



Forest Lakes Fire District

where customer service is job one

2021 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE – ONE PAGE SUMMARY

MISSION

To provide comprehensive fire, emergency medical and search and rescue services to the Forest Lakes community and our surrounding Service Delivery Area.

VISION

To provide superior services to our communities via the use of up-to-date facilities, rolling stock, supplies and trained personnel funded, to the greatest extent possible, by new revenue sources.

GUIDING OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Excellence - If you are going to hang out your shingle, you better be prepared do the best job you can.

Integrity - We will act with integrity in everything we do.

Responsibility - We will do what is morally, legally, and ethically responsible.

Compliance - We will comply with all legal and statutory requirements.

Safety - We will operate in a way that makes the safety of our personnel and equipment paramount.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal: Continue to pursue our designated Master Facilities Plan projects including completion within this 5-year strategic timeframe.

Goal: Upgrade our rolling stock as planned in our latest STRAP (Strategic Plan).

Goal: Improve non-tax revenues each year by identifying new revenue sources, and by leveraging community resources via the Auxiliary, grants, on-going donations and corporate/other.

Goal: Rebuild cash reserves to take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

Goal: Develop governmental relationships and influence with our local politicians at the Federal, State and County levels, coordinating with the Arizona Fire District Association or other representative groups as appropriate, to ultimately be able to call on these relationships for assistance with governmental matters that would benefit our District, especially related to increasing our tax revenues.

Goal: Identify and develop the FLFD Leadership Team for the future, including qualified candidates for the Board of Directors.

DISTRICT ISSUES

Facilities Master Plan/Equipment. With the completion of our new fire station and exterior refurbishment of our Annex, we have finalized a master plan for the rest of our property. A primary goal for the coming year is to continue work on the Annex, repurposing it for lease to the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, equipment storage, and other secondary needs. The Master Planning Committee has also addressed ancillary needs such as updates to the blue garage and storage buildings as well as cleanup of the back lot and, potentially, covered storage for our front-end loader. We installed new fencing along with a permanent water runoff barrier on the south side of the property. However, the new fencing was damaged by excessive runoff and will have to be repaired. We have been given an opportunity to replace our 30-year-old water tender with a gently used newer model that will provide greater pumping capability. We will be able to purchase the new unit with existing District funds (See goal 4 above). We are also starting the planning to replace our engine and other outdated rolling stock within this 5-year strategic timeframe.

Staffing Model/Sustainability/Demographics. Our combination staffing model continues to receive high marks from our community and customers. We plan to maintain the 24X7 Paramedic plus Firefighter service delivery model. We remain concerned about the declining participation of Paid-On-Call support from the local community although we have made some progress in this area. Our 5 Year Finance and Budget projections are based on maintaining the current level of Paid-On-Call support. Our community's demographics are changing, making it a challenge to keep the community engaged in supporting the fire district as it has in the past. Our updated financial plan includes modest pay increases for both On-Duty-Staff and Paid-On-Call personnel. This is both well-deserved and important for our pay rates to remain competitive.

Revenue Constraints. We have continued to experience significant pressure on fire district revenues. Arizona fire districts are limited as to both tax levy and property valuation increases, and Mill rates have been capped at \$3.25 per \$100 assessed valuations. However, recent changes in Arizona law now allow fire districts to adjust their Mill rates over two years to \$3.50. Our District has put this process in place to meet our needs that have been exacerbated by inflated costs. While this change is modest at best, it is also welcome as it provides some limited financial relief while having a minimal impact on our residents. Still, for districts like Forest Lakes, we will continue to be restricted to 5% tax levy increases, presenting additional challenges to the leadership team for addressing our building and rolling stock needs as well as sustaining our staffing and service delivery models. Therefore, to accomplish our strategic goals over the coming 5-year time frame, we are committed to finding new revenue sources outside of the traditional tax revenue structure. An example of that we are currently putting in place is leasing floorspace in the Annex to the Coconino County Sheriff's office. We will continue this focus along with ongoing efforts to decrease expenses to the greatest extent possible so that we can increase our cash levels to take advantage of future opportunities to improve the capabilities of the District. In addition, FLFD actively supports the efforts of the Arizona Fire District Association to work with the legislature to provide additional tax revenues to rural districts like ours.