

MTFR STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 5.0 Improve the Department's Community Relations Activities

Objective 5.1 Develop a consistent public information program that highlights Department personnel and achievements.

Keeping our community stakeholders informed about our accomplishments as well as disseminating vital safety information is critical to maintaining a positive community profile. By developing an information program with a consistent theme and presence, we can increase community awareness as well as aid in recruiting. To accomplish this, we will:

- **Implement a series of advertisements aimed at recruiting volunteers.** This series will utilize local and county newspapers as well as other media (local cable access, MTFR website) to deliver a regular message on the need for volunteers.
- **Enhance the use of press releases to highlight our accomplishments and our members.** Too often we take the modest route, choosing not to inform the public of internal promotions, accomplishments and the like. Through the use of press releases to both print and televised media, we can celebrate our people and their service.
- **Hold community education events.** These include open houses and the like.
- **Utilize MTFR's website as an information clearing house.** Our newly re-designed website provides the perfect avenue to disseminate information to the public on events, personnel, recruiting, safety information and the levy campaign.
- **Train personnel as Public Information Officers and create Public Information Team.** Public relations work is difficult and can be a source of liability. Utilizing resources available within the county, we will train interested members as Public Information Officers for both emergency and non-emergency issues. These members, as well as others, would staff a new Public Information Team that would oversee these issues.

Timeframe and Cost

Funding for this component of the plan is estimated at \$3,000 per year, primarily to fund design and printing costs, and to pay for ads. Part of this can be offset through donations to cover advertising costs. Developing this information campaign will take one to two years, beginning in FY 2005.

Objective 5.2 Develop quarterly community newsletter

A community newsletter provides the perfect conduit for channeling information about our services, people and performance to our customers. Many fire departments do this and have found it to be very beneficial. This newsletter would be sent to every residence in the Township (including both Villages) as well as to major commercial customers.

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Timeframe and Cost

The implementation of this objective is tied to the formation of the Public Information Team. It is anticipated that this project can be in operation by the end of FY 2005. Costs for this project would include printing and postage. These costs are estimated at \$1,000 per year.

Objective 5.3 Form Community Education Team.

We envision a team of department and community members who would plan and implement public education programs targeted to at-risk groups. By including community members on this team, we are able to tap into a wealth of knowledge that may not be available internally. To implement this, we will:

- **Recruit interested community members.** Of particular interest are community members who are or have been teachers. Their knowledge of educational issues and the intricacies of dealing with schools would be of immense benefit.
- **Appoint Community Education Coordinator.** This volunteer position would chair the Community Education Team and oversee program implementation. The Department would pay to train this person in the different core component areas. This is an ideal position for a retired person looking to serve the community.
- **Implement appropriate programs.** Several quality public education programs exist and can be implemented throughout the township at little to no cost. The programs include the National Fire Protection Association's *Risk Watch*TM (for school age children) and *Remembering When*TM (for senior citizens) as well as the Ohio Fire Marshal's Juvenile Firesetters Prevention Program.

Timeframe and Cost

These items can be accomplished at no cost, except time. Recruiting interested community members and appointing the Community Education Coordinator can be accomplished within the first year of the plan. Implementing the education programs, given the logistics and training required, will take up to two years.

Objective 5.4 Fully implement comprehensive fire prevention inspection program

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

- **Increase the number of certified fire safety inspectors.** Our program has been hampered due to the lack of certified inspectors. To address this, we will increase from two to five the number of certified inspectors.

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- **Implement computerized inspection tracking.** This system, available to us through our Firehouse software system, will streamline the paperwork and reporting process following inspections.

Timeframe and Cost

Training additional inspectors will take up to two years. Implementation of computerized inspection tracking is planned as part of MTFR's phase 2 technology upgrade, covered in the FY 2005 budget.

Objective 5.5 Continue functions as an American Heart Association Training Center

Heart disease and accidents are major causes of death throughout the nation. Through our affiliation with the American Heart Association (AHA), we are able to provide the community and the region with CPR, first aid and AED training. During 2004, our first year as a training center, we trained 190 people. These courses are critical to maintaining a safe and healthy community. To continue this, we will:

- **Double the number of people trained in CPR, first aid, and AED.**
- **Partner with other community agencies to spearhead participation in the *Heart Safe Community* program.** This program, from the Medtronic Corporation, provides for automatic external defibrillator placement in key locations throughout the community.

Timeframe and Cost

The AHA program, currently in operation, is completely self-supporting. The costs involved with the Heart Safe Community program include purchasing the AEDs. We plan to pay for these units through grants and community funding. We plan to implement the Heart Safe Community program during FY 2005.

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