

Rockton Fire Protection District

Five-Year Strategic Plan

FY 2011 - FY 2016



Kirk R. Wilson, Chief

Revised June 2011

"Loyalty-Pride-Tradition"

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Preamble

This plan is intended to act as a guide for both the Board of Trustees and Administration as they define the overall course they desire to chart for the District as they lead into the future. The concepts set forth herein should be helpful to both groups when creating specific goals for the District., developing their annual scope of work, and formulating operating and capital budgets. As a living document that is constantly evolving and responding to the changing needs of the Fire District, nothing in this plan should be considered as a “done deal”, irreversible, or, to be undertaken without first going through the standard approval process. By giving recognition to and adopting this plan, the Board is not agreeing to enact any of the items contained herein; all matters must still be brought before the Board for deliberation and vote. Any items requiring expenditure of funds are still subject to the regular budget process.

Section 1 – Background and Overview

Introduction

This plan is the result of a collaborative effort between firefighters, officers, chief officers, and the Board of Trustees of the Rockton Fire Protection District. This document sets forth in a formalized fashion the district's vision for the future, outlining challenges as well as opportunities to be addressed.

The plan was developed within the context of the district's mission statement and core values. The committee remained vigilant throughout the planning process to be mindful that its final recommendations should further the district accomplishing its mission in a fashion faithful to its core values. This document should be read with this principle in mind.

As a framework for devising the scope of the plan, the committee chose to focus on evaluating areas of service delivery to the district's residents. This included programs currently in place as well as expansion of services that should be considered for the future. The committee began its work by engaging in a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) for each service area. This process allowed the committee to identify specific topics to be addressed and prioritized in the future to enable the district to deliver best in class services to its residents with the highest degree of professionalism and efficiency.

The strategic planning committee intends this document to be used as a guide to the future, to be followed where appropriate and to be revised as necessary. The plan provides a direction into the future for the district while remaining flexible to allow for unforeseen changes that will inevitably be necessary as new issues present themselves. This plan addresses the highest priorities of the district for the coming years. This plan will be evaluated on an annual basis to keep up with our ever-changing community.

Mission Statement

The Rockton Fire Protection District is dedicated to protecting the lives and property of the people in the district from man-made and natural emergencies by providing a range of services that include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Suppression and Rescue
- Fire Prevention
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Public Education

Decisions and actions of the members will be in a competent, professional, efficient, safe, and fiscally responsible manner while reaching into the future but never forgetting the past

Core Values

Core values are essential and enduring tenets, a set of general guiding principles, not to be compromised for short-term expediency.

In order to accomplish its mission with the highest degree of professionalism, integrity, efficiency and service to the community, the Rockton Fire Protection District has identified the following core values:

- **People** – the human individual is the most important resource of the district; this includes employees and volunteers who work for the district as well as those we serve and protect;
- **Respect** – the district openly accepts people as individuals, recognizing their fundamental worth, embracing them for all their qualities including differences of ideas and opinions, encouraging the expression of individuality and creativity;
- **Honesty** – the district promotes a culture of honesty and integrity, both internally (within the workplace environment) and externally (in its interaction with the public);
- **Loyalty** – the district instills in its people the spirit of individual support of one person toward another as well as organizational support of the individual; this is critical to maintaining emotional well-being in the high stress work environment of the modern firefighter; also, this support enables people to advance their careers and realize their highest potential of professional service;
- **Quality** – in all aspects of its endeavors the district promotes the value of quality: quality in performance of duties, quality in workmanship, quality in education, quality decision making and critical thinking skills, quality delivery of service to the public; the district requires a leadership commitment to a continuous quality improvement program.
- **Safety** – safety of our personnel while in the fire house, responding to a call, or delivering services to the community is of paramount importance; likewise, safety of those we serve is always at the forefront of decision making.
- **Pride** - is defined as a state of feeling of being proud, a reflection of credit upon oneself. Pride is feeling good after a job well done! It is a feeling of goose bumps as you recount your actions; by going somewhere nobody else can go. By making a rescue and saving a life by being a part of a unit that successfully achieves its goal. Pride is wiping a tear from your eye and swallowing a lump in your throat, as you are hugged and kissed by a loved one thankful you have returned safe and sound. Pride is a glow in your kids as they brag about you being a firefighter. Pride is wearing your uniform, proud of your colors, proud of your co-workers and fire department. Being a member of "THE NOBLEST BREED".

- **Tradition** - is defined as the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, and information from generation to generation. A long established or inherited way of thinking or acting “Courage in the face of danger is a tradition of the fire service”. Firefighters of the past stand by us today, passing on their legacy and dedication to us, and our fire departments. Tradition is the maintenance and connection of values with our heroes, pacesetters, and examples set by our idols! It is our foundation.

Major Functions Provided by the District

Fire and Emergency Medical Operations:

It is our mission to provide efficient service of the highest quality and care to the citizens of the district and it's visitors. Services are provided through emergency response to fires, rescues, emergency medicals and other emergency responses as requested.

Fire Prevention:

It is our mission to provide proactive community risk reduction programs, reducing loss of life and property. To minimize socioeconomic impact on the community through public education, prevention programs, safety surveys, investigations and code enforcement as it pertains to the district's mission.

Administration:

To provide excellent customer service, efficient record keeping, and other support functions necessary to carry out the mission of the district.

Rockton Fire Protection District Organizational Structure

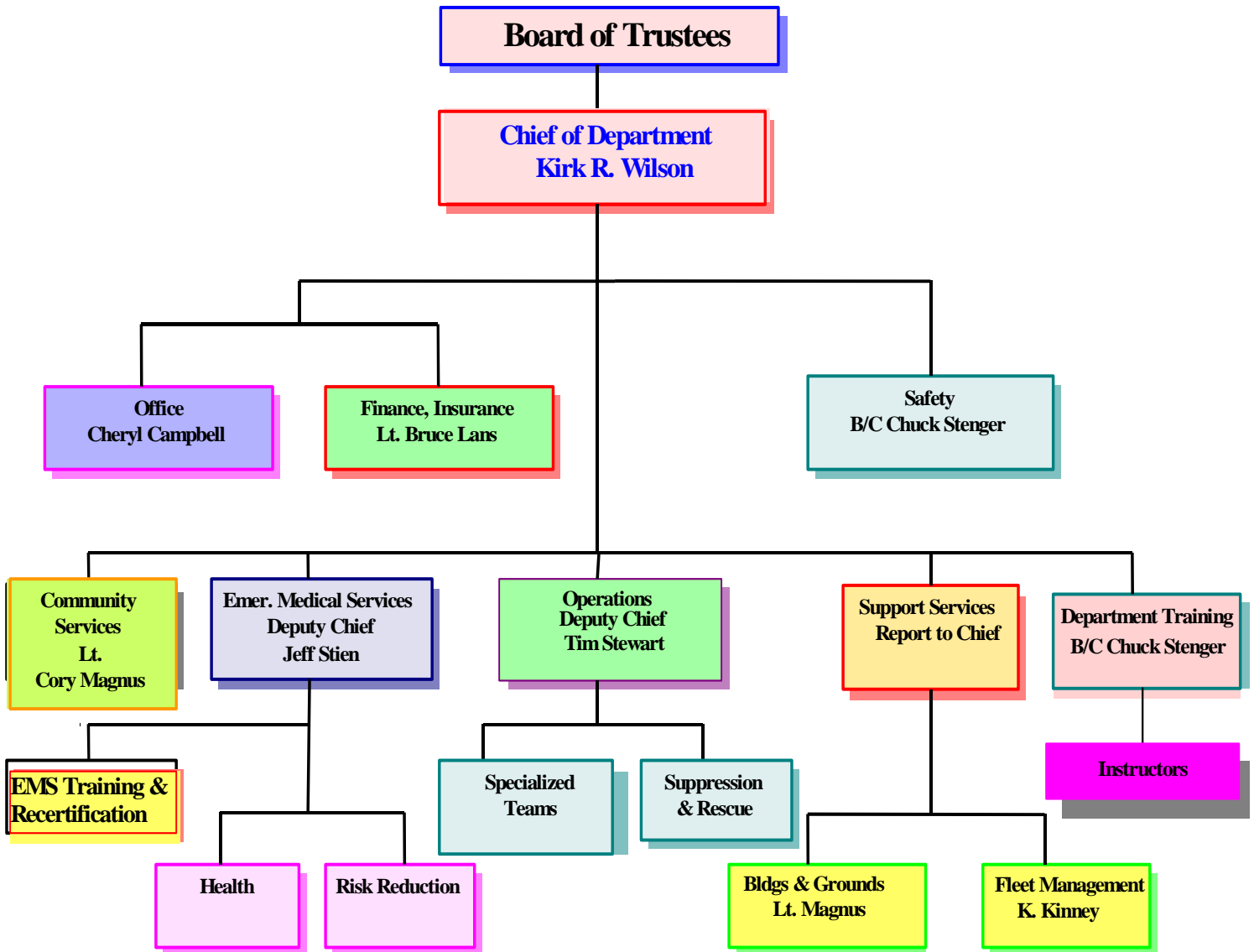


Chart Organizational Structure.pub
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District Overview

The Village of Rockton, Illinois is located in the north central section of the state three (3) miles from the Wisconsin border. When incorporated in 1835, the population of the Village was less than 300. Since 1835, the population slowly grew to our current census, estimated at over 7,800 within the Village limits. Today, the fire protection district covers an estimated 19,000 people in a 54 square miles area.

The Rockton Village Fire Department was organized in 1908 after a disastrous 1907 Halloween night fire in the 100 block of West Main Street behind the Thompson-Baker grocery store. Historians note that the fire could have been extinguished with a garden hose; however, the fire spread quickly and engulfed the south side of the street.

In 1947, a fire occurred in the 2000 block of West Rockton Road, outside the Village limits. Being outside its boundaries, the Village officials would not allow the fire department to respond. To address this situation and prevent a similar occurrence, citizens decided to form a fire district, giving greater fire protection services to the area. Thus, in 1947 the Rockton Fire Protection District was created. The fire protection district has operated separately from the village since its inception.

Board Of Trustees:

When formed, the Rockton Fire Protection District was originally governed by a three-member board. Carlton Williams was the first President of the Board. Board members were appointed and served at the discretion of the County Board Chairperson. In 1990 the board structure was changed from a three member appointed board to a five member elected board.

Employees:

The district currently employs five part-time personnel:

Position Title	Number of Personnel
District Fire Chief	1
Firefighter	3
Administrative Assistant	1

Personnel Roster:

The district has a roster of approximately 36 paid-on-call personnel. Prior to an individual being appointed as a member by the Board of Trustees, prospective candidates undergo an intensive recruit training curriculum which teaches them basic firefighter skill sets and prepares them for taking the State of Illinois Firefighter II test. Many of the members are also certified as Emergency Medical Technicians at either the Basic or Paramedic level. Continuing and advanced educational opportunities are offered and the members are encouraged to pursue training in fields of interest that appeal to them. Many have advanced certifications in specialized fire, rescue and EMS fields of expertise.

Contract Personnel:

Since 1994, the district has used contract EMS personnel from a third party to provide ambulance staffing. This has been necessary since there has not been consistent paid-on-call membership certified at the Paramedic level to provide staffing during daytime hours. The arrangement is for the contract service to provide one 24 hour Paramedic seven days per week and a second Paramedic is provided Monday through Friday, 6am to 6pm. Sunday-Saturday 6pm-6am, the fire district members provide staffing for the second ambulance crewmember.

Fire and EMS Apparatus:

Apparatus represents a major capital investment for the district. The board's philosophy has been to keep a modern, late model fleet of equipment, realizing that the higher up front cost of this approach is more than offset by lower maintenance costs and increased reliability. This approach has served the district well by providing personnel quality, functional equipment with which to efficiently perform their tasks. Current apparatus owned by the district is summarized below.

Description	Unit #	Manufacturer (Chassis / Body)	Model Year
Ambulance	1C22	Ford / Horton	2008
Ambulance	1C32	Ford / Horton	2006
Engine	1401	Spartan / Rosenbauer	2007
Engine	1402	Spartan / 3D	1987
Engine	1404	Spartan / 3D	1989
Truck	1451	HME / Smeal	1995
Heavy Rescue	1441	KME	2004
Tender	1478	International / US Tanker	1999
Tender	1479	International	1979
Grass Truck	1461	Chevrolet	2000
Grass Truck	1466	Ford	1990
Rescue Boat	1445		2008
Command Car	Car 1	Ford	2008
Command Car	Car 2	Ford	2008

Section 2 - Demographic Review

The Rockton Fire Protection District protects several different townships as well as the Village of Rockton. The townships include Rockton, Owen, Burritt, Harrison, Rockford and Roscoe. Some additional areas include part of the City of South Beloit. Table 1 shows the census for the Village of Rockton and its growth as compared to surrounding villages. The 2000 census shows the Rockton Fire Protection District having a population of 13,250 people (data provided by Eric Stromberg, Winnebago County Regional Planning and Development Parcel Maintenance Manager.) As of 2007, the population of the district is estimated to be around 18,000. Table 2 shows population by age (2003).

Table 1. Population Trends

Area	1970	1980	1990	2000	2006	1990-2000 Change		1990-2006 Change*	
						Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Rockford City	147,370	139,712	139,246	150,115	NA	10,869	7.80%	NA	NA
Rockton Village	2,099	2,313	2,928	5,296	7,440	2,368	80.90%	4,512	154.10 %
Roscoe Village	NA	1,388	2,079	6,244	NA	4,165	200.30 %	NA	NA
South Beloit City	3,804	4,088	4,072	5,397	NA	1,325	32.50%	NA	NA

University of Illinois College of Medicine, as of 2000 Census
 *2006 Special census for the Village of Rockton

Table 2. Population by Age (2003)

Age	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	588	8.1
6-11 years	747	10.3
12-17 years	827	11.4
18-24 years	472	6.5
25-34 years	740	10.2
35-44 years	1,291	17.8
45-54 years	1,148	15.8
55-64 years	667	9.2
65-74 years	413	5.7
75 years and older	363	5
Median Age	37.0 years	

* Rockton Village Data, EASI Analytic, Inc., 2003

Goal: To annually update demographic data and district map information obtained from the Village of Rockton and Winnebago County to provide a greater understanding of the district.

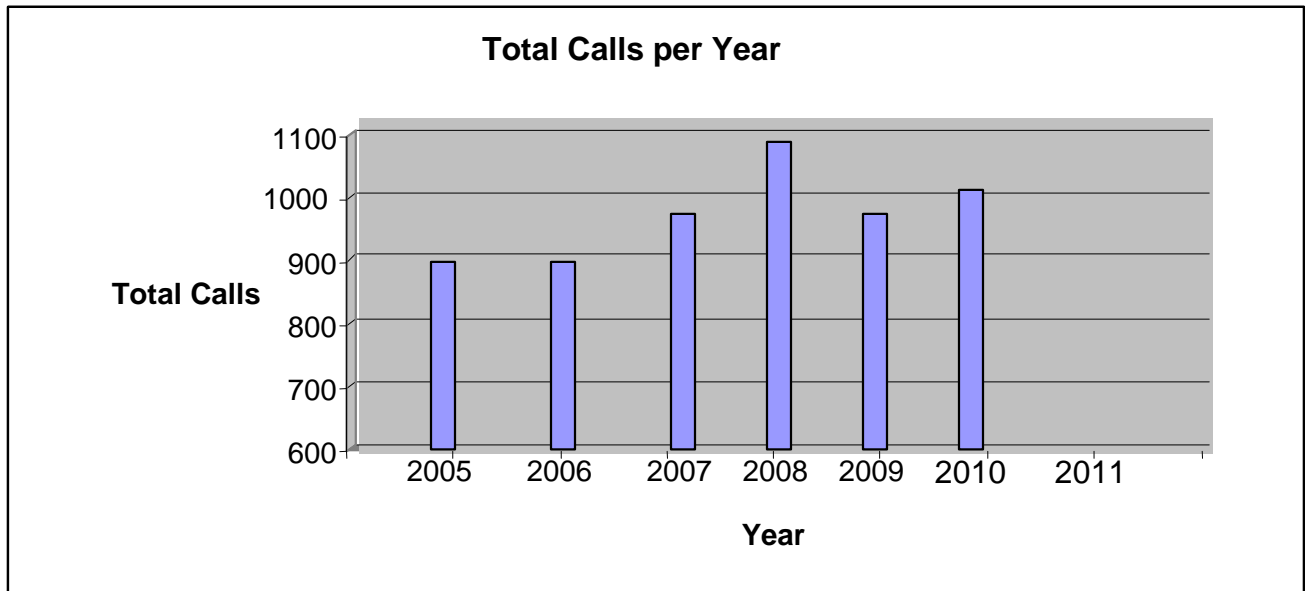
No estimated costs associated.

Section 3 – Staffing Requirements

The issue of daytime staffing was identified through the SWOT analysis as an area of weakness. This is an area that requires a comprehensive study to determine the levels of staff necessary to meet the emergency and non-emergency functions of the district. A planning committee should be established to work in conjunction with the fire chief to address the staffing needs of the fire district.

Over the past several years, the district has experienced a significant increase in the number of calls for emergency services (see Table 4.). This, coupled with ever increasing non-emergency activities, has caused the district to evaluate the daytime staffing necessary to carryout the mission of the district. Also, compliance with NFPA 1720 and IDOL regulations governing emergency deployment on fire scenes will impact future staffing levels.

Table 4. Total Calls per Year



Paid on premises personnel are used from Monday through Friday from 0600 to 1800 hours to bring minimum staffing levels to 3 for the engine company. The positions are presently being filled with district personnel whose scheduling does not exceed 212 hours in a 28-day cycle.

Goal: To professionally staff the district at a level that will enable it to deliver consistent services to citizens in an effective, efficient, timely, and safe manner.

The Rockton Fire Protection District is comprised of an outstanding group of people dedicated to providing emergency services to the community. While the bulk of manpower for fire suppression is, and will remain, the responsibility of the paid on call (POC) personnel, there is an ever-increasing need to address additional part time and paid on premises staffing. POC personnel are experiencing increasing demands on their professional and personal lives and many are not able to respond to incidents during daytime hours Monday through Friday.

During the hours between 0600 until 1800, the department provides an initial response of 3 firefighting personnel to the call for service (on duty Engine Company), an ambulance with 2 personnel and the Duty Chief.

Currently the trend has been that Monday through Friday, 0600 to 1800 the availability of POC personnel is reduced to a point where it is uncertain whether there will be sufficient personnel responding to an incident to adequately staff additional support apparatus to respond in an effective and safe manner to a basic structure fire.

Mutual aid is used frequently to compensate for Rockton’s manpower shortage. Utilizing mutual aid increases the time an adequate number of firefighters are assembled and in position so offensive fire operations can begin in a safe manner for personnel.

Staffing Recommendation

The Rockton Fire Protection District is a combination part – time / paid-on-call organization and this will not change in the foreseeable future. Yet, the Rockton Fire Protection District must expand staffing to adequately meet the needs and expectations of the community while providing quality fire and EMS services. Staffing must meet compliance with NFPA and OSHA standards. The following recommendation can be met by expanding to a staffing model using part time, paid on premises and paid on call personnel.

Action Plan – Staffing

Budget Year	Action	Anticipated Cost
2012-16	Re-Evaluate adequate staff levels and adjust as necessary	

Section 4 –Member Personnel Recruitment and Retention

Goal: To employ and retain a talented, committed, and diverse employee group for the Rockton Fire Protection District in an effort to continue the strong legacy of service to the community and sustain the organization for the future through tradition and progress.

The Rockton Fire Protection District has a proud history of being a professional paid-on-call fire department. With the demands on personnel increasing over the years it has become extremely difficult at times to retain paid-on-call personnel needed to serve the public. The Rockton Fire Protection District views our public perception as a very important indicator of the department’s long-term success. When the members of the department and the community perceive that the Rockton Fire Protection District is well managed and provides outstanding services, then it becomes our job to make sure their perception is the reality.

Retention and Recruitment Root Problems	
Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, United States Fire Administration, 1998	
Source Problems	Contributing Factors
Time Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-income families and working multiple jobs • Increased training time demands • Higher emergency call volume • Additional demands within the department
Training Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher training standards and new federal requirements • More time demands • Greater public expectations of fire department’s response capabilities • Additional training demands to provide broader range of services • Re-certification demands
Increasing Call Volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire department assuming wider response roles • Increasing EMS call volume • Greater reliance by public on fire department services
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evaluate recruitment goals to ensure the department retains the appropriate number of personnel to meet the needs of the community • Develop and maintain a program for testing, interviewing of new recruits

Action Plan– Recruitment and Retention

Budget Year	Action	Anticipated Cost
Annual	Continue to evaluate recruitment goals to ensure the department retains the appropriate number of personnel to meet the needs of the community.	\$0
Annual	Continue to evaluate the recruit program for testing, interviewing of all new recruits and make appropriate improvements.	\$0
Annual	Implement programs to host annual open houses and attend community minded organization.	\$0
2011	Develop a cadet program in conjunction with Hononegah High School.	\$1,000
Annual	Continue implement programs to recognize and reward members for their dedication to service and duty.	\$1,000
Annual	Continue a marketing program in an effort to attract new recruits.	\$1,000
Annual	Survey compensation rates of surrounding fire departments to ascertain Rockton's competitiveness.	\$0
2013	Develop Firefighter Intern Program in conjunction with local community college.	\$1,000

Section 5 – Health and Safety

Goal: To protect the health and safety of department members through effective training, education, programs, and management. The development of policies and procedures that prevent injuries, illness, and maximize overall health.

Health and safety are of primary concern to all department members. Health and safety are affected by many factors including training, equipment, facilities, operating procedures, staffing, medical supervision, government regulations, environment, lifestyle, nutrition, as well as attitude, awareness, and perception.

The ability to serve as a firefighter is a privilege. Being able help others during a time of personal tragedy is the reward. Firefighters do what many are not able to do and what many others are not willing to do. The Rockton Fire Protection District is committed to maintaining the safety and well being of all department members.

Action Plan – Health and Safety

Budget Year	Action	Anticipated Cost
Annual	Continue mandatory TB testing, and Hepatitis vaccinations. Annually provide physicals.	\$1,350
Annual	Encourage members to take advantage of department provided health club membership. This includes establishing a department physical fitness health and wellness program.	\$7,000
Annual	Develop programs that provide regular fire safety, life safety and general safety messages to the community.	\$1,500
Annual	Driver training re-certification for all personnel who are Drivers/ Operators.	\$0
Annual	Provide respiratory fitness testing annually to encourage and support physical fitness, health, wellness and safety.	\$1,700

Section 6 – Training

Training SWOT Analysis	
<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for grants to assist in off-setting expenses • Knowledge/experience of training officers • Computer access and availability • Public perception of fire districts skills and abilities is good • Quality personnel 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of participation/attendance at training • Training in leadership development, driver operations, and special operations minimal to none • Greater demand in training creates larger impact on POC personnel • Limited training facilities/props/equipment • Lack of available space/acreage at current station location • Lack of adequate training documentation • Lack of master training plan
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased training-outside/inside • New training facilities/props/equipment • Creation of resource library to aid in comprehensive/organized trainings • Utilization of forms already created by OSFM/NFPA for tracking training activities • Utilization of drill plans/exercises from various established sources • Emerging technologies 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing budget restrictions • NFPA regulations • Ever increasing costs of equipment, etc. • Volunteer turnover • Injury/death due to “skill degradation” • Increased demand for services • Age of community increasing

Ongoing fire training is essential for Rockton Fire Protection District ‘s successful execution of its mission. It is also mandated by various organizations. The Rockton Fire Protection District training should be as often as necessary to ensure that members can perform their assigned duties in a safe and competent manner but no less frequently than specified by governmental bodies.

Rockton Fire Protection District must identify areas of need and develop training programs to assist its members to become more proficient in leadership abilities and advancement, emergency service delivery and customer service.

Goal: To allow for the necessary development and maintenance of fire fighting skills, a modern training facility should be built within the district.

The strategic planning committee identified the need for a training facility where fire suppression, EMS, technical rescue, extrication, hazardous materials, and classroom sessions may be utilized. Concentration will include but not be limited to such tasks as: hose advancement, interior firefighting skills, ventilation, multiple company operations and ladder training. Further training can include apparatus placement and hydrant connection. This committee believes that a plan must be created to generate specifications and plans for a training facility within the Rockton Fire Protection District boundaries scaled to the needs of this organization. One of the consequences

associated with the lack of a fire training facility and the low outbreaks of fires within our community is the loss of necessary skills and likewise the lack of ability to use them when a fire or specialized incident occurs. The previously stated realization does not occur due to lack of initial training, but because of a phenomenon referred to as “skill degradation.” This phenomenon occurs due to reduction in the ability to perform skills that are not frequently practiced. Without any adequate reinforcement of periodic drills, especially in the area of interior attacks, skills often deteriorate over time. This plan might include a building such as that offered by Wesco, 911 or Werno-Herbison-Padgett (WHP) as long as they followed the recommendations of NFPA 1402. A training facility would aid in the development and maintenance of fire fighting skills, fire fighting rescue, and other skills needed.

The training facility should incorporate learning resources including textbooks, training aids, simulators, and audio/visual and multimedia presentation hardware. These resources will stimulate the educational process, thereby increasing the competency and effectiveness of the students.

Goal: Develop and implement Officer Development Program to ensure that there is a strong nucleus to guide Rockton Fire Protection District into the 21st Century.

Currently Rockton Fire Protection District has approximately 36 personnel on its roster. A high percentage of the senior, experienced personnel are approaching the age where they can be expected to retire in the next five to seven years. The district must address this impending loss of manpower and experience through a comprehensive officer development curriculum. Without this training the district will not be able to fill impending vacancies in the officer ranks and this will lead to an inability to adequately serve the community. With the creation and implementation of such a program Rockton Fire Protection District can provide entry-level personnel with general direction for acquisition of knowledge, experience, skills and abilities, to ensure preparation for a higher level of responsibility.

Goal: Implementation of comprehensive record keeping system to ensure records are as accurate and up to date as possible.

Implement a comprehensive record keeping system that identifies individual fire department personnel participation and compliance with mandated and elective training requirements. This will allow Rockton Fire Protection District to all have complete and accurate records for every member of the organization and to monitor their activity and progress. This will also aid in improvement of the ISO rating, benefiting the taxpayers of the district.

Goal: Creation and implementation of a driver/engineer program to ensure safety and ability to function at incidents.

This program should ensure that each operator is able to execute all functions in operating all Rockton Fire Protection District apparatus.

Members must maintain certification / license to keep pay increment

Action Plan – Training

Budget Year	Action	Anticipated Cost
2011-2012	Fire Officer I program offered to Lieutenants / Deputy Chiefs	\$3,000
	Identify state and federal training standards	\$0
	Assess current hardware and software needs	\$700
	Review current driver/operator certifications and training for baselines. Create standards and guidelines for driver program.	\$0
	Review and perform inventory. Create projected list of training materials.	\$2,000
	Continuous Quality Improvement / review of record keeping process	\$0
	Review levels of training for RFPD personnel	\$0
	Schedule specialized training	\$1,000
2012-2013	Review and perform training inventory. Create projected list.	\$0
	Perform formal review of program and modify as indicated to meet needs of the district	\$0
	Establish testing process to identify future officers/leaders	\$0
	Initiate driver/operator training program	\$0
	Review levels of training for RFPD personnel	\$0
	Schedule specialized training – confined space / extrication / rope.	\$3,500
Annual	Review levels of training for RFPD personnel	\$0

Section 7 – Apparatus / Equipment

Recent practice of the district has been to modernize its fleet, replacing older firefighting equipment with new, state of the art tools. While costs due to acquisitions are elevated due to a more frequent replacement schedule, overall operational cost of the fleet has been minimized by operating late model, modern equipment requiring minimal repair. More importantly, having modern equipment has lead to minimal down time and has made personnel more effective in performing their jobs by giving them the newest and best tools to work with.

Goal: To replace apparatus in an orderly, timely, cost effective manner to meet the requirements of the district.

Action Plan – Apparatus

The following table shows a recommended replacement schedule for major apparatus operated by the district. This schedule will need to be adjusted over time depending on obsolescence caused by multiple factors, including apparatus utilization, operational wear and tear, vehicle durability, NFPA requirements, upgrades necessitated by technology advances.

Vehicle	1401	1402	1404	1441	1445	1451	1461
Purchased	2007	1987	1989	2005	2008	1996	1999
Lifespan (yrs)	25	25	25	25	20	25	20
Next Purchase	2032	2013	2016	2030	2028	2021	2019
Estimated Replacement \$	\$622,000	\$650,000 Pumper / Tanker	\$525,000 Reserve	\$650,000	\$50,000	\$1.2 million	\$65,000

Vehicle	1466	1478	1479	1C22	1C32	Car 1	Car 2
Purchased	1990	2000	1979	2008	2006	2008	2008
Lifespan (yrs)	25	25	25	6	6	5	6
Next Purchase	2015	2025		2014	2012	2013	2014
Estimated Replacement \$	\$65,000	\$260,000	Do not Replace	\$90,000 re-chassis	\$90,000 re-chassis	\$55,000	\$55,000

Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Replacement:

The districts current SCBA cylinders are due to be condemned in 2012. The current units needing replacement are NFPA 1997 compliant but have a great deal of “ware and tear”. The audible reliability of the Advance Display and Alarm Module (ADAM) and integrated PASS device have become a problem and are constantly being repaired. The current units are two (2) upgrades behind and it is only logical to look at purchasing new units to meet the current 1981-2007 standard. Our organizations solution to this problem is to purchase Thirty-two (32) new SCBA units. Doing so shall remedy the problem of constantly taking units out of service for repair.

Action Plan – SCBA Replacement

Budget Year	Action	Anticipated Cost
2011-2012	Replace 21 SCBA units	\$121,000.00

Section 8 – Board Development

Background and Overview

One of the greatest strengths of the district identified in the SWOT analysis is the board of trustees. Rockton is fortunate to have experienced trustees that are very dedicated and serious about serving the public. The board and its interaction with administration was also identified as an area of significant opportunity for advancement.

Rockton’s five member board of trustees is elected at large for a term of six years. The board conducts regularly scheduled monthly business meetings wherein it discharges duties and responsibilities as required by laws of Illinois and other matters that come before it necessary for the efficient operation of the district.

The Statutes of the State of Illinois set forth the authority for the fire protection districts in Chapter 70, Act 705 (70 ILCS 705/), The Fire Protection District Act. Section 6 of this act lists numerous powers granted to the trustees. Since implementation of any plan for the district can be done only within the context of the legal rights and empowerment of the trustees it is helpful to highlight these here.

A summary of the most relevant rights follows: (from *“A Handbook For Trustees of Illinois Fire Protection Districts”* revised edition 2007)

1. Engage in the acquisition, establishment, maintenance and operation of fire stations, facilities, vehicles, apparatus and equipment for the prevention and control of fire and the underwater recovery of drowning victims.
2. Provide “as nearly adequate protection from fire for lives and property” as possible and regulate the prevention and control of fire.
3. Prescribe the duties of the chief and firefighters.
4. Set the compensation of the officers and employees of the district.
5. Purchase real estate to be used for the purposes of the fire protection district.
6. Sell, lease, or exchange personal (equipment and vehicles) property.
7. Make regulations for fire prevention and control.
8. Provide and maintain rescue and life saving equipment including an emergency ambulance service.
9. Adopt and enforce fire prevention codes and standards, which are parallel to national standards except where municipal (city or village) fire codes have been adopted.
10. Enter into mutual aid agreements.

11. Impose charges on non-residents for services rendered by the district.
12. Levy taxes for all corporate purposes of the fire protection district (subject to applicable rate limits).
13. Accumulate funds for the building, repairing, and improving of fire houses', the acquisition of land for fire houses; the procurement of fire fighting apparatus and equipment; and for the procurement of appropriate apparatus, equipment and training for hazardous materials emergencies.
14. Provide a financial incentive for volunteer firefighters.

An overriding principle that must be kept at the forefront in evaluating this plan as well as any actions taken by the board of is that: **The Board of Trustees has “the legal duty and obligation to provide as nearly adequate protection from fire for all persons and property within the said district as possible”.** (70 ILCS 705/11) This imposes an affirmative duty on the district and its board.

Legal duties placed upon the board make the delineation of appropriate board functions and those to be delegated to the chief and administration a complex process. It is not as simple of an equation as saying the board sets policy and the chief implements it.

Goal: Improve functioning of the board, continue to strengthen and build upon the positive foundation that exists between the board and chief, and to better serve citizens of the district.

Action Plan – Board Development

1. Develop and adopt a policy setting forth roles, responsibilities and interactions between the board and chief.

Activity	Board of Trustees	Chief / Administration
Mission Statement	Adopt/review mission statement. Utilize mission statement as basis for setting priorities and plans.	Act as technical advisor to board regarding statement, its appropriateness and relevance. As necessary, communicate mission statement to administrative staff, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers.

<p>Strategic / Long Range Planning</p>	<p>Evaluate community needs, growth and exposures as basis for planning.</p> <p>Establish planning committee.</p> <p>Adopt plan and updates thereto and use same as an operational guideline for board activities during the life of the plan.</p>	<p>Act as technical advisor to board, providing meaningful relevant information of current trends in the district, current trends in the emergency services industry, known issues the district needs to address to provide exemplary services to the citizens and such other data as needed so the board can formulate and regularly update the plan.</p> <p>Provide requested administrative and clerical support to the board and planning committee to expedite the planning process.</p>
<p>Annual Work Plan</p>	<p>Develop and adopt separate annual work plans for the board and chief, providing for monitoring thereof.</p>	<p>Provide technical advice to board on goals and objectives for boards' and chief's annual work plan.</p> <p>Compliance with accomplishing chief's annual work plan. This includes regular reporting of implementation progress to the board.</p>
<p>Annual Assessment</p>	<p>Annual self-assessment of the board of its performance and effectiveness.</p>	<p>Annual assessment by the board of the chief and administration. See below.</p>
<p>Board Meetings</p>	<p>Conduct all meetings, regular and special, as necessary allow effective conduct of the business of the district and to comply with statutes.</p> <p>Conduct all business of the board in compliance with Open Meetings Act.</p>	<p>Attend all board meetings, acting as technical advisor, recommending policies as necessary, recommending specific expenditures (for apparatus, equipment, facilities and personnel) as necessary to fulfill mission of the district, providing comprehensive monthly update on the business of the district, providing information and research to allow the board to effectively operate.</p>
<p>Budget And Fiscal Management</p>	<p>Evaluate and approve budget that complies with statutes, that supports the districts mission, goals and priorities.</p> <p>Adopt ordinances as required for the budget, appropriations and levy.</p> <p>Regularly monitor revenue and expenditure reports.</p> <p>Regularly review district fiscal reports.</p> <p>Establish threshold minimum below which chief makes expenditures without line item board approval.</p>	<p>Identify and evaluate financial needs of the district. Develop and present budget to board which supports districts mission, goals and priorities.</p> <p>Administer approved budget. Provide regular, comprehensive fiscal reports at all board meetings.</p>

District Policies	<p>Adopt and regularly review policies such as:</p> <p>Personnel Training and education (for board as well as personnel) Expenditures / Purchasing</p>	<p>Recommend new or revised policies as appropriate and fully research pros, cons and implications thereof.</p> <p>Implement as applicable board approved policies.</p>
Professional Development / Continuing Education	<p>Affiliate with state, regional and national emergency services organizations.</p> <p>Participate in conferences, task forces, etc.</p> <p>Implement and maintain a board education program</p> <p>Regularly read emergency service publications and publications pertaining to operations of fire protection districts.</p>	<p>Affiliate with state, regional and national emergency services organizations.</p> <p>Coordinate and implement a continuing education program for the board.</p> <p>Attend continuing education programs at regional, state and national levels.</p> <p>Regularly read emergency service publications and publications pertaining to operations of fire protection districts.</p>
Coordination With Other Emergency Service Districts	<p>Actively participate in MABAS.</p> <p>Adopt a comprehensive disaster plan for the district.</p>	<p>Actively participate in MABAS, attending divisional meetings.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive disaster plan for the district, inclusive of all necessary agencies including law enforcement, EMS, hospitals, HAZMAT, technical rescue services, ancillary support services and other fire agencies. Present this document to the board for adoption.</p>
Build Community Support	<p>Actively represent the district in community events and forums to communicate the district's mission, its annual performance, it's need for volunteers and, as necessary, to build support for referendums.</p>	<p>Actively represent the district in community events and forums to communicate the district's mission, its annual performance, it's need for volunteers and, as necessary, to build support for referendums.</p> <p>Be a regular spokesperson for the district at community events, service organizations, church and civic groups, and in the school system. Do not delegate this function to staff, the chief should be the face of the department and spokesperson carrying a consistent message to the community.</p>

Section 9 – Computer / Communications Equipment and Information Systems

Goal: To plan for the future by providing the latest information technology available to the fire department.

Provide additional workstations and software:

Inventory existing hardware and software that the department presently has. Add additional computer and workstation that offers flexibility and user-friendly interfacing. Implement wireless access for all computers within the station.

Purchase new hardware that will provide usage for the next three to five years. Upgrade software to be compatible with the operating system.

Establish procedures for computer usage and software.

Enhance radio coverage in buildings and outlying areas:

We are unable to communicate reliably with dispatch when we are in buildings or our outlying district. We need to establish a reliable means of communication.

Action Plan – Computer / Communications Equipment and Information Systems

Budget Year	Action	Anticipated Cost
2011	Provide additional workstations and software	\$4,000
Annual	Maintain a WEB site for public information	\$500
2012	Enhance radio coverage in buildings and outlying areas (Repeater)	\$4,000
2012	Re-Program new radio equipment to meet narrow band requirements	\$2,500

Section 10 – Facilities

Identified through the SWOT analysis as a critical area of concern is the district’s physical facilities. Over the next several years there are areas of focus that should be addressed in order to prepare for adequate delivery of future services.

The district continues to experience a steady population growth, particularly in its South and Southwest sections. This growth, although occurring at a slow pace, is expected to continue. Response time, measured from time of call to time of the first unit on scene, to these outlying areas of the district is lengthy due to travel time. EMS response time to these areas just meets acceptable standards; fire response times fall short of NFPA guidelines for the same reasons outlined earlier in this plan in the section on “Staffing”. The department is presently just getting by with the level of service delivered to these areas only because of the relatively modest call volume to these locations. As housing units are built and population density increases in the South and Southwest portions of the district the department will be unable to deliver acceptable service without establishing a second station which affords better geographic proximity to the location of the call. Exactly when call volume will require the building of this second station is unknown today; there are too many variables to accurately forecast this. What can be identified now is the general site for location of this station. While the need to build a second station is sometime in the future, the opportunity to secure land for this purpose is approaching. The district should soon turn their attention to acquire land suitable for locating a second station. This should be done before desirable locations are bought up by developers and are no longer available for fire department use. Land for this purpose can be acquired by either by outright purchase or donation. Grant dollars may be available to assist with the cost of this project, especially if location of the second station is coupled with creation of a training facility.

Goal: Plan for the future and the expansion of the district facilities to protect the safety of the personnel, handle ever-increasing demand for services and to provide timely response to all emergency incidents.

Action Plan – Facilities

Budget Year	Action	Anticipated Cost
2015	Assess need for future fire station / facility	\$0

Section 11 – Ambulance Billing

Identified in the SWOT analysis as a major opportunity to generate additional revenue to help cover expenses for projects suggested in this plan is billing for ambulance services. Currently only non-residents are billed for transport and treatment services. Residents of the district are not billed for ambulance service; the rationale of the district for not billing residents is that residents pay for this service through their property tax assessment. While there was nothing prohibiting the billing of residents in the referendum establishing the levy for ambulance service, the district board has continued with the policy of not charging residents for transports.

The district averages 475 transports per year, 104 of these are non-residents. Since 2001 the district has billed non-residents for ambulance transports, averaging \$16,088 per year in collections.

The Rockton Fire Protection District currently charges a \$675.00 rate for ALS and BLS transports plus \$15.00/mile for mileage. Transports average 13 miles. Of these charges Medicare's allowable rate is \$283.64 per call for BLS service and \$37.50 for mileage, totaling \$321.14. Medicare's allowable rate for ALS service is \$336.82 and \$90.00 for mileage for a total of \$426.82. Medicare pays 80% of the billed charges so the corresponding payments are BLS at \$264.41 and ALS at \$359.46. If a patient has supplemental insurance this insurer usually pays the remaining 20% that was not reimbursed by Medicare. Patients who are private pay (either through insurance or self-payment) pay the entire charge, or, in some cases the usual and customary rate allowed by the insurer.

Revenue to be gained by ambulance billing of residents would be $\$675 \times 475 = \$320,000$ plus mileage of $\$15 \times 13 \times 400 = \$78,000$ for a total of $\$398,000+$. When adjusted using our current collection rate of 37.5% this calculates to a projected annual revenue stream of \$149,250.

It is important to understand that the property taxes paid are to ensure a service within the district, if that service is used then there should be an associated user fee. Costs for equipment, personnel and training have increased greatly since the ambulance district was formed. Also, since its formation the ambulance service has upgraded the level of care from an EMT-Intermediate service to EMT-Paramedic.

Goal: To explore different avenues of revenue generation to minimize economic impact on the community of the rising cost of providing fire and EMS services.

Action Plan – Fees

Budget Year	Action	Anticipated Revenue
2012	Formulate policy for billing district residents for ambulance transports. Implementation of policy - TBA.	\$149,250

Addendum

Expanded History of the Rockton Fire Protection District

Rockton Illinois is located in the North central section of the State three (3) miles from the Illinois/Wisconsin Stateline. Rockton was incorporated in 1835. Steve Mack, a fur trader met and married Princes Hononegah. They settled on the South side of the Rock & Pecatonica Rivers, now known as Macktown. Today, there still stands the some of the original trading post.

Incorporated in 1835, the population of the Village of Rockton was less than 300. During the next 157 years the population grew at a very slow rate. Around 1993 the population began to explode to our current population estimated at over 7,500 within the Village limits. Today, the fire protection district covers an estimated 18,000 people in a covering 54 square miles.

The Rockton Village Fire Department was organized in 1908 after a disastrous Halloween fire in the 100 block of West Main Street on Halloween night in 1907 behind the Thompson-Baker grocery store. It has been noted that the fire could have been extinguished with a garden hose. However, the fire spread extremely fast and engulfed the South side of the street. This area was known as the "Stone Block". Fire departments from Beloit and Rockford were summoned to fight the fire due to the fact that Rockton had no fire department at this time. The Village of Rockton Fire Department was officially formed in September of 1908, and functioned until 1947. Equipment included only a 1937 International pumper. Rockton's first fire chief was Clayton Stiles. He reported to the elected officials of the Village.

In 1947, a fire was reported in the 2000 block of West Rockton Road. The Village would not allow the fire department to respond to the fire, in -turn, the building burnt down. As a result of the in-action of the Village there was action taken to form a fire district. This was achieved in 1947. The first president of the Board of Trustees was Carlton Williams. The first Fire Chief of the district was Merlin Wensel.

Board Of Trustees, Presidents:

When the Rockton Fire Protection District was formed in 1947, a three (3) member board was established. Those board members were appointed by the County Board Chairperson and served at his/her will. By referendum vote in 1990, the board changed from three (3) to a five (5) member elected at large board. The district has operated separate from the Village of Rockton since 1947.

Fire District Board Presidents:

Carlton Williams	1947-1970
William Payne	1970-1981
Stanton Phelps	1980's
Robert Turner	1990
Gary Reffett	1990-1991
William Campbell	1991-2009 (Served on Board since 1981)
Dennis Stien	2009 - Present

Fire Chiefs:

Clayton Stiles was the first Fire Chief on record

Jack Lovelace "Wens"	1908–1947	Village of Rockton Fire Department
Slim Boyendall,		
Harry Beck		
Laurel Graves		
Merlin Wensel	4/1945-4/1970	Rockton Fire Protection District
John May	(assisting) 1955	
Robert Turner	1 / 1972 – 8 / 1978	
Russ Patterson	8 / 1978 – 4 / 1979	
Gary Reffett	4 / 1979 – 1 / 1980	
Jim Gentz	6 / 1980 – 5 / 1986	
Tom Marks	6 / 1986 – 1 / 1988	
Randy Olson	6 / 1988 – 1 / 1989	
Mickey Rykowski	1 / 1989 – 12 / 1994	
Ronald E. Weavel	12 / 1994 – 1 / 2009	
Kirk R. Wilson	2 / 2009 – Present	

Fires & Rescues:

As with any fire department, the Rockton Fire Protection District has seen its share of major emergencies...be it a fire or major accident. The first major fire was at in the 100 W. Main Street. Others incidents include: United Methodist Church in 1926, Wagon Wheel Resort (besides the numerous minor fires from 1944, there had been over five (5) five-alarm fires fought before the complex was torn down in 2003. There were seven paper mill fires. One noted was the Rockton Paper Company in late October of 1909. There has been numerous residential and barns, Shopping Bag super market and the Rockton Inn fire.

In addition, the Rockton Fire Protection District has responded to area departments for assistance. Since the establishment of (MABAS-Division 8) Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, the Rockton Fire Protection District is more active than ever before. There has been response as far away as Utica, IL in 2004 after a tornado struck the small community and to New Orleans, LA. In 2005 to assist after hurricane Katrina torn apart the in-tire gulf coast region.

During the history of the fire protection district, many people have contributed to its growth, not only by providing the services, but also to those who taught our staff so that the educational growth of each person who has past through the doors is of the highest degree possible at the time. We honor each person so not to miss anyone.

Fire Stations And Fireman's Hall:

Rockton's first fire station and hall was located in the 200 West Main Street. Now known as Rockton Dental Care.

Rockton's second fire station was located at West Main and South Center Street. This station was constructed cost of \$58,000. In 1978, the fire station was sold to GTE, now Frontier.

The Rockton Fireman's Association for many years held one of the best fish dinners in the area every Friday. The Rockton Fireman's Association has been chartered since 1946. The history of the association, a concrete lintel stating "Rockton Fireman's Association 1947" was taken from the hall and is now located at the rear of station one.

In 1978 our current fire station was dedicated and open for business at a cost of over \$350,000. Located at 201 N. Blackhawk in Rockton its location has served the district very effectively.

Response Times:

Currently, average response times are good for both fire (7:29) and EMS (4:20). However, as the Village and district grows there must be in place a plan for expanding services to our citizens in a fashion that reflects a pro-active department.

Governing Board:

A Board of Trustees governs us, they are: President Dennis Stien, VP Mark Steward, Secretary Bryan Northrop, Treasurer Bruce Lans and Trustee William Campbell. Our Board of Trustees have provided our staff with a modern fleet and have allowed all personnel to attain a great deal of education while serving with the district. We have a board that is very supportive.

Officers:

Chief Kirk Wilson, Deputy Fire Chief Jeff Stien managing the EMS & Health, Battalion Chief Chuck Stenger is Safety & District Training and serves as our Cadet Program advisor, Tim Stewart heads Operations. Lt. Bruce Lans heads finance and Insurance, Lt. Magnus is in charge of Community Service Bureau. Lieutenants are: Mark Lawrence, Rob Ebany, Dennis Seeley, Kathy Dobson, and Joe Marella. Cheryl Campbell serves as our Administrative Assistant.

Fire and EMS Vehicles:

Engine Companies:

Rockton's first fire engine made its maiden response at 1:30 A.M. to the October 1909 fire at the Rockton Paper Company. (Documentation. November 16, 2006 Herald).

In both 1987 and 89 the district purchased an engine from 3D out of Shawano, WI. These units have been refurbished and serve the district today as engine 1402 and 1404.

At the Board of Trustees regular meeting in May of 2006 approval was granted to purchase a new rescue pumper at a cost of \$380,000 plus equipment. This is to replace a 1975 Howe/ Hendrickson pumper. The Howe unit cost \$38,000 in 1975. The association purchased the Howe/Hendrickson in 2005 and donated it to the Joiner AR. Fire department.

Aerial Ladders:

Our first aerial ladder was purchased used. Past Chief and Trustee Robert Turner found the 1960 International/Grove 75 foot straight aerial at West Dundee, IL. for \$10,000. It was in service until June 6, 1996 when the new Smeal 85 foot platform was placed in service at a cost of \$475,000 plus \$30,000 in equipment. This was Chief Weavel's first purchase as Fire Chief.

Ambulances: Today, we have two modern and fully equipped paramedic ambulances. Our latest purchase is a 2008 Horton.

Squads:

Squads better known as "the tool box". (The reasoning is that the unit carries a great amount of power tools such as Jaws of Life and much more). Rockton's first squad was formed in 1969 operating an old donated mail unit as its mode of transportation. Among the first staff members to beg, barrow and steal what they could to get the unit and make it work were: Sam Schafer, Ray Ramsby, Jim Griffin and Ron Bailor. Both Griffin and Bailor served the district as Trustees after their journey with the "squad". Under Chief Turner, the Fire District took on the responsibility of the squad in 1971. Ray Ramsby was Rockton's first EMT.

In 1980, a ¾ ton GMC carried a large box that served as a squad from 1980 to 1985. During this the heavy squad was a 14-foot walk-in on an International chassis.

In January of 2005, Rockton obtained its current squad from KME constructed at a cost of \$386,000. The unit is truly a heavy squad and carries a far greater amount of rescue equipment than our other squads did. Included are; water rescue, auto extrication, confined space and firefighting equipment. Its maiden run was a MABAS alarm to North Park on a working house fire.

Command Vehicles:

The fire district has two (2) command vehicles. Command-1 is assigned to the fire chief, while command –2 is assigned to the duty officer.

Water Rescue and Recovery:

We have a 16-foot john - boat fully equipped. Additionally, we have four certified rescue divers. They are: Lt. Dobson (coordinator) and Rob Ebany, Cory Magnus and Chief Stien.

Grass Rigs:

The district has two (2) pick up units that have been modified to function as a grass rig.

Community Services:

All in all, fire history with the Rockton Fire Protection District has been known as a safe community. Our educational program has advanced since 1998 through the attendance at the National Fire academy. We have obtained a 35 ft. trailer for the purpose of better education to the citizens of our district. This unit was delivered in 2005 via a grant from FEMA.

Today, the educational opportunities are great for those that so desire to advance further than Firefighter II certification through the Office of the State Fire Marshall. With Board of Trustee action, our staff have been to: FDIC in Indianapolis, Monroe and Tomahawk, WI, Meret, East Dubuque, Sauk Valley, Rock Valley Colleges and Champaign, IL, National Fire Academy programs at Emmetsburg, MD. from EMS to Public Ed. to Executive Fire Officer and many, many more.

We have competed in vehicle extrication competitions at Cherry Valley, Madison, WI. and Fridley MN.

Today's Community Services Bureau has work with the Rockton Police to establish a program called National Night Out. During 2006 there was over 150 residents in attendance. Our Fire Prevention Week activities are greater than every before.

Emergency Medical Services:

Emergency Medical Services account for approximately seventy-five percent of our responses annually.

Since April of 1994, the District and OSF (St. Anthony Hospital) have had an agreement in place to provide the staff needed to man one EMS units. That contract stated that there be one (1) Paramedic on duty 24/7 with an EMT-I Monday –Friday 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. Acute Transport Services (ATS) took over the contract service January 2007 and staff ass above except that the 12-hour position is contracted as Paramedic.

Several staff members have completed Paramedic coursework. Chief Kirk Wilson, Jeff Stien, Rob Ebany, Josie Miller, Kathy Dobson, Mary Kiser, and Dan Ewers.

Associations:

The Rockton Fire Protection District is a member of many fire and EMS associations on the local, State, National and International level.

Chief Officers who have served on the executive board of the Winnebago Chiefs Association are: Kirk Wilson; 2008 – 2011, Jeff Stien; 2004-07, Ron Weavel; 1996 & 97, Mickey Rykowski; 1993-95, Merlin Wensel; 1954, and Robert Turner 1959-61.

Higher Education:

Today, we are fortunate to have a large number of staff members who have attained degrees from nationally recognized educational institutions. In addition, several members have or are currently working toward their AAS degrees in Fire Science.

Insurance Services Office (ISO):

ISO is an agency that rates a communities fire defenses on a scale form 1-to-10. One is the best and 10 is the lowest rating. From 1982 until 2000 Rockton's ISO rating was a (6) six in the Village and a (9) nine in the rural. The 2000 ISO survey awarded us a rate of (4) four in the Village, and still a (9) nine in the rural area.

“This strategic plan is a tool to guide the district while striving to continue the goals of the organization. This plan must and will be reviewed to measure our accomplishments. We, as a team, will build on this plan for future development so that we remain a proactive fire protection district with high standards and superior fiscal management.”

Kirk R. Wilson, Fire Chief