STRATEGIC PLAN

ADAMS COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

2023 - 2025
ACFR has invested a great deal of effort to better understand and meet the needs of the District and plan for the future, which seems to change more rapidly than ever. The following Strategic Plan is the result of those efforts, which included measurement of past performance, evaluation of current practices, and input from the community, partner agencies and employees about their expectations and needs. The 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, designed to be somewhat dynamic, is intended to serve as a road map for the organization as it works to fulfill its commitment to continually strive to be an innovative all-hazards organization that provides excellent services that are tailored to the specific needs and risks of our community, employees, and partners.

The 2023 Strategic Plan serves a few purposes. First, it establishes various initiatives intended to improve critical organizational issues and/or service gaps that were identified during the process, including critical observation, examination of industry standards, and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis that were conducted with employees and community members.

Next, it helps to prioritize and allocate current resources and justify long-term capital expenses.

The plan also reinforces ACFR’s commitment to employee/management collaboration by openly listing areas for improvement and how we together intend to accomplish that.

Finally, it provides a vehicle to inform our Board of Directors, community and partners about our intentions, track progress towards meeting our goals, and will be updated and republished at least annually.

STUART SUNDERLAND
Adams County Fire Rescue is dedicated to providing quality, timely, and professional emergency services to those who live in, work in, and drive through our district. ACFR is truly committed to our citizens and the community service needs.

ACFR personnel are all required to have a minimum certification of Firefighter 1, EMT-B, and HAZMAT OPS. ACFR responds out of four primary stations. Front line apparatus include 4 Engines, 4 Medic units, 2 Ladder Trucks, 1 Heavy Rescue, 2 Attacks (Brush truck), 1 SAM vehicle and 1 Command Vehicle. We also have a dedicated training center, fire prevention office and administrative headquarters.

The Fire Investigation team is responsible for determining the Origin and Cause of all unknown and/or suspicious fires and explosions occurring within fire district as well as determining an approximate dollar amount from fire loss.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are a critical function of Adams County Fire Rescue; over 80% of all 911 calls are medical related. ACFR provides emergency response with cross-trained Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Firefighter/Paramedics.

Adams County Fire Rescue is prepared to mitigate all types of rescue situations. Technical Rescue is a specialized aspect of what we can face in the fire service. ACFR has many target areas that have required us to become versatile in many technical rescue procedures. ACFR has the equipment necessary to mitigate these technical rescue emergencies and the trained individuals who are able to cover; Confined Space Rescue, Rope Rescue, Trench Rescue, Structural Collapse, Swift Water Rescue, Ice Rescue, and Heavy Vehicle Extrication and Stabilization.
VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

Adams County Fire Rescue will continually strive to be an innovative and well-prepared all-hazards organization that provides compassionate, professional and high-quality fire, rescue, EMS, prevention and other services that are tailored to the needs of the community, employees and partners.
“Adams County Fire Rescue (ACFR) and Adams County Professional Firefighters IAFF Local 2403 are proud to present our Professional Standards Guide. This important manual contains ACFR’s philosophy, organizational values, mission, and goals. ACFR manages new ideas and changes through the use of committees that represent both Labor and Management. These committees are based on the principle that those who are closest to the actual services we provide should be allowed equitable input into the system. By participating in these committees, ACFR members of every rank and position are vested in and part of the outcome. This Professional Standards Guide was created with this balance in mind.”
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<th>WELLNESS</th>
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<td>Wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life. This includes being physically active, maintaining a well-rounded diet, managing, and balancing mental health, and managing stress on duty as well as off duty. An active healthy life includes the balance of family, friends, work, and social interaction. ACFR will provide the necessary means to support all of these things with EAP, Building Warriors program, and Revital.</td>
<td>All of our members, from the bottom to the top of the organization, have autonomy and are encouraged to actively participate in all aspects of our job and organizational decision-making whenever possible. This can be done by inclusion and involvement in committees, teams, and labor relations. We are all empowered to communicate any and all safety concerns.</td>
<td>Our members are accountable for their actions and behavior on and off duty. As a member of ACFR, you are not only representing Adams County Fire but the entire fire service in general. As an organization of firefighters, we need to hold ourselves, our colleagues, and the fire service community accountable at all times. We set a high bar for ourselves, in which we should take pride.</td>
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<td>Respect for others is a critical factor in our ability to work together. It promotes inclusion, acceptance, teamwork, and morals. Our members come from a variety of backgrounds, each with a unique blend of experiences that enhance our overall ability to respect the culturally diverse community we serve.</td>
<td>We hold ourselves to a high standard of excellence. We deliver exceptional service to our external and internal customers through professionalism, dedication, and our hardworking ethos. Whether it is an emergency incident or the needs within our own agency, we respond as quickly as possible. It is our belief that we cannot only meet all expectations but that we can exceed them. Our goals consist of strategic planning to ensure they are brought to fruition. We go all out. We adapt. We persevere.</td>
<td>Through thick and thin, we strive to keep an unwavering positive attitude. By developing and maintaining an environment with great employee morale, productivity, and team building, we create a positive attitude. Bringing a positive attitude to the start of each shift can help dictate each day's progression to help each of us cope under stressful situations. We shall all proudly take ownership of that positive attitude.</td>
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<td>Communication is essential to the unity and performance of our organization. We are committed to providing an effective and responsive means of communication throughout our organization and community. Information is shared utilizing the chain of command through various meetings, committees, and chief chats.</td>
<td>“Our family helping your family” is our organization's motto. Our family is the culture we embrace for our internal family. We embrace and support the ongoing brotherhood and sisterhood within the firehouse and throughout our organization. We continue to build tradition and culture that was outlined by our members before us. Our motto is also about helping our external family in their time of need. We will do our best to serve our citizens and surrounding agencies, as they are considered to be an extension of our family.</td>
<td>A reputation is not just yours... it is ours. Our crew, our station, our shift, it's ACFR, it's the entire fire service. Bring that reputation to work every day, take it home with you, and protect it. A reputation takes years to build and nurture, but only seconds to destroy. A reputation can precede itself, and no further conversation is needed – or it can land on your organization and crush it. Take care of the ACFR reputation and pass it along better than you found it.</td>
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The department hosted a community meeting in June of 2022. The meeting was facilitated by the Center for Public Safety Excellence - Technical Advisory Program. The goal of the meeting was to gather input from our residents and business owners. The information obtained allowed us to rank the importance of our services in priority order. The report shows Emergency Medical Services as our highest priority service followed closely by Fire Suppression.

The participants were also asked to share what is most important to them. Improved communication/transparency, keeping up with community growth, and increased call volume were all high on the list. Maintaining a well-trained, professional, and courteous workforce was also identified as an area of high importance to our community members.

We appreciate the input provided by our community members and we plan to provide our Strategic Plan to each member that participated to close the loop and let them know how their input helped guide us in creating our future plans.
SERVICES at ACFR

#1 Emergency Medical Services:
Emergency medical response and transportation at the advanced life support (paramedic) level.

#2 Fire Suppression:
Emergency extinguishment of any building structure, vehicle, or equipment on fire.

#3 Technical Rescue:
Basic and advanced rescue and extrication operations for trapped or endangered persons.

#4 Hazardous Materials Mitigation:
Emergency incident stabilization of hazardous materials released involving industry, roadways, critical infrastructure, or the environment.

#5 Wildland Firefighting:
Natural cover firefighting where rapid spread is a threat to life and property.

#6 Emergency Preparedness and Management:
Promotion of awareness, planning, preparation, incident resource management, and emergency response to disasters and acts of terrorism.

#7 Fire Prevention:
Reduction of risk through fire code enforcement, plans review, and inspections.

#8 Fire Investigation, Origin, and Cause:
Determining fire origin and cause, including evidence collection during the investigation, and arrest if a crime has been committed.

#9 Public Education:
Reduction of risk through fire and life safety education and training for the public.

SERVICE RANKINGS

Community members provided input on the following categories and ranked our services based on what they felt was most important.
EMPLOYEE INPUT

Adams County Fire Rescue recognizes our employees as our most important asset. A renewed focus on employee feedback and input has been a driving force in creating our Strategic Plan. Crews were given the opportunity to present feedback on various areas of the fire department. This feedback provided invaluable insight into our operation. Many areas received immediate attention, while others have been used as the foundation of our Strategic Plan.

Strategic Planning sub-committee meetings included members from all ranks and demographics. Crews were given the opportunity to share ideas on new goals and partake in planning sessions designed to drive our future.
Information obtained through planning sessions, crew surveys, and our community stakeholder meeting was compiled and reviewed by our strategic planning committee. As we strive to provide the best service possible, we will continue to look at ourselves critically. All goals and ideas have been categorized into two separate areas: **Critical Issues and Service Gaps**.

Critical issues are areas we feel present the greatest threats to the continued growth and improvement of day-to-day operations.

Service gaps are areas that can have, or are already presenting opportunities for improvement. These gaps have the potential to disrupt the service we provide to our citizens and therefore, will be receiving immediate and ongoing attention.
Maintaining Staffing Levels

Maintaining staffing levels has presented a significant challenge. The number of qualified applicants has decreased greatly over the past three years. While the interest level has decreased at the entry-level firefighter position, the most significant impact we are finding is at the paramedic level. As a primary strategic initiative, the district will focus efforts on recruiting qualified paramedics, retaining existing paramedics, and developing paramedics from within. According to our citizens, providing advanced life support level first responders is one of the most important services we provide.

Employee Wellness and Fulfillment

Keeping our employees healthy and ready to respond when called upon will continue to be a primary focus of Adams County Fire Rescue. As we have evolved, we recognize the importance of both physical and mental wellness to ensure a long career. We will continue to focus on providing our employees with the necessary resources to remain in top physical and mental condition. Employee fulfillment has also taken on a new perspective. Employee retention has become more challenging for the fire service. What was once unheard of, people are now leaving the fire service early to pursue other careers. Recognizing the importance of job fulfillment, ACFR will continue to explore new avenues to provide advanced-level training, specialty teams, specialty team deployments, and other cutting-edge training opportunities. Remaining innovative and flexible in the way we address employee fulfillment is of the utmost importance. As we know, our employees are our most important resource. We must continue to find ways to keep them engaged and challenged, which we hope will help keep them fulfilled in this career.
Communication

As the department has grown in size, communication has become more challenging. A full evaluation of ways to share information internally will be completed. Utilizing technology for internal communication is only part of the solution. We also need to ensure the information is able to freely flow through the chain of command in both directions. Our Fire Chief has prioritized frequently spending time at the stations for Chief Chats, answering questions and accepting feedback and suggestions.

Citizens have also asked for more communication. The social media world has taken communication to an entirely new level and significant focus has gone into getting information on social media. While we have been progressive and focused on providing information to anyone with a social media account, there are still those that feel they want more information. We will continue to be progressive and innovative with the ways we share information. We will focus efforts on providing information via various mediums/languages/social media channels and perhaps even an occasional pancake breakfast to communicate face to face with our community.

Succession Planning

As the department has grown, we are beginning to experience more and more retirements in addition to firefighters leaving the fire-service all together. The growth of the past five years created new positions that were filled with tenured employees. In some cases there may be no obvious successors in line, and potentially more positions than there are qualified people to fill them. In order to foster growth from within we will focus on finding new ways to encourage and facilitate career development.
Maintain High Standards and Technical Skills

Providing the highest level of service possible is only achieved through continuous quality improvement, staying current with industry best practices, and challenging ourselves in new endeavors. Researching new ideas and utilizing all resources available to remain on the cutting edge of our profession is of the utmost importance.

Improve Budget Development and Tracking Processes

Budget development and tracking will continue to improve as we learn how to better integrate program appraisals and strategic goals into the budget requests, refine workflows, and expand access to real-time reports and expenditures, with the goal of becoming as transparent as possible for our employees and community.
Maintain the Best Response Times Possible

Quick response times are the most common expectations of the community. The department and firefighters have gone to great extents to evaluate and improve turnout times. Dispatch call processing times have gone through a similar process and continue to improve. The final component in total response time is the travel time. We are currently well above the travel time recommendations of the NFPA for a metropolitan area. There are no simple answers or quick fixes to resolve this issue. The number of calls for service continues to increase which has a significant impact on the ability to quickly respond to and mitigate the issues. Evaluation of potential solutions to keep up with community growth and the increased number of requests for service will be the focus.
Maintaining Adequate District Coverage

Keeping a Full Schedule
Employee staffing has proven to be an issue. The department has found itself in the place of forcing overtime to maintain coverage for the district. We need to find out why we are having problems keeping our units staffed and then address those issues accordingly.

Apparatus Serviceability
Supply chain issues and equipment shortages have created a concern for keeping our apparatus in service. We are aware this could potentially create a catastrophic situation and will actively pursue solutions to ensure we have the apparatus needed to respond to and mitigate our emergencies.

Crew Resource

Time Management
Day-to-day demands have been increasing in all areas. In order to maintain the most optimal state of readiness, a full evaluation of how our emergency crews are spending their time will be completed. The evaluation will be used to determine the best use of crew time and could potentially impact areas such as public education, on-the-job training, and other non-emergency commitments.

Understanding the Needs of our District
The dynamics of our community have changed substantially over the past decade. As our fire department has grown, we have also moved away from our community outreach programs. We will strive to find new ways to interact with the community in non-emergency situations. The department has a renewed focus on Public Education and will continue to make ourselves available to our community. Our department is also focusing our efforts on recreating our Community Risk Reduction and Standards of Cover to have a better understanding of the needs in our area.
The strategic plan is designed to be a dynamic process which will continue to grow with our department. A series of goals which support the strategic initiatives have been developed. All goals are supported by objectives which are designed to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time bound. Plan progress will be tracked in real time on the department's internal Web-site. Bi-annual progress updates will also be posted on the department’s public facing website.

Annual appraisals will be completed by each division. Appraisals will provide further details on goal progress and will also be the conduit for which new goals are identified. New goals will be updated at least annually. Below are samples of how we are tracking the progress of our objectives.
This plan is a product of a collaborative effort involving all ranks and positions of our employees, business representatives, partnering agencies and residents from all areas of our district. Our mission of providing the excellent service to our citizens, and creating the best possible work environment for our employees, would not be achievable without developing a true understanding of their needs and expectations. In total, more than 110 people participated in the process. Thank you to all of our employees, citizens and business partners for participating in the development of this strategic plan.

It is with genuine humility that we realize the comprehensive scope of this plan would not have been possible without your help.