. During breakout sessions among the different divisions, the individual groups developed goals pertaining to each division.

After the initial workshop, the entire group met for three additional four-hour sessions to complete the goal development portion of the strategic plan. Additionally, members of the administration along with members from the accreditation workgroup partnered in making face-to-face visits to each fire station on each shift to deliver the new mission and vision statements, and to discuss the components of the entire accreditation process.

In November of 2012, the Department's internal stakeholder group engaged in an additional one-day session with Howard Cross. The group reviewed the Department's goal-planning process, assessed the 2012 annual goals, developed goals for the upcoming year, and updated the Strategic Plan accordingly.

In November 2013, the Department assembled a cross-section of personnel again for a one-day strategic planning session with Howard Cross to evaluate our progress regarding the 2013 goals. In an effort to more closely align the Department's goals with its mission and vision, we identified goals within broad categories rather than by organizational divisions. During this process six critical issues were identified. The work group met for an additional one-day session later in November 2013 to further develop goals, objectives and critical tasks for each of the broad categories.

In November of 2014, the Department conducted a one-day strategic planning session with an external facilitator/certified parliamentarian, Nancy Sylvester. Prior to the strategy session, the participants were engaged in a brainstorming exercise and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis to help identify and prioritize the critical issues of the Department. The participants then focused their efforts, during the one-day strategy session, on goal planning.



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Although the Department had existing mission and vision statements and had previously identified core values and critical issues, all aspects were revisited during the workshop. The Department is committed to keeping these fundamental elements of the organization current and meaningful so that members have clear direction regarding the accomplishment of goals, objectives, and critical tasks.

Internal stakeholders who participated in the 2014 strategic planning workshop are listed in the table below.

Figure 4: Rockford Fire Department Internal Stakeholders Group

Internal Stakeholders Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Derek Bergsten, Fire Chief• Joe Corl, Division Chief of Operations• Greg Castronovo, Division Chief of Administration• Matt Knott, Division Chief of Fire Prevention and Training• Sandy Stansell, 911 Division Administrator• Steve Preiss, District Chief• Benny Ognibene, District Chief• Bud Turner, District Chief• Jim Rife, District Chief• Tracy Renfro, District Chief• Dan Zaccard, District Chief• Jeff Poshka, Fire Equipment Specialist• Timothy Morris Jr., Fire Prevention Coordinator• Bob Vertiz, EMS Training Coordinator• Brian Drerup, Fire Training Coordinator• Chad Moe, Inspector• Mike Schnaper, Inspector• Jeff Kloweit, Recruiter• Michele Pankow, Captain/Accreditation Manager• Derreyl Brown, Captain• Kyle Hill, Lieutenant• David Nordenberg, Lieutenant – Local 413 Vice President• Ernest White, Lieutenant• John Dempsey, Lieutenant• Todd Monahan, Lieutenant• Frank DeCastris, Driver/Engineer – Local 413• Andrew Bolhous, Firefighter/Paramedic• John Hall, Firefighter/Paramedic• Erica Nunez, Firefighter/Paramedic• Rebecca Tyo, Firefighter/Paramedic



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- Tim Brown, Firefighter/Paramedic
- Dan Allen, Firefighter/Paramedic
- Elizabeth Russell, Statistical Analyst
- Leigh Sterrenberg, 911 Training Supervisor
- John Girone, 911 Supervisor
- Judi Yehling, Senior Administrative Assistant
- Anita Cardenas, Senior Clerk

The Department's current mission and vision statements, and core values are illustrated below.

Figure 5: Mission Statement

The mission of the Rockford Fire Department is to protect the lives and property of our community through fire, emergency medical and life safety services.

Figure 6: Vision Statement

The members of the Rockford Fire Department are professionals dedicated to provide services that are innovative and progressive ensuring the safest environment for our community.



Figure 7: Core Values

<i>Professionalism</i>	<i>Service</i>
<i>Respect</i>	<i>Loyalty</i>
<i>Dedication</i>	<i>Compassion</i>
<i>Integrity</i>	<i>Safety</i>

During the goal setting process, the following five recurring issues were identified as critical to the success of the Department.

Figure 8: Critical Issues

<i>Labor/Administration relationship</i>
<i>Morale</i>
<i>Communications</i>
<i>IT Support</i>
<i>Career-related training</i>



Goals and Objectives

The Rockford Fire Department Strategic Plan revolves around five goal areas. Each goal is supported by and accomplished through a series of tactical statements. In the context of this strategic plan, goals are defined as visionary statements that guide the future direction of the department. The tactical statements listed beneath each goal outline a plan of action for achieving the goal.



The following goals and tactical statements provide specific timelines for completion, and designate the responsibility for completion. The strategic planning group will meet periodically to review progress toward these goals and tactical statements, and adjust timelines and specific targets as needed.

All tactical statements have been developed using the SMART method:

- **S** – specific
- **M** – measurable
- **A** – attainable
- **R** – relevant
- **T** – timely



Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal # 1

Continue to enhance career-related training and development throughout all department levels.

Strategic Goal # 2

Continue to identify and address critical issues that positively and negatively impact the Department morale.

Strategic Goal # 3

Develop and implement a comprehensive framework for open lines of communication between Labor and Administration.

Strategic Goal # 4

Ensure effective internal and external communication.

Strategic Goal # 5

Increase reliability by providing consistent IT support.



Strategic Goal # 1

Continue to enhance career-related training and development throughout all department levels.

#	TACTICAL STATEMENT	START DATE	COMPLETE DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Develop a fire officer and 911 supervisor training curriculum	01/19/15	05/01/15	Knott
2	Develop a comprehensive EMS skill-based continuing education program	01/09/15	06/03/15	Vertiz
3	Update curriculum for second driver and driver training	01/09/15	06/03/15	Drerup
4	Expand and update training curriculum for 911 personnel	01/09/15	06/03/15	Sterrenberg
5	Expand QA/QI for 911 personnel	01/09/15	06/03/15	Sterrenberg



Strategic Goal # 2

Continue to identify and address critical issues that positively and negatively impact the Department morale.

#	TACTICAL STATEMENT	START DATE	COMPLETE DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Review and modify questionnaire by next planning meeting	12/15/14	02/01/15	Committee & Nordenberg
2	Seek Administrative support	01/15/15	02/15/15	Stansell
3	Distribute to employees	02/01/15	03/30/15	District Chiefs & 911 Supervisors
4	Collect results and post	03/30/15 - 04/07/15	04/15/15	District Chiefs & 911 Supervisors
5	Review top five results	04/20/15	04/20/15	Division Chief
6	Post to personnel/transparency		04/30/15	Stansell
7	Categorize results and assign	05/01/15	05/30/15	Stansell
8	Follow up		06/30/15	Committee



Strategic Goal # 3

Develop and implement a comprehensive framework for open lines of communications between Labor and Administration.

#	TACTICAL STATEMENT	START DATE	COMPLETE DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Define what are open lines of communication	01/09/15	02/28/15	Scrol/Bergsten
2	Regularly schedule Labor/Administration meetings	01/09/15	Ongoing	Scrol/Bergsten
3	Collaborative participation (ex. community events, fundraisers, etc.)	01/09/15	Ongoing	Scrol/Bergsten
4	Station visits conducted by Chief Officers	01/09/15	Ongoing	Bergsten

Strategic Goal # 4

Ensure effective internal and external communication.

#	TACTICAL STATEMENT	START DATE	COMPLETE DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Identify weaknesses with internal and external communications by updating previously used survey	01/01/15	03/01/15	Corl
2	Disseminate meeting and committee minutes on SharePoint	01/01/15	03/01/15	Corl
3	Re-establish interagency and media notification procedures	01/01/15	02/01/15	Corl
4	Revise and update procedural manual on SharePoint based on survey results	03/01/15	06/01/15	Corl
5	Develop more Public Information Officer (PIO) training	03/01/15	12/31/15	Corl



Strategic Goal # 5

Increase reliability by providing consistent IT support.

#	TACTICAL STATEMENT	START DATE	COMPLETE DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
1	To create/develop a 24/7 IT specialist position dedicated to the Fire Department	Now	Budget dependent	Castronovo
2	Identify hardware upgrade needs	Now	Ongoing	Castronovo
3	Identify software upgrade needs	Now	Ongoing	Castronovo
4	Continue monitoring for technology crossover capabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Terminals at hospitals- Patient care software – RFP- Tablets/interoperability	Ongoing	Ongoing	Castronovo
5	Develop more Public Information Officer (PIO) training	Ongoing	Ongoing	Castronovo



Long-Range Considerations

The Rockford Fire Department Strategic Plan creates a platform for a wide range of initiatives. This strategic plan will come to life by being shared, debated, and implemented in the context of organizational realities.

The strategic plan contains goals that will be updated annually to embrace newly identified challenges. Critical issues that extend into the future have also been considered. Although some of the critical issues have defined timelines and strategies, the Department is limited by budgetary, contractual, technological, and intangible factors, which inhibit specific goal development. These issues include:

Apparatus procurement

In early 2012, the City developed a seven year apparatus replacement plan which included three quint apparatus, one engine, two sport utility vehicles, and three sedans during the first year. In 2013 the replacement plan continued with procurement of three engines, four ambulances and two tow vehicles. Plans are to address further apparatus requirements with additional agreements over the next five years that would provide for all front line apparatus and support vehicle needs. The capital replacement plan is outlined in the following table.

Figure 9: Capital Replacement Plan

Capital Replacement Plan					
Vehicle Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Ambulance	1	0	0	0	0
Engine	0	1	0	1	0
Quint	1	0	0	0	0
Van	0	1	0	0	0
Sedan	0	0	1	0	1
SUV	4	0	0	0	0
Shop truck	1	0	0	1	0
Dive vehicle	1	0	0	0	0
Boat	0	1	0	0	1
Hazmat trailer	0	0	0	0	1

Additional facilities

Statistical analysis and facility recommendations designed to provide for both resource distribution and concentration factors will continue. Due to the State's South Main Road Project, Station #3 relocation is aggressively being pursued consistent with the Standards of Cover recommendations. General timelines for the Fire Station #3 project are as follows:

- Design and document development: October 2013 – March 2014
- Bidding and Negotiation: April 2014 – May 2014
- Contract Administration (construction): June 2014 – June 2015

It is expected that the City will occupy the new Fire Station #3 by June of 2015.



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Facility improvements

The Department continues to work with the City Public Works Department regarding station maintenance and improvements. Improvements to the maintenance facility office and upgrades to the training facility, including new training props, have already been completed. Additional classroom space to better serve the training needs of the Department is still being considered as funding becomes available, and an approximately 1000 square foot classroom has been included in the plans for the new Fire Station #3.

Plans for the maintenance facility include the creation of a new SCBA repair and testing area and the implementation of a more efficient inventory tracking program. The Department received an Assistance to Firefighters Grant for \$247,700 through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which will provide for the installation of sprinkler systems in four fire stations in the spring of 2015.

The Department has developed a long term Facilities Improvement Plan for all fixed facilities, with the exception of Fire Station #3 (see appendix).

Workforce diversity

The Department recognizes the need for a workforce which represents the community. Both elected officials' and community survey comments have expressed the desire for a diverse department. The Department has created and staffed a recruiter position in May 2014. The testing process for new employees is expected to begin in February 2015 and take approximately six months to complete.

Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program

The Department is partnering with Swedish American Hospital to develop and implement a Mobile Integrated Healthcare program. Mobile Integrated Healthcare represents a progressive evolution in the delivery of community-based care by working with other healthcare providers within their current scope of practice in an expanded role through the use of non-emergent resources in the pre-hospital setting.

Paramedic class

Continuation of the paramedic training program is critical for service delivery. Contractual issues, including the number of ambulances, are factors as well as the need to rotate personnel through assignments. The Department currently has a paramedic class of 12 personnel scheduled for completion in June of 2015. An additional 11 personnel will enter the paramedic training program in the fall of 2015.

Expanded officer development program

The Department is developing an internal training program for new officers and officer candidates. The program will provide a framework for required and self-guided training, along with a partnership with Rock Valley College to provide training on the more intangible aspects of management and leadership.



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Through the collective bargaining process, the Department and Local 413 agreed to promotional bonus points for Fire Officer I and II certifications for the positions of Lieutenant and Captain, respectively.

Technological hardware upgrades

Improvements in radio communication equipment, mobile data computers, and a variety of fire suppression equipment are currently either being implemented or researched. As part of the 2015 strategic goals, the Department is trying to develop a plan for 24/7 IT support.

The Department has submitted a request for proposal (RFP) to equip frontline ambulances with tablets for mobile patient care reporting. In an effort to provide better network coverage, the Department will transition to the new Toughbook computers with the internal Verizon card.

Currently, the Department is researching a variety of software to cover the following: new staffing software that incorporates daily staffing, vacation entries, overtime entries, and a callback system; inventory management for consumable inventory; and fleet management.

Commission on the Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS)

In an effort to join the more than 135 CAAS-accredited agencies in North America, the Department is challenging the process to achieve accreditation for ambulance services. The Department completed and submitted the required documents in March of 2014. Adjustments have been made as needed and the anticipated timeline suggests a site visit will take place in May of 2015.

Accreditation

Although the accreditation process follows a 5-year timeline, the Department conducts an annual compliance review. This review specifically addresses recommendations made by the peer assessment team and whether or not the Department is in compliance with those recommendations on a yearly basis. For the past three years, the Department has successfully met the annual compliance criteria.

In addition to the Strategic Plan annual update and the Annual Compliance Report, the Department must conduct a Standards of Coverage study every five years. The Accreditation Work Group will begin conducting this study in early 2015.

The Department is scheduled for a site visit from CPSE in early 2016 for re-accreditation. In an effort to maintain the Department's accredited status, the Accreditation Work Group will continue to keep data and documents current, as accreditation is a continuous process through which the Department strives to improve its service to the community.



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Summary

These issues will provide the basis for future strategic planning efforts in order to maintain organizational and community commitment to the plan. Everyone who has a vested interest in the present and the future of the Rockford Fire Department also has a role and responsibility in this strategic plan.



Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of the Community-Driven Strategic Planning, the following terms have the meanings set forth below:

Accreditation	A process by which an association or agency evaluates and recognizes a program of study or an institution as meeting certain predetermined standards or qualifications. It applies only to institutions or agencies and their programs of study or their services. Accreditation ensures a basic level of quality in the services received from an agency.
Accredited	The act of accrediting or the state of being accredited , especially the granting of approval to an institution or agency by an official review board or organization that has established nationally accepted standards.
Customers	The person or group who establishes the requirement of a process and receives or uses the outputs of that process; or the person or entity directly served by the department or agency.
Goal	A broad target that defines how the agency will carry out its mission over a specific period of time, something to accomplish in assisting the agency to move forward.
Mission	An enduring statement of purpose, the organization's reason for existence. Describes what the organization does, for whom it does it, and how it does it.
Tactical Statement	A specific, measurable accomplishment required to realize the successful completion of a strategic goal.
Stakeholder	Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on, or influence, the organization's resources or outputs, is affected by those outputs, or has an interest in or expectation of the organization.
Strategic Plan	A long-range planning document that defines the mission of the agency and broadly identifies how it will be accomplished, and that provide the framework for more detailed annual and operational plans.



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- Strategic Planning** The continuous and systematic process whereby guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.
- Vision** An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.