

Mount Dora Fire Service Executive Summary

This report has been prepared as an informative document on the Mount Dora Fire Department in response to the recent meeting of Lake County commission and the Lake County Municipalities elected officials on 12/7/2010. The premise of the meeting was designed to entertain discussion on possible changes to fire and emergency response delivery, in order to provide these services cooperatively in a more effective manner and on a better economy of scale.

This report is intended to serve as a threshold of information that will assist the City Manager and the elected officials in formulating ideas that are relevant to future policy consideration and decisions. An overview of the service levels provided by and within the Mount Dora Fire Department will be broken down in order to provide a better understanding of the current existing organization, operations and infrastructure.

Mount Dora Fire Department primarily provides our services as a professional urban fire department. The City of Mount Dora has a complete water system inclusive of fire hydrants that are utilized for the sole purpose of fighting fire. The department has a fire inspection division that assures code enforcement in all areas of commercial property both new and existing. The inspection division, coupled with public education efforts is responsible for the relatively low fire rates within the City. A large portion of our emergency calls are emergency medical in nature. Mount Dora Fire provides advanced life support with paramedics on staff.

It is imperative to understand that Mount Dora Fire Department has a long standing pattern of attempting to cooperate and implementing cooperative relations with surrounding jurisdictions in order to improve services and reduce expenditures where possible. We currently cooperate as much if not more than any other agency in Lake County.

Admittedly, MDFD has not compromised (nor have we been directed to), if it would require services to be reduced to the citizens and visitors of Mount Dora. Careful attention has been given to assure that City resources are utilized appropriately and not overcommitted. While fire service officials of all agencies have met to work out inter-local and mutual aid agreements, ongoing disagreement has taken place for decades in regards to how taxpayer funded resources are utilized and for what purpose or in what areas they will be used.

Most fire officials believe that their first allegiance is to the taxpayer or assessment fee provider within their respective community. The responsibility and liability placed on the Chief of any fire department promotes careful consideration when dedicating equipment or personnel resource within other areas outside the service jurisdiction. Maintaining adequate coverage is always a primary concern.

Fire Services in Lake County Survey

Fire Department: Mount Dora Fire Department

Demographics

What is your jurisdiction's population?	11,687
What source did you use to determine the population?	Planning and Zoning Department
What is your coverage area in square miles?	11.251
How many stations does your jurisdiction have?	2
What is your ISO rating?	4
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The City of Mount Dora Fire Department handles all responsibilities and provides emergency response from two (2) fire stations. Through previous cooperation, these stations have officially been numbered in accordance with a countywide numbering system of all fire stations. The main Station at Donnelly Street is Station #34 and the Station on Hwy 19-A is Station #35. Our fleet is numbered the same way according to assigned location i.e.; engine 34, rescue 34, tower 34, engine 35 etc. This numbering system facilitates an easier identification program for joint dispatching.</p>	

Personnel

What is the total number of personnel in your department? <i>(Including administrative, fire prevention personnel, etc.)</i>	25	
How many hours per year do your shift personnel work?	2912	
What is your minimum staffing for shift personnel per shift?	6	
How many of your personnel are paid paramedics?	10	
Breakdown of total personnel by rank. Describe what each rank does.		
Rank	Total Number	Brief Description
Fire Chief	1	Administrative Functions – Budget, Policy making, Interagency agreements, Discipline, Chief Officer Response 24/7 etc.
Deputy Chief	1	Operational oversight – Policy enforcement, Training, EMS, Chief Officer Response 24/7 etc.
Fire Inspector	1	Performs occupational license and annual Inspections of all commercial structures. State required licensure inspections. Fire prevention and public education duties
Administrative Assistant	1	Data Management of all computer programs operating within the department. Assists in quality control of incident reporting and maintains responsibility for all record keeping in accordance with State law. Communicates with Public.
Lieutenants	3	Routine Command Company officer response and daily shift supervision. Performs assigned departmental projects and responsibilities.
Engineers	6	Routine apparatus operations. Drives all vehicles and performs pump operations at fire scenes. Knowledge of city streets and building fire protection equipment and connections.
Firefighters	12	Performs the labor aspect involving highly skilled and technical delivery of all service operations involving emergency and non-emergency work.

Comments:

Requirements of Rank

Chief Officers – BS degree, progressively responsible education and experience within the fire and emergency services with considerable tenure in all working aspects of the system.

Fire Inspector – State certified fire safety inspector including State Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician certification. Considerable knowledge of fire code interpretation and application.

Administrative Assistant – Knowledgeable in computer program applications and data management. Experience in payroll and accounting practices. Ability to generate sophisticated reports and statistics for routine review and planning.

Shift Lieutenants – Must be State certified Fire Officer 1 and hold State certification as EMT or Paramedic. AS Degree preferred. All company officers successfully pass departmental written and practical examinations in order to be eligible for promotion.

Engineers – Must be State Certified Firefighters, Apparatus and Pump Operators and hold State certification as EMT or Paramedic. Must have attended and passed the Emergency Vehicle Operators Course. All Engineers successfully pass departmental written and practical examinations in order to be eligible for promotion.

Firefighters - Must be State Certified Firefighters and hold State certification as EMT or Paramedic. All Firefighters successfully pass departmental written and practical examinations in order to be eligible for employment. All Fire employees receive comprehensive orientation training.

Call for Service Data - Please provide the following information for the calendar year 2010

Total Number of Medical Calls	2490	
Total Number of Non-Medical Calls	958	
Average Response Time	4.75	
List the services your department offers: <i>Examples include- ALS services, trench rescue, dive team, hazmat, high angle, vehicle extrication, etc.</i>	Advanced Life Support Fire Suppression Hazardous Material Mitigation Fire Inspections Plans Review/Development Review Committee Fire Prevention Education Water Rescue Community Risk Reductions Event/Festival Support Emergency Management Coordination City Wide Safety Program	
List the major risks in your jurisdictions. <i>If an event occurred, it would considerably tax your resources, or would be considered a major hazard</i>		
Special Events	Medical Facilities	Government/Industrial
Arts Festival	Pleasantville	Police Department
Annual Collectibles and Craft Fair	Avante Health Care	Fire Station 34
4 th of July Celebration	Davita Dialysis	Fire Station 35
Craft Fair	Edgewater Building	City Hall
Light Up Mt. Dora	Bridgewater Building	City Maintenance Facility
African-American History Festival	Waterman Village	Water Treatment Plant #1
Mount Dora Boat-In	Kiva of Mount Dora	Water Treatment Plant #2
5k Pedestrian Road Race	National Deaf Academy	Waste Water Treatment Plant
Sailing Regatta		Embarq Telephone
Bike Festival		Heritage Propane Gas
Plant & Garden Fair		Natural Organic Products

Operations

List total number of Apparatus and Vehicles (Staffed, not staffed, or reserve?)		
Type of Apparatus/Vehicle	Total Number	Staffed, Not Staffed or Reserve
Engines	2	Staffed
Rescue	1	Staffed
Tower	1	Not Staffed
Attack	1	Not Staffed
Rescue Boat	1	Not Staffed
Inspector Vehicle	1	Staffed
Deputy Chief Vehicle	1	Staffed
Fire Chief Vehicle	1	Staffed
Comments: Specialty units, such as the Tower, Rescue Boat and Attack are staffed when their functions are required. MDFD currently does not have reserve units.		
List Interagency Agreements		
Type of Agreement	With which Agency	
Inter-local/Automatic	Tavares and Eustis	
Mutual Aid	Lake County and Orange County	
Co-Location at Station 35	Lake Sumter EMS	
Dispatch Service	Lake Sumter EMS	
ALS Agreement	Lake Sumter EMS	
Adoption of Joint Incident Management Manual	Lake Sumter Fire Chief Association	
Tri-City Regional Training Program	Eustis and Tavares	
Comments: All of the above agreements serve to enhance personnel and equipment resources within the jurisdiction of Mount Dora and surrounding communities. For routine fire response, Mount Dora has (2) two <i>inter-local agreements</i> with Eustis Fire Department and the Tavares Fire Department. These agreements call for automatic dispatch and response for structure fires and other comprehensive calls involving the need for large amounts of personnel and equipment resource on scene. They have been in place and a source of cooperation between the tri-city departments for more than a decade. They exist to provide each agency with increased staffing and equipment when needed, while saving each city countless dollars in overtime by reducing the need to call in off-duty personnel. From the inception of these agreements, services between Mount Dora, Eustis and Tavares fire departments have been given on a relatively equal and equitable basis. Additionally, the fire department has signed agreements with both Lake and Orange County for <i>Mutual Aid</i> . These agreements are not first response and they require a request for assistance if all area resources become exhausted. We have an <i>inter-local agreement</i> with Lake Sumter Emergency Medical Services (LSEMS), whereby we function on a two tier delivery model. We respond immediately within the City gaining access first to the patient and delivering the service to stabilize the situation. Lake Sumter EMS arrives on scene soon thereafter and provides the extended care and transport to the hospital.		

Budget - Please provide the following information for the Budget Year 2010/2011

What is the total Fire/Rescue Budget?	\$2,005,100
What percentage of the total jurisdiction budget is Fire/Rescue?	5%
What is budgeted for training? <i>Include fire training courses, college classes, EMS contracted courses, etc.</i>	\$7,000
What are the average total hours of training per person per year? <i>Include in-house training hours as well.</i>	200 hours
How is your budget funded? <i>Tax ad valorem, Fire Assessment, LSEMS etc.</i>	Tax ad valorem and Emergency Medical Services MSTU Reimbursement
What avenues do you use when purchasing equipment, uniforms, apparatus or any other major purchases? <i>We purchase by a variety of methods including, but not limited to, City Purchasing Policy, piggybacking on other contracts, state contracted pricing, competitive bids and sole sourcing when necessary.</i>	
In the next five years, how many stations, additional personnel and apparatus is being planned? <i>Despite the economic downturn, the City of Mount Dora has annexed property east of US Highway 441 and several planned unit developments have been approved. Additionally the City is anticipating a fly-over at US Highway 441 and Highway 46 to handle increased traffic demands from the future expansion of the 429 Expressway. An Employment Center has been discussed and planned for near this area. In expectation of growth on the east side of US Highway 441, the City of Mount Dora has approved a new water plant. This plant was designed to serve the expansion of growth. All of this activity has suggested that we plan for one east side fire station, an additional nine fire personnel, and one engine over the next five years to maintain pace with this growth.</i>	

Comment on how the fire service in Lake County can be more cost effective and provide quality service.

Urban Fire Services vs. Rural Fire Services – Both of these areas exist within Lake County. Most municipal fire departments provide more urban protection. The County fire department provides services to a far greater area of rural than they do urban. As times have changed, these areas begin to overlap through building and development.

In the urban area, stations are closer together for faster response. They are typically staffed heavier to accommodate a higher call volume. In addition, most urban areas have established an adequate water supply available for suppression purposes. Rural areas must rely on tankers and improvised water supply to fight fire.

Most urban fire departments have better ISO ratings than rural departments. This is based on several factors as mentioned above such as; water supply, staffing levels, equipment and response times. For example, the Lake County Fire Department area has a split ISO rating of 6/9, six in the urban coverage and nine in the rural areas. Mount Dora has an ISO rating of 4 in all jurisdictional areas. Tavares is a 5 and Eustis is a 3. A lower number indicates a better overall fire protection rating within a given jurisdiction.

The concept of regionalization could have a positive impact on future service delivery. In this model, City/Municipal Stations would establish cooperative and consolidated efforts to handle the urban areas. The benefits could include, but not be limited to, the revisions of the organizational structure for better utilization of personnel, joint purchasing and sharing of equipment needs to reduce future capital costs.

The County Fire service should respond by relinquishing the enclaves and unincorporated areas within the urban areas and provide the collected funds to the municipal departments who will get there faster and provide better service than they currently receive for less cost.

In order to maintain and improve service while experiencing increased growth and decreasing revenue, the recommendation is to regionalize the Tri-City area fire departments. This effort would eliminate duplication of services and provide all citizens with the fastest response times and the optimum levels of service. A portion, if not all of the funding, in those areas now going to the County, should be relinquished back to the municipalities to enhance the revenue necessary to maintain pace with the increased coverage areas. The County would then be able to reassess their needs and align their services to handle the unincorporated outlying areas as determined.

In the past year, the Fire Chiefs of Mount Dora, Eustis and Tavares have frequently met to discuss further cooperative efforts and the concept of regionalization. There is an extraordinary opportunity that exists by continuing to merge the fire and emergency service departments of these three cities. For years inter-local agreements among the Tri-City Agencies, have established a strong operational relationship. There is a cohesive bond among the Fire officials, who collectively understand the need to further combine services.

Through the numerous meetings and discussions, it has become evident that much of what can be done as individual jurisdictions working together has already been done. Significant efforts at this point would need to take place at the legislative level within the Tri-City area to create and authorize these agencies to closer align themselves with one another to further enhance and improve service levels.

Furthermore, the focus should turn to merging the three cities into a fire district whereby the individual fire departments may re-organize for a more cost effective solution of providing fire and emergency services in the region. The professional talent, knowledge and skill base is present within the current Tri-city area to accommodate and become involved in the necessary fire and emergency service planning for this area. This concept provides the urban area of this region with same or like services and would highly improve the quality of service to all, more effectively and efficiently.