

# *Consolidation of Fire/EMS Services*

*Between the Cities of*

*Sun Valley and Ketchum  
Idaho*

*Conducted by:*



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**“What Is In the Best Interest of the People We Serve”**  
Jack Snook

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## Introduction

The Cities of Sun Valley and Ketchum are two beautiful communities located in Blaine County, Idaho. Each community offers a mix of outdoor activities in all seasons, small town charm, luxury accommodations, and the arts; all are an integral part of both Cities. All of these amenities, within the beauty of the Rockies, draw in excess of 865,000 visitors/tourist annually.

Both communities have a unique culture but share the goal of providing their residents and visitors the highest level of emergency services possible. To accomplish this goal the two Cities have joined in a cooperative effort to provide fire and emergency medical services (EMS) including the purchase and sharing of apparatus. For the most part this partnership has done well and both Cities seek the opportunity to investigate enhancing that relationship in an effort to improve and assure high efficiency services in the most cost effective manner. It was for this purpose that the Cities jointly hired McGrath Consulting Group, Inc. to investigate fire/EMS consolidation.

This report is divided into three sections:

- Part 1 – City of Sun Valley Fire Department
- Part 2 – City of Ketchum Fire Department
- Part 3 – Consolidation Service Plan

Part 1 & 2 are a complete comprehensive audit of both fire departments. If one or both Cities choose not to consolidate, these sections will address current and future opportunities and challenges for the City and department. The consultant fears that if consolidation is not adopted by the two departments that the future of the existing partnership is in jeopardy; one City might feel that the inequality of the current mutual and automatic aid program is significant enough to discontinue the current agreements.

Therefore, the consultant has provided recommendations for future resource needs if they were to remain a stand alone agency.

Part 3 represents the critical issue of this report: What are the attitudes towards, opportunities for, and challenges of consolidation. There are different types of consolidation and in fact the two departments have already accomplished functional consolidation to a degree. However, the intent of the study is to investigate a full consolidation, defined as having both departments merge into a single legal agency. All service demands in each community are viewed as a single function of the department and political boundaries become invisible.

Five consultants participated in the study. Three made site visits and two were utilized as technical advisors by the firm. Each handled topics that were appropriate to their specific skills and expertise.

**Dr. Tim McGrath** – President and lead consultant, is a retired Fire Chief with 33 years of fire and EMS experience. He has served as the Fire Chief of two very diverse communities. He has experience in leadership of fire departments comprised of fully career to combinations of career, paid-on-call, part-time paid, and contractual personnel. He has been a fire/EMS consultant since 1997 and president of McGrath Consulting Group, Inc since 2000.

**Chief Randy Justus, Retired** – has over 35 years of fire/EMS experience. Chief Justus recently retired from a large Chicago area suburb department that developed a partnership with the neighboring department to share a fire station and personnel. He currently is a technical expert with the International Fire Chiefs Intra-state Mutual Aid System (IMAS) covering ten states.

**Dr. Victoria McGrath** – Chief Executive Officer of McGrath Consulting Group, Inc. brings expertise in administration and human resources. Her published doctoral dissertation on Government as a Learning Organization dealt with government efficiency.

She is a federally trained mediator and past member of a team which served as City Manager for the City of Brookfield. She has extensive experience with organized labor and measuring efficiency in organizations.

Two consultants were utilized as technical experts on the project but did not make site visits:

**Ms. Pat Garrison, Attorney** – Ms. Garrison is an associate dean at Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Houston, Texas. Thurgood Marshall School of Law is a part of the Texas Southern University. Ms. Garrison researched the legal options in the formation of a consolidated fire/EMS district in Idaho.

**Battalion Chief Larry Pieniasek, Retired** - retired from the City of Elmhurst Fire Department with 33 years of service. Chief Pieniasek dealt with the areas of data assessment, training, fire prevention, and public safety education.

The consulting team performed an independent audit of the two Fire Departments and assessed the issue of consolidation free from any influence or pressure from any governing or Fire Department official. The only restriction placed on the consultants was that if consolidation was a recommendation, no existing employees should lose their jobs and should be included within the consolidated organizational chart.

Interviews were conducted (in both communities) with city governing officials, city administration, city department heads, Fire Chief, department leadership team, rank and file department members, retired department members, City Police Chief, neighboring Fire Chiefs, EMS Medical Director, governing officials of the Blaine County Ambulance District, governing officials of the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District, communication center director, and members of the general public.

The consultants wish to especially express their appreciation to the many individuals who participated in ensuring that the consultants received the information requested for this

report. Special acknowledgment to the Ad Hoc committee consisting of: both Mayors, both City Administrators, both Fire Chiefs, and one council member from each City, for their oversight and suggestions.

## **Part 1: Sun Valley Fire Department Overview**

This section addresses issues pertaining to the Sun Valley Fire Department. The recommendations are based on the premise that the City of Sun Valley will not adopt any additional form of consolidation and will attempt to keep the status-quo agreement with the City of Ketchum as it is today. Incentives for and obstacles to consolidation with Ketchum will be addressed in a separate section.

The City of Sun Valley is approximately 12 square miles and receives fire protection from a municipal fire department consisting of two career members (Chief and Assistant Chief) and a number of paid-on-call. The City also provides EMS at the 1<sup>st</sup> Responder level. This program was implemented approximately 18 months prior to the start of this report. Paramedic service is provided to Sun Valley by the Blain County Ambulance District which contracts with the Ketchum Fire Department to provide EMS paramedic services north of the Greenhorn Bridge on State Highway 75.

Although the number of department members is small, there are some very dedicated individuals serving the community. This includes several local employers who respond as well as their employees to fire calls within the City. The Fire Department's paid-on-call staffing numbers vary throughout this report ranging from 20 members to 26 members. Staffing levels in paid-on-call departments can be very fluid, and therefore, depending on when the data was retrieved by the fire department, the membership numbers might vary. However, the best indicator of the number of personnel is to review the payroll records for any given time period. For slightly over a 5.5 month period the Sun Valley payroll records indicated that only 14 paid-on-call members received any compensation. Therefore, the number of active paid-on-call members is 14, plus the Chief and Assistant Chief.

The data provided indicated that the percentage of emergency calls increased in 2006 by 3.9% from 2005. Upon analysis, however, the actual number of incidents increased by only six incidents. The majority of emergency calls were for EMS incidents, followed by

false alarms, which occurred in the same order as the previous year. As will be discussed, the consultant had a difficult time with the data in Sun Valley, as most is recorded in an antiquated software database. The department would benefit from replacing its current emergency incident recording software with commercial software that is more compatible with those used by fire departments across the United States. It would be very advantageous to jointly purchase and share an incident recording software program with the Ketchum Fire Department inasmuch as they respond to each other's incidents frequently.

The response times of the Fire Department were surprisingly long. Unfortunately, the lack of a program that records the emergency data and allows easy retrieval might have skewed the averages. However, the consultants utilized the data provided by the department in developing all figures, tables, averages, percentages, and recommendations.

Overall the department does not have formal human resource programs for paid-on-call personnel. Similar to many municipal paid-on-call programs, the City does not treat these individuals as employees of the City, and many of the programs, policies, and procedures required for paid-on-call personnel are missing.

The department provides services from two fire stations. The headquarters station is in Elkhorn and is very adequate for today and future service needs. The City is considering building paid-on-call housing units on this property. The building of such housing units is highly encouraged by the consultants. The City Hall station is inadequate other than for storage of apparatus. If the City does not consolidate with Ketchum, the consultants recommend replacement of this facility. However, consolidation with Ketchum would eliminate the duplication of each City's need to build a fire station as they could consolidate into one facility.

The Sun Valley Fire Department has adequate apparatus. However, if they do not consolidate with Ketchum, they will need to replace an engine. Again, both Cities need

an engine, and jointly they could purchase a single unit and share it by rotating between Cities, as is currently done with the aerial and command van.

There is considerable need for improvement in both the training curriculums and recording of training for the department. Greater emphasis and time needs to be devoted to training. It is always difficult to require more time of paid-on-call personnel but most will recognize the need for improved training and make a sincere effort to comply.

The department and City should place a greater emphasis on EMS and encourage and reward individual paid-on-call members who acquire a higher level of EMS certification above the 1<sup>st</sup> Responder level. In addition, all new members should be required to achieve a 1<sup>st</sup> Responder certification within 18 months of employment.

Fiscally, the City of Sun Valley is capable of providing for the needs of the Fire Department and has done so in the past. The consultants acknowledge that the City funds an apparatus replacement program and is capable of replacing apparatus when needed. The City rejected any need for a lease/purchase program pertaining to apparatus, a fiscal philosophy shared by 50% of municipalities.

Although the consultants will note a number of areas for improvement within this section, one should not lose sight of the dedication of the active members of the department. Paid-on-call departments throughout the Country are facing difficulty in recruiting and retaining members. Any and all recommendations in this section are solely made in an effort to improve the department and are not intended to be critical of the efforts of those that are providing emergency fire and EMS to the City of Sun Valley.

## Sun Valley Fire Department Emergency Data

This section highlights the emergency fire and EMS activities of the Sun Valley Fire Department for the calendar years 2004 through 2006. The Fire Department's entire primary emergency response area is approximately 12 square miles and includes all of Sun Valley and Elkhorn. Protection includes fire suppression and EMS at the 1<sup>st</sup> Responder level provided from two fire stations. The headquarters station is in Elkhorn and there is an annex building at the Sun Valley City Hall campus.

The consultants request a considerable amount of data when conducting studies of this nature. The ability of the department to provide that data is very dependent on a number of factors including: importance the department places on this type of information, accuracy of data input, computer software program utilized, and whether the data is utilized – for example for quality control purposes. The request for data pertaining to emergency activities in the last four years included:

- Number of emergency responses divided into each year
- Nature of the incident (i.e. structure fire, auto fire, fire alarm, EMS, etc.)
- Incidents by time of day
- Incidents by day of the week
- Incidents by month
- Incident breakdown by area (City, District, Town, etc.)
- Response time
- Mutual/automatic aid – given and received – with whom
- Simultaneous calls

The department had difficulty in providing this data; not from lack of desire but ability to retrieve the information. In many cases the department performed manual counts in an effort to provide the requested information. Although limited in the amount of data provided to the consultants, the consulting team was able to grasp an overall assessment of the emergency activities of the department.

Because of the difficulty in obtaining the data, and the need to do manual computations, there were occasions when the data conflicted. An example of the conflicting data occurs when the consultants compare the response time data for 2006 to the total number of

incidents. The department, after significant difficulty, provided a list of calls with response times from January 1 through December 31, 2006. There were 68 alarms (calls). However, other data provided to the consultants indicated that in 2006 the department responded to 161 incidents (calls). Sixty-eight incidents did not align with any category of emergency responses provided to the consultants.

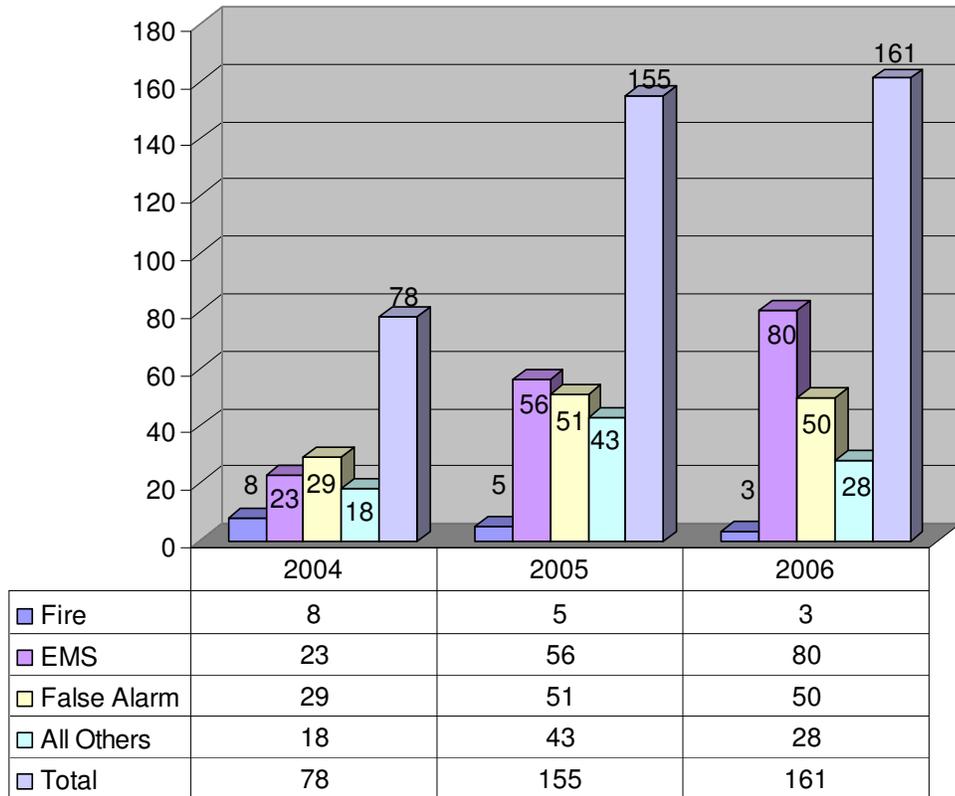
Regardless of the reason for the conflicting data, the response time data represented 42.2% of the alarms, assuming the accuracy of the 161 calls. At best, the department had significant difficulty in providing data that in most departments is essential information. Response times will be further discussed in a separate section of this report.

It is important for the reader to understand that there is an automatic aid agreement with the Ketchum Fire Department on all fire calls involving either fire or smoke within a structure as well as a fire alarm. All other types of fire calls (dumpsters, car, wildland fires, etc.) are classified by Sun Valley as single resource emergencies unless the incident commander requests aid. Therefore, single resource emergencies involve only Sun Valley apparatus.

The Sun Valley Fire Department lists their emergency data into four categories for a three year period;

- Fires
- EMS
- False Alarms
- Others

**Figure 1: Sun Valley FD Emergency Responses**



Fire calls in Sun Valley are minimal. A call regarding a structure would automatically bring apparatus and staffing from the Ketchum Fire Department. All EMS emergency calls originating in Sun Valley are simultaneously sent to both departments. Sun Valley responds with 1st Responders, if available, whereas Ketchum sends a paramedic ambulance to treat and if necessary transport the patient. Therefore, any EMS data listed by Sun Valley will also appear as an EMS response by Ketchum.

False alarms include incidents where upon arrival of the Fire Department an emergency did not exist. The Fire Chief noted that many of the homes in the department’s response area are vacant a great portion of the year, and most have residential fire alarm systems that generate considerable number of false alarms. The category of “All Others” includes all citizens’ assists. Many of these citizen assists, although listed as Fire Department incidents, are not emergency situations; rather, part of a customer service philosophy of the City to assist residents in situations not normally handled by fire departments.

To illustrate just how much these two departments currently respond together, the table below illustrates the total number of emergency responses listed by Sun Valley as compared to the total number of automatic response (aid) given to Sun Valley by the Ketchum Fire Department.

**Table 1: Automatic Aid Given By Ketchum**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sun Valley Total Calls</b>	<b>Ketchum Automatic Aid Total Calls</b>
2004	78	92
2005	155	124
2006	161	127

In 2004 there might appear to be a discrepancy; inasmuch as the automatic aid listed by Ketchum exceeds the total emergency responses listed by Sun Valley. These most likely were ambulance calls in which Ketchum responded within the City limits of Sun Valley and Sun Valley personnel did not respond.

As previously noted, the City of Sun Valley has adopted a customer service philosophy where most any request for assistance by a resident will be handled by the Fire Department. In most cases, the Fire Chief and often his wife, and/or the Assistant Fire Chief will assist residents with requests such as: frozen garage doors, flat tires, assist with pets, etc. These services are not normally performed by the fire department. The City of Sun Valley and the Fire Department, however, pride themselves in providing a very high level of customer service. Therefore, if a consolidation of Fire Departments were to occur, Sun Valley would most likely continue to provide this level of customer service. Whether these citizen assists would be conducted through the Fire Department needs to be determined. If continued, however, such incidents should not be recorded as Fire Department incidents, but rather tracked as community service activities.

The significance of this discussion is to clearly communicate that the City of Sun Valley and especially their Fire Chief places considerable emphasis on customer service and a successful consolidation will require that these services not be diminished to the residents and visitors to Sun Valley.

## Emergency Medical Services

Most fire departments that provide any level of EMS find that EMS incidents far exceed fire calls. Sun Valley is not an exception. Most fire departments, however, still model their organizations primarily based on fire verses EMS activities. In the case of the Sun Valley Fire Department, all EMS services could be provided solely by the Blaine County Ambulance District. The District has divided the County in half for ambulance treatment and transports with the Greenhorn Bridge on State Highway 75 as the dividing line. The northern half of Blaine County receives EMS services at the paramedic level through an agreement with the City of Ketchum. Paramedics are the highest level of pre-hospital care available. The Ketchum Fire Department is the agency that houses and staffs the ambulances for northern Blaine County and receives funding from the County for that purpose.

Fires have decreased nationally by 17.8%, or approximately 1.8% annually, in the last ten-year period (*Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency – U. S. Fire Administration – National Fire Data Center – Fires in the U. S. 12<sup>th</sup> ed.*). Unlike police and fire, which have national reporting systems, there are no definitive national figures for EMS. EMS is recorded at most state levels but there is no consistency as to how the data is obtained and/or interpreted. The consultants have reviewed EMS trends in this multi-state area and the data suggests that emergency medical services are increasing an average of 6.4% annually (*Source: National Fire Protection Association – from Protecting Emergency Responders, Vol. 2*).

The governing officials of the City of Sun Valley have decided to provide EMS services to its residents and visitors at the 1<sup>st</sup> Responder level. Although this is the lowest level of pre-hospital EMS care, one should not assume it is not extremely beneficial. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sets standards for fire and EMS response; when 1<sup>st</sup> Responder services are utilized, paramedic arrival is extended from four to eight minutes. Trained 1<sup>st</sup> Responders with basic equipment, including an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), are essential in treatment of an individual in full cardiac arrest.

Sun Valley is, however, limited in the number of personnel who are certified as 1<sup>st</sup> Responders. The current roster lists three EMT-B (next EMS level above 1<sup>st</sup> Responders) and five 1<sup>st</sup> Responders out of 25 members. Regardless of the level of training, it is essential that those that respond to EMS incidents initiate patient contact and basic treatment immediately.

There is a difference in opinion as to how aggressive the Sun Valley 1<sup>st</sup> Responders are prior to the arrival of the paramedics. Sun Valley officials indicated that they routinely administer patient treatment prior to the arrival of the paramedic ambulance. However, when the consultants interviewed the paramedics who responded on the ambulance, they consistently stated that most often Sun Valley personnel are outside directing the ambulance to the proper location; patient treatment rarely occurred. In fact, the paramedics indicate that the Sun Valley Police Department is often more aggressive in patient treatment than the Fire Department. Thus, there are two different perspectives from the same EMS incident.

The consultants are unable to determine which side more accurately describes the norm. Regardless of the answer, it is obvious that the Chief Officers of both departments should meet and discuss what is best for those in need. A consolidated department would resolve these situations inasmuch as a standard protocol would apply to all EMS calls, and 1<sup>st</sup> Responders would continue to have a vital role in patient care. The 1<sup>st</sup> Responder should not feel that once the paramedics arrive their value diminishes. Paramedics can and should oversee patient treatment but work as a team with the talent at hand.

It was surprising to the consultants that Sun Valley does not place more emphasis on providing paramedic services or at least medical services at a higher level of EMS intervention than 1<sup>st</sup> Responder. Although many of the homes are vacant a great portion of the year, when occupied they most likely are filled with individuals whose expectations are that they receive the highest level of EMS services when they dial 9-1-1.

The consultants were troubled by two themes related to this topic from Sun Valley personnel. The first was that, unlike Ketchum, Sun Valley does not receive any money for providing EMS. A senior department member stated, “Maybe we (Sun Valley) shouldn’t be providing any EMS without reimbursement.” The individual also questioned the value of paramedics, and noted that the current system “was good enough.” Although the consultants acknowledge this individual’s right to these feelings, they question if the individual calling 9-1-1 in Sun Valley would agree. For a community that prides itself on extremely high customer service, certainly providing the highest level of pre-hospital care in the timeliest manner would seem more consistent with the Sun Valley’s philosophy.

Providing public safety in most communities is the largest expense the community must fund. If it were profitable to provide fire and EMS, privatization would be much more common in the profession. The level of EMS is a quality of life decision made by those that govern the community.

The second, perhaps more disconcerting theme heard, was that future staffing of the Sun Valley fire station wasn’t necessary. The consultants agree that a career staff isn’t currently needed. Adding housing for department members at the Elkhorn station, however, could be very beneficial for acquiring additional paid-on-call. The Elkhorn station could be similar to the two station housing arrangement utilized by the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District.

## **Identifying Emergency Service Trends**

When analyzing a department’s efficiency or addressing future resource needs, it is prudent to examine the historical occurrences of emergencies in order to identify trends. The following factors are of significant importance to the Sun Valley Fire Department when examining call data:

- Simultaneous Incidents
- Incident by Time of Day
- Incident by Day of the Week
- Incident by Month

## **Simultaneous Incidents**

A significant issue regarding response times is the ability of a fire department to respond in a timely manner to simultaneous emergency incidents. By definition, a simultaneous emergency involves times when the fire department is handling a fire and/or EMS emergency incident, and another unrelated emergency incident requiring immediate fire department response occurs at the same time within the City.

Fire departments do not have the ability to stack calls (prioritize calls that are less urgent and let other calls wait) like other public safety agencies. Fire/EMS departments nationwide staff and equip their department with sufficient apparatus and personnel to handle simultaneous calls that occur on a regular basis. Mutual aid is often utilized for extremely large emergency incidents and/or multiple simultaneous emergency incidents.

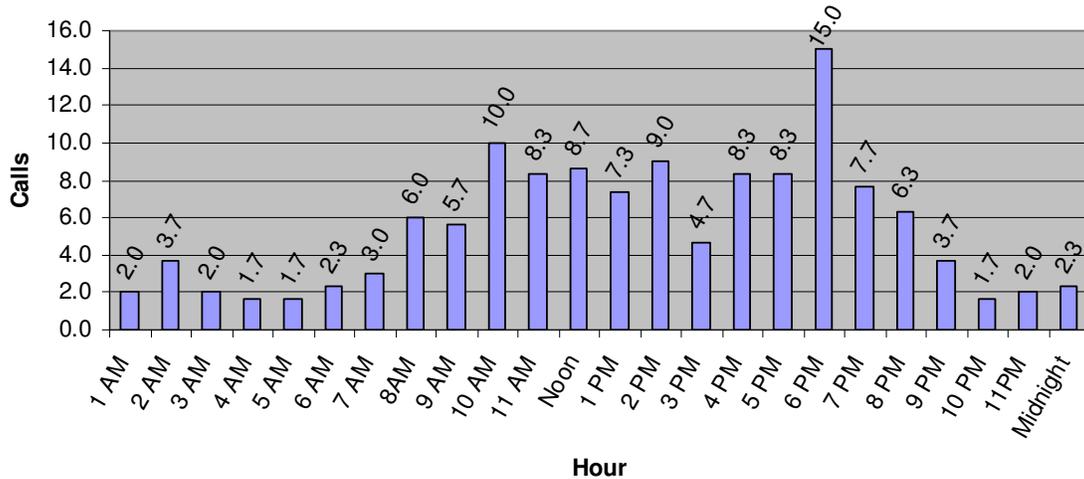
The Sun Valley Fire Department indicated that simultaneous incidents are infrequent. The department was unable to provide data without a manual review of all incidents to determine simultaneous incidents. Therefore, the Fire Chief estimated that there were three or four simultaneous incidents in 2006, which would represent approximately 2.3% of the total calls. This percentage of simultaneous incidents does not warrant a change in the staffing method of the Fire Department.

## **Incidents by Time of Day**

In some cases, fire departments notice an increase in alarms during certain time periods of the day. This could be the result of vehicle accidents during peak traffic hours or other community activities that routinely result in demands for fire/EMS services. In most departments, incidents charted by time of day follow a pattern similar to a “bell curve,” with calls beginning to increase somewhere near 8 A.M., peaking in mid afternoon, and diminishing to the fewest incidents in the early morning hours.

The consultants averaged the Sun Valley Fire Department time of day data for the calendar years 2004 – 2006. The figure below illustrates that the department’s data is not an exception to the industry norm.

**Figure 2: Incidents By Time of Day – Sun Valley 2004 - 2006**



The consultant questioned why the spike in emergency incidents at 6 P.M.? The Chief indicated he believed the data was accurate. The Chief indicated the majority of the calls at this time were vehicle accidents.

Although the fewest number of incidents occur between 11 P.M. to 6 A.M., this is also the time period when most civilian fire deaths occur. This time period is typically when the occupants are sleeping. Those most in danger are the very young and the old, who are often less able to escape and protect themselves.

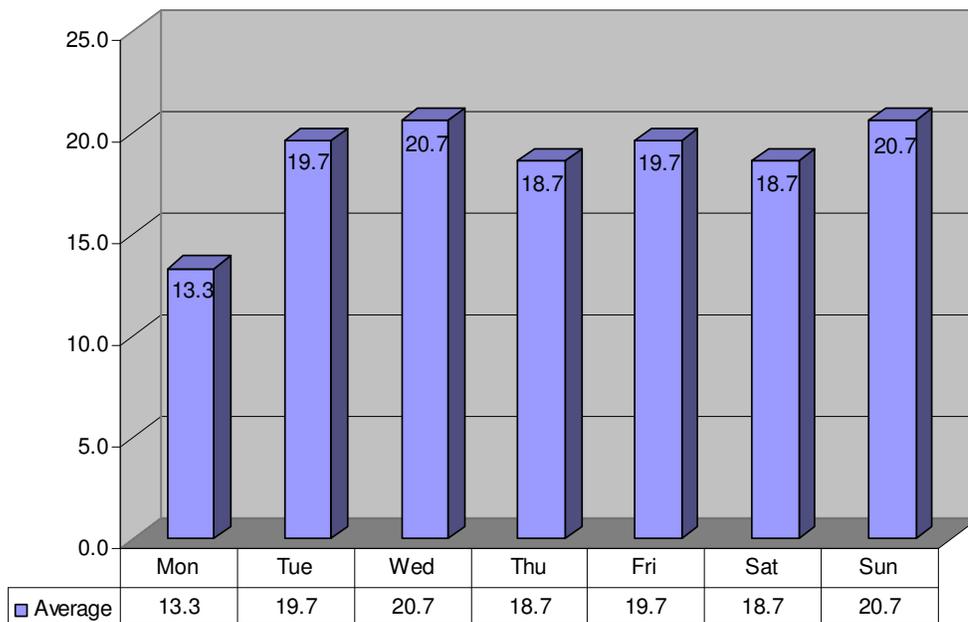
### Incidents by Day of the Week

One examines day of the week and time of day in order to determine if there is a need to consider peak staffing (augmenting existing on-duty personnel for selected time periods). A fire department in the Midwest protected a large nationally recognized theme park and discovered three patterns of peak incidents: just prior to the park opening and closing (auto accidents); on Wednesdays and Saturdays, which had larger crowds; and the month of August when calls significantly increased due to the heat and year end vacations. The

department had considerable cost savings through the hiring of part-time individuals during these periods.

The Sun Valley Fire Department data does not demonstrate any pattern that would suggest peak staffing. It does illustrate that, with the exception of Monday, for the three year period calls by day of the week are remarkably consistent.

**Figure 3: Incidents by Day of Week – Sun Valley 2004 – 2006**



### Incidents by Month

Sun Valley Fire Department did not provide data for incidents by month. Thus, no analysis could occur.

## False Alarms

The consultants were especially concerned with the high percentage of incidents classified as false alarms/false calls by the Fire Department. In Sun Valley, false alarms are the leading cause for alarms in 2004 and the second leading cause for alarms in 2005 and 2006.

A significant concern for any fire department is the number of false alarm responses. False alarms are a drain on a department's resources, prevent personnel from responding to actual emergencies, and increase the chances for vehicle accidents. False alarms are the second leading cause of firefighter/EMT line of duty deaths. In 2005, false alarm response represented 17% of all firefighter's on-duty fatalities.

NFPA statistics indicated that fire departments responded to 2.2 million false alarms in 2005, which accounted for 9.2% of all incidents. The Sun Valley Fire Department's three year average of false alarms is **258.7%** higher than the national average. One in every three calls in Sun Valley is a false alarm.

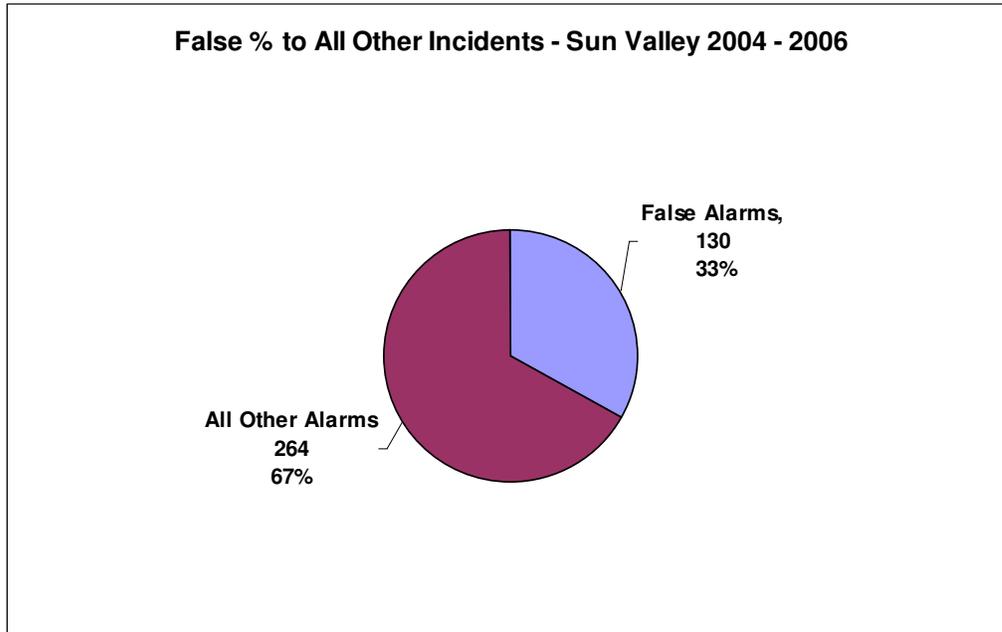
The Sun Valley Fire Department provided the following false alarm data:

**Table 2: False Alarms – Sun Valley**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>Total/Average</b>
False Alarms	29	51	50	130
Total Calls	78	155	161	394
<b>Percent of Total Calls</b>	<b>37.2%</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>33.0%</b>

It is important, however, to compare these figures as they relate to the percentage of total alarms for the department as shown in the figure below:

**Figure 4: Percentage of False Alarms to Total Incidents**



The method in which many departments record false alarms can be misleading. Assume that a building is protected by an automatic fire alarm system and some minor event occurs in the building (i.e., burnt popcorn), which creates enough smoke to activate the fire alarm. Many fire departments would record this event as a false alarm because there was no actual fire or no fire department intervention was necessary. However, the system activated as designed and, although minor in nature, the alarm was neither false nor a system malfunction. Unfortunately, the Sun Valley department did not provide sufficient data to determine the causes of the false alarms. Sun Valley did indicate that a large percentage of homes in their response area are vacant a great portion of the year and fire alarms will be transmitted for a variety of reasons.

The goal of most fire departments is to minimize the number of false alarms by taking appropriate action to address the cause of the false alarm. The best procedure for preventing future false alarms is to investigate each alarm as soon as possible and determine the cause. If the cause is due to alarm malfunction, the owner should be required to repair the alarm within a reasonable time or be fined for each reoccurrence.

## Automatic Aid

Automatic aid is a predetermined agreement with another emergency service provider to respond automatically when the host department receives an alarm at a given location or area. Automatic aid is dependent upon the timely notification by dispatch of the automatic aid company. Currently, Sun Valley and Ketchum have automatic aid on any reported structure fire and all EMS incidents. The figure below indicates the amount of automatic aid to Ketchum Fire Department that the Sun Valley Fire Department provided:

**Table 3: Automatic Aid – Sun Valley to Ketchum**

Year	Sun Valley To Ketchum		
	Fire	EMS	Total
2004	9	0	9
2005	12	0	12
2006	7	0	7

## Recommendation – Emergency Data

The Fire Department greatly needs to improve its data collection and retrieval capabilities. Accurate data is essential in managing an organization as well as ensuring cost effective service delivery. Monthly summaries of the departments activities should be provided to all governing officials and include emergency call data with a comparison to the previous year's activities. The report should be in an easy-to-read format. The data the consultants requested is critical in any quality control program overseen by the department's leadership. Accurate data allows better allocation of resources and is essential in any future planning.

The consultants highly recommend that the department investigate one of the many commercial fire department management software programs, for example Firehouse™. A greater benefit could be achieved if Sun Valley and Ketchum utilized the same recording program. Most commercial fire department management software programs are compatible with the state recording system.

## **National Standards**

Prior to consideration of the future resources needed by the Sun Valley Fire Department, it is prudent to discuss national standards that impact the fire and EMS services.

Consideration as to the implications of these standards to the department can only be determined by those that govern the City, inasmuch as most of the standards are not mandatory.

Until 1999, no nationally recognized standards existed for the fire service pertaining to staffing and response times. Unlike law enforcement, and a host of other public agencies that have national standards, the fire service remained absent of such standards. This lack of standards puts both the governing officials and Fire Chiefs at a disadvantage when attempting to ascertain the level of service to provide and what resources would be needed to accomplish that goal.

The City of Sun Valley is ultimately responsible for providing fire and EMS protection to its residents. The City has considerable discretion in determining how it wishes to accomplish this responsibility. The majority of municipalities either receive protection from a municipal fire/EMS department or from a fire protection district. Other alternatives include private corporations (legal non-profit corporation) or privatization by contract. Regardless of how the City chooses to provide protection, the level of protection reflects the quality of life standards of the community.

### **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)**

Historically, the fire service has made attempts to create national standards for staffing and response times. In 1997, a technical committee (NFPA 1200) and a sub-committee of NFPA 1500 (Fire Department Occupational Safety & Health Program) was appointed to create a standard for both career and volunteer departments. The efforts were abandoned when the technical committee failed to reach a consensus.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is the organization recognized by the Fire Service for standards and codes. NFPA codes and standards are widely adopted

because they are developed using an open, consensus-based process. All NFPA codes and standards are developed and periodically reviewed by more than 5,000 volunteer committee members with a wide range of professional expertise. These volunteers serve on more than 200 technical committees and are overseen by the NFPA Board of Directors, which also appoints a 13-person Standards Council to administer the standard-making activities and regulations.

In 1999, two separate standards were created and later adopted by the NFPA. The two standards are **NFPA 1710** (Organization and Development of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by **Career** Fire Departments), and a sister standard, **NFPA 1720** (Organization and Development of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by **Volunteer/paid-on-call** Fire Departments).

The determination of whether a fire/EMS organization falls under the standards of NFPA 1710 or 1720 is not dependent on the number of members who are career versus paid-on-call. Rather, the determination is made by the status (career or paid-on-call) of those that make the decisions. Therefore, in an organization like the Sun Valley Fire Department where there are two career members, both Chief Officers, and the Fire Chief clearly makes the majority of decisions one could argue as to which standard applies. However, since there are no 24/7 personnel, the consultants would suggest the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) – the City – would consider the NFPA 1720 as the more appropriate standard for consideration.

Regardless of which standard the City might reference, they should not adopt either standard. Doing so would adopt by reference all other standards (i.e. OSHA) referenced in the NFPA standard. The City should take the standard under advisement and attempt to meet the standard wherever existing resources allow.

The significant components of NFPA 1720 are:

- Develop and issue written administrative and operational standard operating guidelines
- Participate in a community risk management plan (each municipality within the fire protection district)
- Establish an order of command responsibility
- Must have appropriate apparatus and equipment to accomplish the community risk management plan
- Identify minimum staffing requirements for safe and effective operations and to meet the community risk management plan
- Maintain standard report of information on each response
  - Location
  - Nature of incident and performance
  - Names of responding members
  - Standard response assignment
  - Number and type of apparatus to respond
- Standardized response assignments, including mutual and automatic aid companies
- Number and type of units assigned to an incident either by risk analysis or pre-fire planning
- Incident Command – identified to all units
- Defined incident command responsibilities
- Accountability system on the emergency scene to account for personnel
- Company officers aware of each company member’s assigned task and location
- Company officers must be able to be readily identified
- Order to company members via company officer

In addition, the actual firefighting/EMS standards must be met.

NFPA 1720 standards are much less restrictive than the NFPA 1710 standards. In 2004, however, NFPA 1720 standards were revised to include staffing and response time standards for the first time, as shown in the table below:

**Table 4: NFPA 1720 Staffing & Response Time**

<b>Demand Zone</b>	<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Staffing/Response Time</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Special Risk	AHJ*	AHJ	90%
Urban	>1,000/mi <sup>2</sup>	15 staff / 9 minutes	90%
Suburban	500-1,000/mi <sup>2</sup>	10 staff / 10 minutes	80%
Rural	<500/mi <sup>2</sup>	6 staff / 14 minutes	80%
Remote**	≥ 8 miles	4 staff / NA	90%

\*Authority Having Jurisdiction

\*\* Upon assembling the necessary resources at the emergency scene, the fire department should have the capability to safely commence an attack within two minutes 90% of the time.

It is unlikely that anywhere within Sun Valley there would be greater than 1,000 residents within one square mile. If there were greater than 500 residents with one square mile, however, the department would need to have ten members at the emergency scene within ten minutes 80% of the time. Under NFPA 1720 the following standards would apply:

- Four members assembled before interior suppression at a working structure fire
- Hazardous areas require a minimum of a two-person team
- Must have a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) for interior attacks (2 In – 2 Out)
- Tasks cannot be abandoned if critical to perform rescue of firefighter operating at incident
- Initial attack operations shall be organized that allow for less than four members to operate if there is imminent threat to life or serious injury could be prevented
- Capability of sustained operations beyond that of initial attack
  - Search and rescue
  - Forced entry
  - Property preservation
  - Ventilation
  - Dedicated RIT
- Mutual, automatic and fire protection agreements must be in writing addressing topics of: liability, staffing, equipment, ICS, etc.
- Mutual aid companies be able to communicate with host department in groups, sectors, and incident command
- Organized to insure for the delivery of EMS functions
- Document fire department's role within the delivery of services
- Delivery of EMS congruent with licensing authorities in state
  - First responders
  - BLS response
  - ALS response
- Patient transport in appropriate vehicle for uninterrupted care while enroute
- Assurance of quality program management – quality assurance program
  - Defined
  - Reviewed by fire department personnel
  - Approved by Medical Director
  - Capability to communicate with EMS supervision and medical oversight

System requirements include:

- Safety and health system for personnel – NFPA 1500
- Incident management system in place and utilized
- Training system to ensure for the proper training of members commensurate with service levels
- Communication systems – protocols, procedures, equipment
- Pre-incident planning – particularly of target hazards

Special Operations include:

- Organized to ensure deployment of appropriate resources to provide such services
- Adopt special operations plan and standard operating procedures for response to hazardous material incidents
- Hazardous material operations comply with NFPA 472
- Capability of Rapid Intervention Crew for threat to operating firefighters
- Identify and plan on the appropriate outside resources if beyond scope of internal capabilities

What is not covered in the NFPA 1720:

- Fire prevention
- Community education
- Fire investigation
- Support services
- Personnel management
- Budgeting

It is important to emphasize that NFPA standards are just that, “standards,” and not mandatory by law for a municipality or fire company to meet. However, once an incident occurs, the department will be judged on its performance as compared with the NFPA standards. That is why NFPA standards are sometimes viewed as a double-edged sword. The department does not have to meet them, but if a serious incident occurs (for example, serious injury to or death of a firefighter), the department will be judged against the NFPA standard. It is not recommended that any department intentionally disregard these NFPA standards, but instead should work to meet them.

The consultants again remind the City that combination departments’ (career and volunteer/paid-on-call) voluntary compliance is left to the authority having jurisdiction to decide which standard best applies.

## **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**

Before fire mitigation can begin, the following standards must be considered: NFPA, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation 29 CFR 1910.134 paragraph (g) (4). These standards outline the “Procedures for Interior Structural Fire Fighting,” which dictate the number of fire fighting personnel required to be assembled

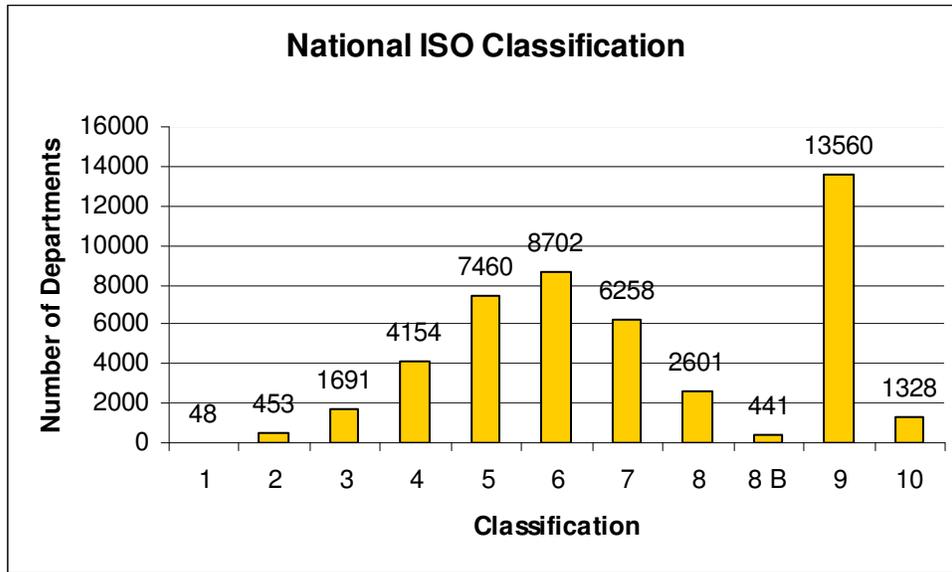
on the fire ground prior to any interior fire fighting efforts. This standard requires two stand-by personnel and two fire suppression personnel on-scene prior to the commencement of interior fire suppression activities. This rule is commonly known in the industry as the 2 In/2 Out standard. There is an exception to this rule noting that if a victim is known to be trapped and there is a chance for a lifesaving rescue, such action can be taken, but this exception must be recorded in the incident report. This standard applies to all career, paid-on-call, and volunteer departments.

### **Insurance Service Offices, Inc (ISO)**

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) publishes and utilizes the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) to “review available public fire suppression facilities, and to develop a Public Protection Classification for insurance purposes.” Although the primary purpose of this tool is to rate fire protection from which insurance rates can be established, ISO ratings have been one of the few standards to compare community fire protection. Realizing the true intent of the ISO classification, it should not be the sole determining factor in establishing public fire protection. Rather, the schedule should be considered an instrument for comparison and an additional factor from which to make a decision.

The Sun Valley Fire Department was last evaluated by ISO in November 2004 and was classified as a Class 4 at that time. ISO attempts to reevaluate fire departments every 15 years; therefore, the department should be scheduled for their next review in 2019. In 2006, there were 46,698 communities, nation-wide, that were classified by ISO. 8.9% of those departments had a Class 4 rating. This class would include career, combination, paid-on-call, private corporations, and volunteer organizations.

Figure 5: Nationwide ISO Classifications



ISO also lists comparisons at state levels for ratings; forty five of the fifty states are included in the ISO data base. Unfortunately, Idaho is not one of the states in which ISO comparison data is maintained. A Class 4 ISO classification for the City Sun Valley is a very good classification and something the Fire Chief took significant pride in.

The ISO classification assigned to a community is based on three categories: fire department (50 percent of the total points), water supply (40 percent), and emergency communications (10 percent). The total points are compared to a chart with ten classes, each of which represents about ten points, for a total of 100 points. Class 1 is the highest and Class 10 is the lowest. Very few communities are Class 1 or 2, and rural communities are generally rated Class 9 or 10. Most urban cities are in the Class 2 – 4 categories, while most suburban communities fall into the Class 4 – 8 categories.

Paragraph 560 of the Schedule states, “the built-upon area of the city should have a first due Engine Company within 1½ miles, and a ladder-service company within 2½ miles.” This distance is recognized by ISO as an acceptable level of fire protection. One can determine how long it takes for fire units to travel this distance in order to meet the ISO standard. Based on the 1½-mile distance standard, a community may determine its desired average travel time by plugging in its approximate vehicle speed of responding

fire equipment. Given the topography, road system, and actual time and distance studies, it is reasonable to figure an average vehicle speed of 35 mph for the present apparatus. It would take approximately 2½ minutes travel time to cover 1½ miles. The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule also indicates that when the fire flow requirement is less than 2,000 gallons per minute (GPM) and the area is primarily residential, it is generally acceptable to have the first due Engine Company as much as two miles away. Given an average speed of 35 mph, it would take approximately 3½ minutes to travel two miles. Obviously, higher or lower average vehicle speeds will impact the distance covered and the travel time.

It is important to note what the ISO rating means to the City of Sun Valley. The ISO purpose is to determine a fire insurance classification, which may be used in the calculation of property insurance premiums. State Farm Insurance, the largest residential insurer of property in the United States, had previously discontinued the use of ISO in ascertaining insurance rates. They experimented with a zone figure classification, which took into account a number of other risk factors. However, State Farm Insurance has abandoned the zone system and returned to ISO ratings.

An ISO rating is not conducted for property loss prevention or life safety purposes, and no life safety or property loss prevention is recommended by the ISO. The ISO classification system was designed to be used primarily to figure property insurance premiums for commercial property, not residential properties. Most insurance companies use the ISO rating as a benchmark and then use market data to establish competitive rates for residential properties.

Moreover, about 90 percent of the insurance companies will group Classes 1 – 4 together, and then look separately at Class 5, Class 6, Class 7, and so on. In essence, the ISO rating is only one factor in establishing premiums and certainly not the primary one. It is this **perceived link** to insurance rates which for years has driven communities to base their decisions on the level of fire protection appropriate for their community on ISO standards.

The value of the ISO rating continues to be questionable as a determining factor in a community's level of fire protection. The ISO survey is not a complete assessment of a community's fire protection program, defenses, or performance. The ISO does not rate response times, the quality of the fire prevention program, built-in fire suppression systems, fire loss and property saved, or the actual competence and performance of the fire suppression personnel and operations. The ISO only rates those pieces of the fire protection program they feel are important to assign insurance rates.

Sun Valley Fire Department's classification of ISO Class 4 should not be interpreted as meaning that its continual commitment and resources are not necessary. It is an indication that the leadership of the department has made a commitment to service using the best tools for measurement available at the time.

### **Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)**

A better evaluation tool exists today. The International Fire Chief's Association (IFCA) has developed a program – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), formerly the Commission of Fire Accreditation International (CAFI). The Center for Public Safety Excellence measures the quality and performance of a particular fire service agency and will award national accreditation to those departments that pass the stringent criteria. Any future effort by the Sun Valley Fire Department to demonstrate competencies should be channeled towards the CPSE accreditation. The consultants do not recommend that the department, at this time, attempt to become accredited; rather they should use the CPSE standards as the benchmark of quality.

### **CPSE – Standard of Response Coverage (SORC)**

The lack of national criteria by which a community can judge the level and quality of fire, EMS, and other services has been increasingly problematic for community leaders, as well as for fire chiefs who are faced with increased public pressure to provide more for less money. These same governing officials are hard-pressed to justify any increase in

expenditures unless it can be attributed directly to improved service delivery in the community.

Many community and/or district's governing officials have rejected the standards presented in NFPA 1710 and/or 1720 as a "one size fits all" approach to measuring service performance. The CPSE program is a method of measuring performance based on the community's expectations and serves as the benchmark for evaluating department performance. The standard used is called the Standard of Response Coverage (SORC) and requires self-examination to quantify the department:

- Remain organizationally effective
- Achieve the goals, objectives, and mission of the department
- Identify the areas of success of the department
- Encourage quality improvement through a continuous self-assessment process
- Foster pride in the department with both the internal and external customers

Standard of Response Coverage is determined by the community absent any non-mandatory requirements and consists of analysis of the following seven components:

- Existing Deployment
- Community Outcome Expectations
- Community Risk Assessment
- Distribution Study
- Concentration Study
- Historical Reliability (addresses simultaneous calls)
- Overall Evaluation

What is particularly difficult for those that administer fire/EMS organizations is the absence of the second component – community/district outcome expectations. In most cases, those that govern and provide funding for fire departments concentrate on the fiscal aspects of providing that service. Although this is an essential responsibility for those that govern, many do not articulate exactly what level of service they expect. What are acceptable response times? What level of EMS service do they want to provide to the citizens? What non-emergency services can the fire department provide to the community? Thus, in many cases, the fire chiefs, not a unified team of governing officials and fire department leadership, determine the SORC for the community.

Governing community/district officials are constantly faced with the issue that there are more good district causes than tax dollars to provide those services. Therefore, they strive to provide as many services at the highest level with available dollars. Absent “citizen outcry,” governing officials have little incentive or motivation to suddenly change service levels. Thus, fire and EMS services are a “quality of life” issue that must be determined by community/district leaders.

CPSE accreditation is a structured process for documenting the levels of fire safety, prevention, fire safety education, suppression services currently provided, and for determining the future level of service the department should provide. CPSE accreditation asks the community/district to determine and document if its fire protection services are appropriate, adequate, and effective.

The advantage to the CPSE program lies in the process of completing it. The department must literally examine every aspect of its existence and determine the most cost effective means of providing service. This program requires a time commitment and effort on the part of the fire administration. It is recommended that a single individual be assigned full-time for the completion of this project.

Critics of the program emphasize the cost and time commitment needed for completion. These critics miss the point that the process of compliance with CPSE standards may keep the department and district from catastrophic failure in the system of service delivery. Other critics claim it is nothing more than bragging rights, similar to an improved ISO classification. Again, the point is missed that a department that develops pride can often translate that pride into better performance and morale, which is priceless.

Some fire departments have incorporated student interns from schools such as Oklahoma State University, which has one of the leading Fire Protection Safety Engineering Technology programs in the Country, to assist the department in the accreditation process. These students usually work 8 – 12 weeks during the summer and live in the fire station, responding to calls for experience. The students receive compensation that has been negotiated with the department. Other students who have

graduated from this program are often available to oversee and participate in the entire process, which can easily take 12 – 18 months.

### **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**

The International City/County Management Association collects and publishes data pertaining to fire department operations from municipalities across the country by establishing a standardized format for the collection of data. This allows a district the opportunity to compare itself to other like districts in establishing its benchmark.

The advantage of this data collection is the ability for governing officials to compare themselves to other like districts in a format that is consistent with what they are attempting to measure. The disadvantage is that the ICMA does not set any benchmarks or recommendations, and therefore the data collected is, by nature, subjective to the individual(s) collecting the data.

### **Emergency Medical Services Standards**

The standard utilized by a host of governing EMS organizations such as the American Heart Association (AHA), American Medical Association (AMA), American Association for the Surgery of Trauma (AAST), and others utilize the initial arrival of EMS within six minutes allowing for a four-minute travel time. The AMA notes, “every minute of delay clearly has a huge negative impact on survival.” The American Heart Association indicates that brain death starts to occur within four to six minutes after an individual stops breathing and cardiac arrest (including ventricular fibrillation (VF) or pulseless ventricular tachycardia (VT). The AHA also indicates that for every minute that passes without medical intervention the patient’s chances of survival drop 7 to 10 percent. Patient resuscitation after 10 minutes is rarely successful.

These standards are consistent with the NFPA 1710 medical response standard of a four-minute travel response for basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support within eight minutes.

## **Recommendation – National Standards**

The City should not adopt NFPA 1720. The adoption of the NFPA 1720 standard includes the adoption, by reference, to all OSHA and NFPA standards listed. Rather, the Fire Department should utilize these standards as a benchmark for comparison.

The department should familiarize itself with the evaluation standards of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. Any efforts for quality improvement or benchmarking for excellence should evaluate the department's programs against these standards.

## Sun Valley Fire Department Response Times

Response time is a calculated measurement used to determine fire department effectiveness in responding to emergencies. There is a direct correlation between response times to fires and the outcome of those fires on life and/or property loss. It can be argued that response time to EMS incidents is as important, if not more so, than response time to fires. Longer response times to fire and emergency medical calls can have a significantly negative impact on the outcome of any emergency.

Although there are national standards referencing response times for fire and EMS incidents, the final decision is the standards set by those that govern the community. Levels of public safety are truly a “quality of life” issue in a community.

As previously noted numerous EMS organizations recommend the initial arrival of EMS intervention should occur within six minutes allowing for a four-minute travel time. Death to the human brain without oxygen begins to occur within four to six minutes and survival drops 7 to 10 percent for every minute beyond that time. Patient resuscitation after 10 minutes without oxygen to the brain is rarely successful.

There are many factors that affect the growth of a fire, but once ample fuel and oxygen mix, fire growth can expand at a rate of several times its volume per minute. Time is the critical factor for the rescue of occupants and the application of an extinguishing agent. The time segment between fire ignition and the start of fire suppression activities is critical, and has a direct relationship to fire loss.

The Insurance Services Office, Inc., the leading underwriting information service for the insurance industry, dictates the distribution of fire companies. ISO requires the first due engine company to be within 1.5 road miles of the protected properties and ladder-service company to be within 2.5 road miles. ISO bases its response time in minutes based on a formula developed by the RAND Corporation. Their extensive studies have resulted in ISO adopting a 3.2 minute response for an engine company and 4.9 minute response for a

ladder-service company. RAND concluded the average speed for a fire apparatus responding with emergency lights and siren is 35 mph. That speed considers average terrain, average traffic, weather, and slowing down for intersections.

The misunderstanding of response time is also compounded by the fact that most departments erroneously consider response time to be the time it takes responders to arrive at the scene of the emergency from the time the fire department was notified. In actuality, this criterion only defines two components of the overall response time: the turnout time and the travel time.

## **Response Time Components**

The actual measurement of response time must be a total system understanding of all components of response time, including:

1. **Detection Time:** The time it takes to detect the emergency incident and for the individual to dial 9-1-1.
  2. **Notification Time:** The time from when the call is received by dispatch to the time the department is notified.
  3. **Turnout Time:** The time it takes personnel to prepare and leave quarters after notification.
  4. **Travel Time:** The time the first fire apparatus leaves the station to the time it reports on the scene.
  5. **Mitigation Time:** The time the first apparatus arrives at the scene to the time when actual extinguishing/treatment efforts begin.
- 
1. Detection time. This first component is considered to be uncontrollable by the fire department. However, there are requirements related to fire detection that some communities require commercial properties to follow. Communities that require automatic detection systems to send an electronic alarm directly to the communication center versus a third party will reduce the time it takes for the fire department to be notified.

2. Notification time. All land-line 9-1-1 calls originating in the City of Sun Valley or Ketchum are received in the Ketchum Communication Center. Under NFPA 1221, dispatch time (time the call is answered to the time the emergency unit is notified) cannot exceed 60 seconds. The Ketchum Communication Center provided average notification times for the last quarter of 2005 and the first quarter of 2006. The average for these two quarters was 75.5 seconds.

Cellular 9-1-1 could be answered by either the County or Ketchum. No notification time data was received from the County communication center.

3. Turnout time. The time it takes the fire/EMS personnel to prepare to leave the station after notification of the incident. This time is controllable by the fire department and involves personnel dressing themselves in their protective clothing and equipment and staffing the emergency unit.

Sun Valley did not provide turnout times, although the Chief noted that he and/or the Assistant Chief respond immediately from home if not at the station. Although there is a value to having a Chief Officer arrive to conduct size-up (evaluation of the emergency and resources assessment), the more important issue is the turnout time of the first mitigation unit (engine) that could begin extinguishment or, on EMS incidents, when the first aid is administered to the patient.

4. Travel Time. This represents the actual time it takes the apparatus to drive from the fire station to its arrival at the emergency scene. Weather conditions and traffic congestion will be a factor in the length of time it takes the apparatus to arrive on the scene. Under NFPA 1720 the travel time is illustrated in the national standard section of this report. It is important to note that it differs with the amount of population within a square mile.

5. Mitigation Time. For EMS incidents, mitigation time represents the time the first emergency unit arrives to when patient treatment begins. In the case of a fire incident, it represents the time from arrival of the first fire apparatus, to when actual mitigation/extinguishing efforts begin. It does not represent the arrival time of the first Fire Department unit such as the Fire Chief arriving in his command vehicle.

NFPA 1720 requires volunteer/paid-on-call departments to be able to begin mitigation within two minutes upon assembly of necessary resources for areas greater than eight road miles from the fire station.

Therefore, NFPA standards would require the Sun Valley Fire Department to be capable of beginning mitigation of the emergency incident immediately upon arrival of the first engine, or 1<sup>st</sup> Responder. This means that upon arrival of the first Sun Valley 1<sup>st</sup> Responder, patient treatment should begin immediately.

### **Sun Valley Fire Department Response Time Data**

Sun Valley Fire Department had significant difficulty in providing response time data. The department does not keep this data in their in-house computer system; rather they submit run information to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The Chief indicated that he needs to get the department's actual "run reports" from the FEMA website. The consultants were unaware that this feature was available from the FEMA website and perhaps it is unique to the computer recording program utilized by Sun Valley.

After considerable effort the department did provide response data for 2006 which indicated the date of the incident, dispatch time, initial responder on the scene, response time of the first unit (most often one of the Chief officers), engine number responding, when the engine left the station, arrival of the engine on the scene, travel time, and total time from dispatch.

As previously noted, this data represented only 42.2% of the total incidents in 2006.

From that data the following response times were:

- First arriving individual average response time = 5 minutes 30 seconds – based on 68 incidents provided.
- First arriving engine average response time = 11 minutes 12 seconds – based on 31 incidents provided.

The first individual to arrive in most cases was one or both of the Chief Officers. The more significant response time was that of the first engine, which is the personnel/equipment that could begin extinguishment or provide 1<sup>st</sup> Responder EMS.

After the initial review of these response times the Fire Chief felt the response time averages, listed above, were not an accurate representation of their emergency response. The Chief indicated that on some calls the department is staged (held) in the station before they respond. This might occur for a situation the police need to investigate first to ensure the scene is safe for the Fire Department. Unfortunately, the current software recording system was unable to designate any particular incident(s) that would skew the average, or the number of times such incidents might have occurred. Therefore, the response times listed above are determined by utilizing the data provided to the consultants by the department. Again, the department only provided response times for 68 of the 161 calls in 2006.

A question repeatedly asked was which department arrives first for fires in Sun Valley. The consultant is not as interested in who arrived first, but rather how long did it take to get a unit that could begin to apply water (extinguish) to the fire?

The consultants requested that the Ketchum Communication Center provide fire incidents data for Sun Valley for a six-month period. The communication center data should indicate response times accurately.

The consultant requested from the Ketchum Communication Center calls where both departments responded. The data did not include fire alarms, hazardous material, gas line breaks, motor vehicle accidents, or ambulance calls. The Communication Manager provided three incidents. Only two, however, involved both departments, and addresses were not included. However, the data demonstrated that in two of the incidents both responding departments arrived at approximately the same time.

**Incident #1 – Vehicle Fire (Sun Valley only)**

Call Dispatched: 07:56:33  
Chief Arrived: 08:04:34  
Engine 60: 08:08:36 (Sun Valley engine)  
Engine 62: 08:16:14 (Sun Valley engine)

First unit able to begin extinguishment response time was: 12 minutes and 3 seconds

**Incident #2 – Chimney Fire**

Call Dispatched: 02:38:59 (both departments dispatched simultaneously)  
Chief Arrived: 02:51:18  
Engine 60: 02:51:34 (Sun Valley engine)  
Aerial: 02:52:59 (responded from Ketchum station)

First unit able to begin extinguishment response time was: 12 minutes and 19 seconds

**Incident #3 – Structure Fire**

Call Dispatched: 22:40:57  
AC Arrived: 22:43:54  
Aerial: 22:50:47 (responded from Ketchum station)  
Chief Arrived: 22:50:51  
Engine 62: 22:55:46 (Sun Valley engine)  
Engine 2: 22:59:53 (Ketchum engine)  
Engine 3: 23:00:04 (Ketchum engine)  
Engine 60: 23:00:32 (Sun Valley engine)  
Engine 10: 23:10:35 (Ketchum engine)

If the aerial, rather than the engine, applied water the building extinguishment response time was: 9 minutes and 50 seconds. If extinguishment didn't begin until the first engine arrived, extinguishment response time was: 14 minutes and 49 seconds.

### **Recommendation – Response Times**

The consultants were not aware that response time data could be retrieved from the NFIRS web page, and in past studies this information is in-house on the computer program utilized to record incidents. It is recommended that the department move toward a fire-based recording system such as Firehouse™. Firehouse™ has the capability of maintaining response time data. The department has the ability to download the data to the state recording system, thus reducing paperwork redundancy. The state of Idaho utilizes both NFIRS and/or the Idaho Fire Incident Reporting System (IFIRS).

Regardless of the system utilized by the department, response time data is a critical component and one that needs to be easily retrievable for quality control as well as inquiries pertaining to a particular incident. The department should develop a means of entering and retrieving this information in-house.

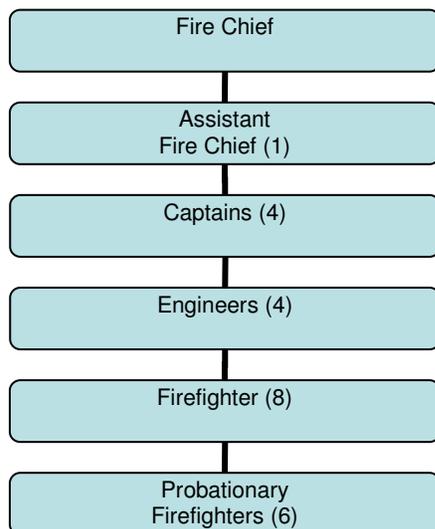
## Sun Valley Fire Department Staffing

The consultants have already noted that the department's paid-on-call membership numbers are fluid, depending on when the data was retrieved. Sun Valley Fire Department's paid-on-call membership ranged from a high of 26 to a low of 20. However, the best indicator is to review payroll data. The number of paid-on-call members receiving compensation for emergency call response, training, or other activities reimbursed by the department (including the individual who donates the money to the association) was 14 members within a 5.5 month period. Therefore, during this time frame the department had 14 active paid-on-call members.

There are multiple factors that influence how communities staff their fire/EMS departments. Factors include: population, size of the area protected, social/economics of area, community risks, level of fire and EMS services desired, fiscal capabilities of the community, future area development, politics, other service provider options, citizen expectations, and availability of mutual aid.

The Sun Valley Fire Department provided the consultants with the following organization chart:

**Figure 6: Sun Valley Organization Chart**



The Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief are the only two career members of the department. All other members are paid-on-call, although one member interviewed noted that he refuses any payment and donates his earnings back to the volunteer association fund.

Both the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief work a 40 hour week, Monday through Friday, and respond to emergency calls at all times of the day and night. They are considered exempt employees under the Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA), meaning that they do not receive overtime pay for emergency responses beyond 40 hours in the established work week. The implications of FLSA will be discussed in the Human Resource section of this report.

Sun Valley is approximately 12 square miles and the residential population is listed by the US Census Bureau at 1,427 in 2000. According to the Fire Chief, the visitor/tourist population will swell to over 10,000 at certain times of the year. Conversely, a large number of the 2,339 housing units are vacant a great portion of the year. The City Administrator felt that a more accurate number of individuals in the City at any given time would be close to 5,000 individuals.

Most commonly, fire/EMS departments are classified in one of four manners as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): *Career departments* refer to departments where all firefighters/medics are career employees. *Mostly career* refers to departments that are a combination – the majority are career supported by volunteer/paid-on-call. *Mostly volunteer* refers to departments that are a combination, where the majority of employees are volunteer/paid-on-call. *All volunteer/paid-on-call* refers to departments that have no career firefighter/medics.

The figure below compares the staffing of the Sun Valley Fire Department to the national average published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA

compares the residential population of a community and the type of staffing the fire department utilizes to protect that community to similar community's population throughout the United States.

**Figure 7: Type of Staffing Compared to Population - National**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Career</b>	<b>Mostly Career</b>	<b>Mostly Volunteer</b>	<b>All Volunteer</b>	<b>Total</b>
> 1,000,000	73.3%	26.7%	0%	0%	100%
500,000 – 999,999	63.0%	33.3%	3.7%	0%	100%
250,000 – 499,999	47.7%	40.9%	11.4%	0%	100%
100,000 – 249,999	80.5%	14.6%	4.3%	.6%	100%
50,000 – 99,999	71.6%	17.3%	9.3%	1.7%	100%
25,000 – 49,999	44.4%	22.5%	22.5%	10.6%	100%
10,000 – 24,999	20.4%	18.1%	37.8%	23.8%	100%
5,000 – 9,999	3.4%	6.0%	32.3%	58.2%	100%
2,500 – 4,999	0.6%	1.5%	15.1%	82.7%	100%
<b>Under 2,500</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>93.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Mostly volunteer could include employee classification of paid-on-call and/or volunteer

Source: FEMA U.S. Fire Administration 2006 – Survey of the Needs of the U.S. Fire Service

 Represents average daily population as advised by the City

 Represents residential population noted by the US Census Bureau

According to FEMA, which utilizes the US Census Bureau figures, 5.3% of all fire departments in the United States of comparable size staff in a manner similar to Sun Valley. If one were to utilize the average daily population as estimated by the City then Sun Valley staffs its fire department as does 32.3% of the fire departments in the United States.

The consultants acknowledge that at times the Fire Department has an extremely large number of people visiting as well as large number of people involved in outdoor activities within their protection area. It is not cost effective for the City to staff the Fire Department at all times for this influx of visitors. Rather it is more prudent to consider peak staffing during these peak times if need arises.

FEMA also provides staffing/population comparisons for many of the states. In Idaho 194 fire departments responded to the FEMA survey illustrated in the figure below:

**Figure 8: Type of Staffing Compared to Population - Idaho**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Career</b>	<b>Mostly Career</b>	<b>Mostly Volunteer</b>	<b>All Volunteer</b>	<b>Total</b>
50,000 – 99,999	66.7%	33.3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
25,000 – 49,999	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%	0.0%	100%
10,000 – 24,999	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	100%
5,000 – 9,999	0.0%	0.0%	58.8%	41.2%	100%
2,500 – 4,999	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	100%
Under 2,500	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	94.1%	100%

\* Volunteer could include employee classification of paid-on-call and/or volunteer

Source: FEMA /USFA and NFPA Survey of the Needs of the U.S. Fire Service 2004 – based on 194 of Idaho fire departments responding to the survey.

- Represents average daily population as advised by the City
- Represents residential population noted by the US Census Bureau

There are roughly 1.1 million active fire fighters in the US, of which just under three-fourths (73%) are volunteer or paid-on-call. Nearly half of the volunteers/paid-on-call personnel serve in communities with less than 2,500 population. In the population category in which the Sun Valley Fire Department is classified by the US Census Bureau, seven departments surveyed in Idaho staffed in a similar manner, representing 5.9% of Idaho fire departments.

If one were to utilize the average daily population, as estimated by the City, 58.8% of fire departments in Idaho staff in a similar manner to Sun Valley.

This national and state data does not include employees assigned to duties outside of firefighting and/or EMS activities; nor does it include fire prevention and support staff.

## **Future Staffing Needs**

Currently the Fire Chief and his wife dedicate an inordinate amount of time to the Fire Department. Without question, the Fire Chief believes in customer service and assists citizens of Sun Valley with help not often associated with fire departments. This fits very well into the City’s philosophy of high customer service. The advantage is that the Fire Chief is very involved in the services offered by the City and in return the City has given him a great amount of autonomy. The disadvantage is that there is not a lot of succession

planning and if for some reason the Fire Chief left the department, a vast amount of information would go with him.

During the interview process it is very apparent that the Fire Chief is very hands-on and handles many functions in the Fire Department that are traditionally delegated to a larger number of individuals. For example, the Chief made the comment, “that if someone doesn’t show up for a fire call he is on the phone inquiring why... he expects all members to make every fire call.” He also conducts the fire inspections, investigates fires, conducts training, does administrative functions, and is incident command, as well as a host of other job responsibilities.

Apparently this type of leadership currently works well for Sun Valley, but there is always a danger of not having a succession plan or allowing other members to have an active role in the administrative functions of the Fire Department. This should not imply that others are not capable, but definitely the Chief made it clear that he is very involved in all aspects of the department.

The department still enjoys several employers in the community that are department members who will respond as well as allowing some of their employees to do the same. This is a luxury that most volunteer/paid-on-call departments lost many years ago, forcing them into alternative staffing methods. The City and department should acknowledge the community service of these employers. Most cities do not even allow their own city employees in different departments to leave their jobs to respond to fire and/or EMS calls.

Does Sun Valley need 24/7/365 in-house personnel? There were diverse opinions expressed during the interviews. It was stated either by a member of the department or council that, “it isn’t needed here,” or our service is, “good enough.” It is sometimes hard to separate the level of service from the dedicated individuals who provide it. This issue is not whether the providers are good or bad people. Rather it is what level of service the City of Sun Valley wishes to provide to its residents. There were others that

believe that it is only a matter of time before additional full-time staffing would be needed.

If the consultants were to base their recommendation on the number of emergency calls each year of the study period (2004 = 78, 2005 = 155, 2006 = 161) it would be hard to justify additional staffing. The consultants would recommend maintaining the status quo. However, what is inconsistent with the City's philosophy of high level of service is the level of EMS provided. There are only 8 of the 25 members who are certified as either EMT-B or 1<sup>st</sup> Responder. During the interviews it was apparent that a number of individuals felt that since Ketchum was the agency to provide EMS and hospital transports for the north part of Blaine County, and received funding from the County, it was "unfair" that Sun Valley should have to provide this level of service and not be reimbursed. What is lost in this argument is the issue of what is best for the citizens and visitors of Sun Valley.

Reimbursement is an issue that would need to be resolved with the Blaine County Ambulance District. However, with the individuals that have seasonal homes within the community, their perception would most likely expect the highest level of EMS when 9-1-1 is dialed. The consultants were given a tour and some very large prestigious homes were pointed out- and the owners were well-recognized names. Certainly these individuals would anticipate the highest level of service.

Although the consultants will not recommend 24/7/365 station coverage they would acknowledge that the City would certainly benefit from it. The service level would most likely better align with the perception of the residents, especially those that are only part-time residents. The City would benefit from providing additional housing for paid-on-call fire/EMS personnel. Currently the City is considering building housing units at the Elkhorn station which the consultants highly support.

The consultants will encourage the department to place greater emphasis on EMS, including the level of certification and the number of individuals trained. Although it is

extremely difficult for paid-on-call members to dedicate the time to becoming certified as paramedics, the City could provide a greater fiscal housing incentive to those with higher EMS certifications.

If the department ever chooses to staff the station during certain periods, the consultants would recommend paid-on-premise covering 12-hour shifts. Paid-on-premise staffing assigns a minimum staff to man the station for specified hours – i.e., 12-hour shifts. These shifts could be filled with existing paid-on-call members and/or hiring off-duty firefighter/EMS personnel from other departments. Under FLSA the hourly rate could be Idaho minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour or \$61.80 per shift per individual. There would be FLSA issues to be addressed if this type of staffing were implemented.

The Fire Chief emphatically stated a desire for additional help during the day. He also indicated a desire for the current Assistant Chief position (currently in a temporary status), to be converted to full-time. Finally, the Chief expressed the need for one more individual to help with the many administrative tasks.

The current staffing has a large percentage (25%) of its members who are in a probationary status with less than two years of experience. In addition, 28% of the members are over the age of 50. A number of these individuals might consider retirement within a short time and their departure would result in a significant knowledge void in the department. In the firefighter profession, age is sometimes a disadvantage due to the physical nature of tasks but an advantage due to the knowledge gained from experience. The Sun Valley Fire Department needs a greater number of “active” members.

### **Recommendation – Staffing**

The consultants do not recommend additional career members, with the exception of converting the Assistant Chief to a full-time position if the City rejects the consolidation recommendation. Additional in-house staffing should be accomplished by the use of paid-on-premise and additional housing units.

Succession planning should be emphasized in the department in the event that the Fire Chief leaves. The Chief is passionate about his job, and although there are many good individuals in the department, the consultant is not sure if anyone is currently prepared to handle the multiple tasks the current Chief oversees and performs. It is in the City's best interest to distribute the knowledge base of the Fire Department among a greater number of individuals while the Chief is available to mentor.

The leadership of the Fire Department emphasizes fire. This is not unusual for those leaders that have been in the service for years. However, today's fire department is really an EMS department that happens to perform fire activities on a less frequent basis. This philosophy needs to be adopted by the Sun Valley Fire Department and a greater emphasis placed on aggressive EMS intervention. Can the existing leadership accomplish this organizational culture change? The consultants cannot determine that. That does not diminish the need, however.

## **Sun Valley Human Resource**

This section of the report will discuss all of the aspects related to human resources – hiring, promotion, policies, and performance management, as well as compensation.

### **Recruitment**

The hiring of personnel is one of the most important functions of any Chief, as the quality of the members will directly reflect on the department and the district. The hiring of personnel is also a great liability for the City since the organization can be sued for negligent hiring and retention. The mentality and skill set required for an individual to be successful must be verified through a number of testing processes prior to being hired. The community must also be assured that the individual applying for the position truly wants to dedicate his or her time to Sun Valley. The applicant should be made familiar with the City and the functions of the position. Too many times, individuals take the job of being a firefighter only to become discontented because of a lack of understanding of the training and time commitments the position requires. The time and cost invested by a department in hiring and training an employee should not be wasted on poor hires.

The consultant is aware that with the exception of one full-time employee (Fire Chief, full-time Assistant Chief position on hold at the writing of this report), the entire department is staffed with paid-on-call personnel. Thus, some may consider the term “hiring” as a misnomer. However, regardless of the salary mechanism, these individuals should be considered employees of the organization and as such, care needs to be taken as to whom is hired/volunteers to represent the City of Sun Valley.

The current recruitment process is basically word-of-mouth with some advertising in the local newspaper. The Fire Chief indicated that the City’s web-site had information on joining the department, and the consultant visited the web page. Under “medical information” is a 1-page information sheet with reasons to join the Sun Valley Fire Department. However, nothing in the web site indicates that the Fire Department is

volunteer, nor is there any information given as to how to apply for the position. The consultant would recommend reviewing the web-site and giving more information about the qualifications required, training provided, and how to apply for a position with the department. A concern for most that live in the area is the availability of affordable housing, and the web page does offer that benefit – a draw for some candidates.

The department provided a 1-plus page recruitment literature that described the hiring process and expectations of the department. This would be a great piece to turn into a tri-fold brochure and distribute at functions, have available in the department and City Hall, etc. The brochure should highlight the benefits of volunteer in the Fire Department, summarize the time and training commitments, and articulate how to apply for membership.

The department has a good reputation and indicated that they have not had problems with recruitment. The consultant questions whether the current recruitment process is effective. Among the various responsibilities to be accomplished in a paid-on-call department is the development of an on-going recruitment program; this has not been a priority.

Fire departments are in competition with many other paid-on-call and volunteer organizations for paid-on-call members. Departments that utilize paid-on-call personnel are experiencing ever-increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining members. This might be evidenced in Sun Valley, where 25 members are claimed, yet only 14 are active and receive compensation.

Continual recruitment efforts are essential to maintaining a viable paid-on-call fire-fighting force. Every member of the Fire Department is responsible for recruiting new members. Simply stated, the fire department that markets itself the best is the fire department that recruits the best. Unfortunately, fire departments have, in many cases, become “closed shops,” allowing only a select few into their ranks.

Recruitment starts with the Fire Chief, who must be the organization's "super salesman." Recruitment must be a goal of the organization and part of the training program for all firefighters. Every firefighter should be taught methods of recruitment and be expected to recruit.

Research conducted by Reade Bush, Philip Schaenman, and Katherine Thiel (1998) for the National Volunteer Fire Council and the U.S. Fire Administration noted:

"There is no single reason for the decline in volunteers in most departments. Instead, retention and recruitment problems usually can be traced to several underlying factors, including, more demands on people's time in a hectic modern society; more stringent training requirements; population shifts from smaller towns to urban centers; changes in the nature of small town industry and farming; internal leadership problems; and a decline in the sense of civic responsibility, among other factors. Although some regions are more affected than others, volunteer retention and recruitment is a problem nationwide."

The consultants sensed a strong sense of pride in the paid-on-call members during the interview process. This sense of pride is the tool that each member has to sell the department to others. On a national basis, 50 percent of current volunteers have close friends or relatives who introduced them to a fire department.

Recruiting and retaining volunteer/paid-on-call firefighters is an ever-increasing challenge faced throughout our country. Without question, it is more difficult to recruit and retain volunteer/paid-on-call firefighters today than ever before, and the Sun Valley Fire Department is no exception to this challenge. Volunteer/paid-on-call members are not free and need to be provided with training and leadership. The cost for paid-on-call protective gear is significant, and used protected gear, in most cases, cannot be handed down under NFPA standards. The management of a paid-on-call organization is a very time-consuming job, not to mention the high degree of leadership skills required.

There are also some unavoidable challenges in managing a paid-on-call department:

- Availability of daytime response
- Attrition or turnover

- Limited ability to recruit
- Lack of time to train and meet state/national certification levels
- Unpredictable response
- Administrative time to manage program
- Difficulty training to higher certification levels
- Less flexibility and more options for leisure time

The economics of paid-on-call firefighters is the number one reason communities embrace this type of organization. Community leaders are faced with maintaining or increasing public safety services, while there is increasing competition for available revenue. Thus, in the Sun Valley area, volunteerism/paid-on-call is the typical mode of staffing, and as such, there is competition for human resources.

The consultants offer these recommendations to the department's recruitment program:

- Community service groups provide a source of potential recruits, inasmuch as most community service groups have a philosophy of giving to the community. Membership in community organizations by the Fire Department's top administrative staff is recommended.
- Establish and distribute a written job description detailing the required skills, qualifications, and time commitment for the department.
- A critical factor in most recruitment processes is the follow-up. A simple phone call after initial contact sends a strong message of sincerity. A recruitment policy and procedure document should be written.
- The department should give a formal orientation program to the potential candidate and his/her family. The candidate should be encouraged to bring as many people with them as they like, especially spouses, significant others, and/or parents. It is very important that all family members hear the details of the time commitment and expectations of the Fire Department's new member. The number one reason most paid-on-call members leave the department is for personal or family matters.
- An eligibility list of new recruits should be maintained and a formal membership program should be started every six months. New recruits benefit from starting with a group of other new recruits. This practice should be adopted whenever possible. There is a fine line between waiting too long and having the individual lose interest, as compared to waiting for a scheduled start date to generate the best opportunity for a consistent and formal program. (Note: It has been recommended that the City of Ketchum, along with the City of Sun Valley, consider running the Essentials training class every 6 months rather than once per year.)
- Keep recruits well-informed of their progress and successes. If problems develop, the best solution is immediate communication. On average, the consultants found that in most departments only one in three recruits remain

with the organization after one (1) year of entry. The Sun Valley Fire Department should develop a mentoring program for this purpose.

- Develop a probationary evaluation for new recruits to ensure training and problem resolution before escalation. Items should include attendance at training, percentage of response to calls, recruitment efforts, etc.
- Guard against attempts to make membership a social climate. Rather, provide an organization that stimulates a feeling of pride and accomplishment in providing a critical community service.
- Generally, high school students are not a good group to recruit. The majority of high school students leave the community shortly after graduating.
- Know your market. The profile of the average volunteer/paid-on-call firefighters is: 20 to 40 years of age, 96.7 percent male, 80 percent married, 45 percent blue collar workers, and 73.1 percent will volunteer/paid-on-call for only one organization (Source: The Volunteer Firefighters: A Breed Apart by Jack W. Snook & Dan Olsen).
- Train in the public's eye. Literally, move some of your training sessions into areas that normally attract large numbers of people, or train in the various subdivisions and distribute flyers notifying the residents of the exercise a minimum of three (3) to seven (7) days in advance. Be cautious not to create distractions to highway traffic that might contribute to auto accidents. Recruit members at these exercises.
- Conduct a media ride-along program. Involve the media by asking them to participate in any actual building "burn down" training exercises.
- A door-to-door campaign in targeted areas of the community, conducted by existing members, can be very successful. Interfaces with the residents should be short and they should be given a simple recruitment flyer inviting them to contact the department if interested. Tell your story with pictures and as few words as possible.
- Keep the recruitment process as simple as possible.

**Job Descriptions** – The department provided the consultant job descriptions for the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief and Building Official. The job descriptions are somewhat difficult to read and it is recommended that the City look at categorizing job duties, skills and abilities to make it easier to see the information.

The job descriptions do not contain the physical requirements of the position as required for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Positions of a supervisory nature should contain more than firefighter skills. They should also contain supervisory skills and/or education appropriate for that rank. It is becoming more common to find that candidates for a Fire Chief position are required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree; no educational skills are listed on the Sun Valley Fire Chief's job description. Further, the skills and

abilities section should include the "soft" skills – ability to work as a team, ability to get along with co-workers, etc. All of these elements are necessary for a competent member.

Finally, it would be advisable for each of the job descriptions to be reviewed as to qualifications, especially special and/or supervisory training, and utilized during the evaluation process. The job description, along with an evaluation form, can be a great tool for establishing the professional development of Fire Department personnel.

A job description for the position of firefighter should be developed and a copy given to all applicants. In some organizations, a copy is signed by the new hire assuring that he/she is capable of performing the essential job functions. The date the job descriptions were created and/or revised should be placed on the form so that individuals know they are working with the latest version.

**Application** - An individual who expresses interest in becoming a member of the department is given a City application to be completed. The application form appears to be slightly out of date. Since this is a generic form, it does not lend itself to the hours a typical applicant is willing to work, and the form does not solicit any licenses and/or certifications which the applicant may possess, and which may be pertinent to the Fire Department. Finally, the question as to whether the City can contact an employer is asked at the end and should be asked for each employer, along with an explanation if the employer cannot be contacted.

The application form should not ask for the applicant's social security number. Rather a separate criminal background authorization should be created that contains the information required by the Sun Valley Police Department. It is more appropriate to put social security number, driver's license number, etc. on the authorization form than on the application.

A requirement for membership with the department is a valid driver's license. However, that information is not collected, and therefore, one would assume that the department

does not check this information. The above-mentioned authorization form should include the driver's license number so that during the Police Department's criminal background check this can also be verified. Another avenue to check license numbers is through the City's insurance carrier. In some cases, insurance carriers can find out about possible violations in other parts of the country. This form should also contain language authorizing referenced parties to release information, as well as the applicant's authorization.

Because the form is rather generic, it might be prudent for the Fire Department to develop a form specific to its needs. Thus it could ask for skills and qualifications necessary for firefighting. With that said, the application should also seek any additional skills and qualifications which may benefit the department. For example, could the department benefit from someone with information technology experience, or marketing experience, but who does not want to be a firefighter? In a small paid-on-call organization there are still a host of administrative duties that must be accomplished, and recruiting members with specific skills, not necessarily firefighting, may benefit the organization as a whole. Thus, the application should also seek this information.

The application form does not ask if the applicant has ever been convicted of a felony. Although one cannot necessarily discriminate against an individual with a criminal background, such information is beneficial to the organization to prevent hiring of an individual that could put the City at risk for negligent hiring. The section regarding conviction of a felony should have a statement indicating that answering this question may not preclude employment. Having a conviction does not automatically preclude the applicant from becoming a member.

Finally, the authorization at the end of the form should also state that employment with the City of Sun Valley is "at-will," and nothing should be construed as a contract for employment. The City wants to retain its right to hire and terminate employees" at will," and not get into any contractual relationships, or infer that the member has any union protections.

## **Recommendation - Recruitment Process**

The Sun Valley Fire Department should establish a recruitment program. An individual within the organization should be responsible for establishing programs that not only retain current members but also keep recruitment programs current.

The recruitment program should consider utilizing sources other than just word of mouth. Recruitment efforts that rely on referrals can pose difficulties in creating a diverse workforce. Often, membership, as previously discussed, becomes a "closed shop," and only individuals who know someone are allowed in.

Design an application specifically tailored to obtain information vital to the assessment of candidates for membership. This includes previous work experience and history. The authorization on the back of the application should acknowledge the correctness of information, address falsification or misstatements, and define employment at will.

A separate authorization form for a criminal background check should be developed and completed after the member has been interviewed and is considered to be a viable candidate, since it contains information that could identify discriminatory classifications.

## **Interview Process**

The Fire Chief and/or Assistant Fire Chief conduct an informal interview with all interested applicants. The interview should be conducted utilizing a set of standard questions that have been developed specifically for the position and are asked of each candidate. During the interview process, the Chief should ensure that the candidate understands the qualifications and obligations of membership.

The Fire Chief should not be the sole interviewer. It is sometimes beneficial to develop an interview team comprised of the Fire Chief, and the Assistant Chief, as well as one or two members, to represent the department. One must remember that not only is the department interviewing the candidate, the applicant is interviewing the department to see if he or she fits with the culture of the organization and whether the responsibilities are something that he or she wants to engage. Thus a team allows for different perspectives of the candidate, and allows the candidate to understand all of the functions of the department.

The interview process, even in a volunteer/paid-on-call department, is critically important. The individual selected for membership is not only an individual that one may rely on in an emergency, but is also a representative of the organization. Thus, the selection team needs to spend time questioning the individual as to his or her reasons why he or she wants to become a member; skills and qualifications the individual brings to the department; current and past work history to identify any trends or problems with full-time employment; and finally a discussion of the job description, employment obligations and responsibilities that are associated with membership. The interview questions should include:

- Why is the applicant interested in joining the department?
- Allow the individual to describe his/her past and current work experiences. What were the positions held? Why did he/she leave employment? Answers to these questions could lend some insight into employment stability and commitment to responsibilities.
- Before giving any descriptions, ask what he/she believes the duties and responsibilities of a firefighter and/or EMT are.
- The job description does not ask if the individual has a valid driver's license and a good driving record. While the application is being updated, this may be included in the interview questions.
- It is a good idea for the time commitments to be spelled out in a brochure or one page sheet, and for the selection team to verbally communicate them during the interview.

All too often, the interview process in a volunteer/paid-on-call organization consists of the Fire Chief/interview team doing all of the talking, rather than the applicant talking about themselves and the skills that he/she brings to the table. The Fire Chief and

interview team should allow the candidate to do much of the talking, so that the team can assess the individual's skills and qualifications and see if there is a 'fit' with the culture of the department.

In most situations, by the end of the interview session, it is evident that the individual is or is not qualified for membership and the team can begin discussion of the next steps. However, one should take the time to evaluate the candidate and complete a few reference calls prior to making an offer. This allows the candidate time to think about the opportunity and the interview team a chance to discuss the candidate to ensure all team members are comfortable with the membership decision.

In the event the candidate is not qualified for membership, the department should ensure that the individual is notified, either by phone or by letter. The candidate is still a member of the community and should leave the experience feeling positive.

Upon acceptance of the individual for probationary membership, the department should give the candidate the paperwork to complete for the criminal background check and physical. Candidates not selected should be given either verbal or written notification. The date of notification should be noted on the application materials.

The department should establish, in accordance with Federal and Idaho State Law, record retention policies for maintaining all documentation pertaining to the membership of an individual. Federal law dictates that the department retains recruitment documents for a period of three (3) years. These files can be maintained by position and should be put on a regular purge cycle. The application and authorization forms for an individual hired should be maintained in the individual's personnel file.

The application and interview process is a two-way street. The professionalism of the process should reflect the type of respect and professionalism expected by the department. Further, applicants are in the interview process not only to find a position, but also to interview the organization to ensure it meets with his/her own job aspirations

and work values. Thus, the more professional the process, the greater the opportunity to find a match that meets both the individual's and the organization's needs.

## **Recommendation – Future Hiring Process**

The department should develop a formal interview process that includes the development of a set of standard questions developed for the position. A team of individuals (firefighters should be rotated so that all interested members have an opportunity to participate) should assist the Fire Chief in the selection of potential members to the department.

Develop a record retention policy for all materials obtained during the recruitment process.

Allow time to consider the candidate's qualifications and if the individual is not selected, inform the individual via letter.

## **Post Interview Activities**

**Reference Checking** –The Fire Chief indicated that although he does not have a form, he conducts a background check on all qualified applicants, and the organization does conduct criminal background checks through the Sun Valley Police Department. The Release and Waiver form should be tailored to ensure that the Sun Valley Police Department has the necessary information to conduct a background check.

Often volunteer/paid-on-call departments do not see the rationale for conducting reference checks. It was felt that only positive information would be received from the individual's references. Further, one would question who would intentionally give the name of a reference that would supply negative information?

It is true, in today's legalistic society, that one questions the need to conduct reference checks, since many organizations do not release information other than name, position, and dates of employment. Personal references are typically neutral to positive. However, the completion of reference checks by the hiring organization often "covers" the employer in the event the individual commits a crime while acting in the capacity of his or her employment. Thus, by performing the criminal background and reference check, the organization is doing its due diligence in ensuring that the candidate does not have any issues that would give concerns to the finalization of hiring.

Example: The Sun Valley Fire Department conducts a reference check on a candidate's former employer who only validates employment dates, position, and does not indicate any concerns. The individual becomes a member and, during the course of an emergency call, steals property. Investigating agencies are going to look to see if the organization did its due diligence in the hiring process to establish whether the member had a history of criminal activity. If it was discovered during the criminal investigation that the member had been terminated from an employer for theft, but the employer did not disclose that to the Fire Department, the Fire Department cannot be held liable for "knowingly" hiring a person with a criminal past. The Fire Department can demonstrate that it attempted to find out, through the criminal background check and reference notes, and that no indication of the individual's past was uncovered.

The consultants recommend that the organization develop a simple reference sheet to verify current and past employment, as well as to ask if there is anything that the reference believes would prohibit the individual from being a good firefighter/EMT. The reference sheets should include the responder's name and the notes of the conversation. Reference sheets should be kept in a confidential section of the personnel file.

**Medical Examination / Drug Test** – Once an employee has been given an offer of membership, the department is able to conduct a medical examination and drug test. The department does not conduct a drug test or physical examination on any final candidates.

The department should work with a physician or occupational health center and develop a physical agility test that firefighter personnel must be able to complete in order to become members. This information is more critical than someone's height and weight. In addition, the department should get baseline health data – i.e., pulmonary function and hearing -- in order to mitigate future worker's compensation claims.

Because of the cost of physicals and the protections afforded under the American with Disabilities Act, collecting medical data just for the sake of having it no longer makes sense. All medical examinations should be job specific and relate to the overall health of the individual to perform the job functions.

Note: Medical examinations and drug screenings must be conducted after the applicant has been offered employment. Any type of offer communications should be contingent upon successful completion of the medical exam and drug test.

**Pulmonary Function Test** – OSHA requires that any individual who uses a self-contained breathing apparatus (mask) have an annual pulmonary function test to ensure safety. The test must be administered by a licensed physician who is familiar with the fire suppression tasks and working environment. The physician will provide the department with a certificate of compliance to the OSHA regulation and keeps the medical record in his/her position. Noncompliance to this OSHA regulation can result in fines of up to \$70,000. These records do not exist in the department.

This issue should be addressed immediately to come into compliance with the OSHA regulation for any member who might be required to wear self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

**Applicant orientation** – There are a few volunteer departments which allow membership applicants the chance to sit in the firehouse and go on calls (not able to participate) in order to ensure that the applicant is serious about membership and the time commitment.

In addition, some offer an orientation night, where the prospective member and his or her family can come down to the firehouse and learn about the position, training, and time commitment. These are beneficial activities in that often a prospective member has the enthusiasm, but does not realize the extent of the training and time commitment. The extra effort, up front, can save dollars in wasted training and expense.

### **Recommendation – Post Interview Activities**

Conduct reference checks on current and past employers (within the past five years) and maintain information in the individual's personnel file.

Reference checks completed on individuals who are not selected should be retained with the individual's recruitment materials for the time designated in the record retention policy.

The application and criminal background authorization sheet should contain language authorizing reference checking of employers and other persons.

Develop a medical examination to include gathering of baseline medical information – pulmonary function and hearing – and a physical agility test to determine if the individual is capable of performing the functions of the position. The job description should include the physical activities of the job and match the physical. The department should complete annual pulmonary function testing, and the records should be kept in a separate medical file.

The department should implement a new member orientation event where members can either sit in the firehouse and ride along on incidents and/or conduct a family night where family learn of the job responsibilities and time commitments.

## **New Member Orientation**

The new member orientation process is probably the most important function a paid-on-call organization can perform. It is the socialization and job responsibilities that entice an individual to volunteer for the position, not money; thus, make sure the new member feels welcome and understands the organizational structure and practices. This is critically important to the tenure of the individuals.

The Sun Valley Fire Department does not conduct any formal orientation program for new members. There is a checklist of items that the Fire Chief or Assistant Chief go over with the applicant.

The checklist indicates that the employee's I9 form (Immigration and Control) and beneficiary card are to be completed after 30 days of employment. It is necessary that these forms are filled out on the first day of employment. Although there are no immigration police, all I-9 forms must be completed within 3 days of employment and filed in a separate file – not in the individual's personnel file.

There was a feeling by the consultant that the paid-on-call members of the department are not treated as City employees. This was not done in a malicious manner, rather just not thought of. All new paid-on-call members should attend the City's new employee orientation program and complete all of the necessary new hire paperwork, and learn about the City of Sun Valley. Because these employees have limited benefits, they may not be required to stay as long as those employees who get benefits, but treating them as employees of the City is very important.

Other items that may be included on the orientation checklist:

- Receipt of the City's employee manual
- Uniform and dress requirements
- Payroll procedures

- Report writing, documentation, etc.
- Patient confidentiality – HIPPA
- Weapons policy can probably be deleted
- Responding to an emergency – use of lights, sirens, obey traffic laws, etc.

## **Recommendations – New Member Orientation**

The new member should have the opportunity to complete all necessary paperwork for membership at the orientation meeting:

- Completion of Federal/State withholding forms, Employment Eligibility - I-9 form, etc.
- Completion of member information sheets that collect name, address, phone number(s), and family information. Maintain in personnel file.
- There should be a sign-off for the Employee Manual and Standard Operating Guidelines acknowledging receipt and requirement to read and understand.
- The department may wish to consider revising the member orientation checklist so that the member has a document which they can physically take with them.

Once the formal orientation program is completed, the new member should continue to be assigned to an individual to serve as a mentor. The consultants do not feel that the organization needs to adopt a formal mentor program at this time, but should assign the new member a "buddy" that he or she can ask questions, be shown the ropes, and can assist in gaining an understanding of the "informal" organization.

In essence, the more a new member understands the organization and feels a part of it, the more likely that he or she will have the "commitment to serve" and become a valuable part of the department.

## **Probationary Period**

The department does not have a written, established probationary period for new members to the department, or for members who have been promoted. Although the City's handbook does not reference a probationary period, it would be beneficial for the City as well as the department to adopt such a practice. The City is an at-will employer

and therefore, has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any legal reason. The setting of a probationary period, sometimes called "orientation period" allows closer scrutiny of the employee during this time period and creates a less liable situation for removal. The culmination of the probationary period should conclude with a formal performance evaluation process documenting the individual's performance.

## **Retention of paid-on-call Members & Turnover**

The primary reason that paid-on-call members join a fire department is the desire of the individual to meet personal needs, while serving their community. The primary reason members remain active is that those needs are being met. The primary reason members leave fall into two categories:

1. Problems in one's own life
2. Dissatisfaction relating to the fire department, which usually relates to the top leadership

Jack Snook and Dan Olsen noted in their book, Recruiting, Training, and Maintaining Volunteer Firefighters, that four critical characteristics are essential to retaining members.

- The program must meet individual needs
- The program must provide its membership with reward and recognition
- The program must provide adequate supervision and leadership
- The program must challenge members

Contrary to popular belief, the departments that experience the greatest longevity are those that require significant involvement of their members. Many departments that utilize paid-on-call members find that strong but fair discipline helps rather than hurts retention. Military-style structure of command and leadership may mean the difference between life and death on the fire ground, but participatory management is the leadership style most successful off the fire ground.

Strong but fair standards allow paid-on-call members to consider themselves professionals. The principle reason members stay with an organization is their desire to become members of a department with a strong reputation and positive image. The

leadership style of the Fire Chief is one of the most important factors in the retention, participation, and productivity of its members.

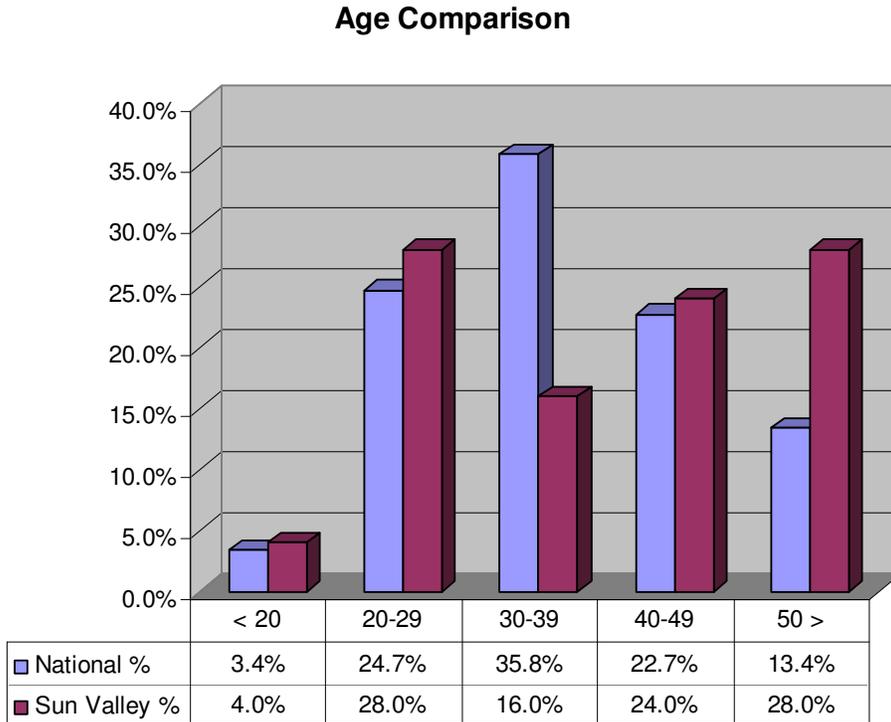
The highest turnover in paid-on-call members nationally occurs within the first year, while an additional 38.6 percent turnover occurs within the first five (5) years.

**Table 5: Years of Service with Sun Valley**

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b># of Members</b>
Probationary	7
2 Years	1
3 Years	2
4 Years	2
5 Years	2
6 Years	1
8 Years	2
10 Years	1
12 Years	3
17 Years	1
24 Years	1
28 Years	1
30 Years	1

If Sun Valley were to align with the national standards, 56% of the department's personnel are within the first five years of employment. Thus, it is a critical time in the department to ensure that the majority of these individuals continue serving the Sun Valley Fire Department.

**Figure 9: National Trend vs. Sun Valley Age Range**



The national average for paid-on-call is 36 years of age, whereas Sun Valley’s is 30-39 years, well within the average. The Sun Valley Fire Department, as illustrated in the above chart, is similar to the national average. However, in the critical volunteer age 20-40, Sun Valley is below the national average, and 52% of its current members are in the age category 40 and above.

Members in the age category of 30 – 39 are usually very active and have experience in fire/EMS emergencies. Sun Valley has a few individuals in this age category and this can be viewed as very positive. However, 32% of its membership is below the age of 30 and this could be troublesome, as this age group has a greater propensity to leave the organization due to family and other job commitments.

Unfortunately the Fire Department does not conduct an exit interview nor track the number of members that have left the department. By soliciting exit information and tracking terminations, the department can gain valuable information to assist in future retention efforts.

The department can create a simple 1-page form that asks the reason for leaving, and in addition, specific questions about supervision, management of the department, equipment, apparatus, training, etc. If the exit interview can be conducted personally, then the interviewer can solicit specific examples of the paid-on-call's positive comments, as well as areas of concern. In the event the interview cannot be face-to-face, then mail the exit questionnaire to the home and include a self-addressed envelope. Some organizations are now creating the exit interview form to be completed on-line. There appears to be greater success in gathering the information due to the ease of completion and anonymity of the responder.

Many organizations conduct exit interviews, but once completed do not do anything with the information. The consultant recommends reading each one, and if appropriate, taking immediate action. Then, on a periodic basis (annually) review and summarize all of the comments for the department administration to review and take whatever action is appropriate.

## **Recommendation – Retention**

The consultants offer these recommendations to the department's paid-on-call retention program and are also beneficial to the full-time staff:

- Recognition plays a major role in satisfaction and retention of firefighters. Most paid-on-call will never mention the desire for recognition. It is almost always a positive when given and usually a negative when withheld.
- The Fire Chief should show interest in the paid-on-call members by stopping by during training sessions. Often a Fire Chief feels that if he/she provides good equipment and apparatus, the members will be appreciative and their job is done. Although the members do appreciate good equipment, they appreciate the simple interest and concern for their community service that is shown when the Fire Chief stops by.
- Feelings of frustration and misunderstanding for not being appreciated are often found on both sides. The consultants found this feeling of frustration common in fire departments studied, and to some extent by the paid-on-call members. All departments, including Sun Valley, need to have programs where there is a flow

- of communication and appreciation of efforts to both the membership and administration.
- Incorporate pictures of the member and his/her family in department newsletters or local news media.
  - The Fire Chief should send a department thank you note for member's accomplishments, and birthday and/or anniversary card to the member's home address.
  - Continue to ensure that members feel they are part of the decision-making process. Use committees for input into the operations of the department, making sure to communicate that their input is appreciated and that their input has been utilized. When decisions must be made that are contrary to the members' input, be sure the reasons for that decision are publicly stated.
  - Develop a simple membership plaque that recognizes years of service, i.e. 5, 10, and 15 years of service, with the City and department's insignia and the individual's name and years of service engraved on it. These awards should be given at an appreciation dinner for the members and their families or at a department meeting. This should be the format for recognition for both career and paid-on-call members.
  - Recognize committee members for their successes, i.e. apparatus committee members' names should appear on a simple engraved plate attached to the apparatus, etc.
  - Place a locked suggestion box in the station with a standard form allowing members to give input either anonymously or authored. Establish the ground rule that only constructive suggestions, either positive or negative, will be discussed at a member meeting. The boxes should be checked and emptied on a weekly basis.
  - Provide individual meetings, on an annual basis, asking each member what are the top three needs of the individual in order to continue to be a productive and valuable member. Then meet those needs in all practical manners.
  - Provide department surveys and have meetings to discuss the results of the survey along with recommendations for change. Take action on the survey results.

The Fire Chief should learn the skills and abilities of the paid-on-call members and continually look for ways in which their experience could benefit the department. Further, look for paid-on-call members who may bring unique skills to the department, such as marketing, publishing, writing, technology, etc. in addition to the skills of firefighting and EMS. Not every member needs to be a firefighter or EMT.

## **Performance Management**

Performance appraisals are among the most valuable and important tools available to a supervisor. Performance appraisals are seldom done in volunteer/paid-on-call organizations, however. Evaluations, or performance appraisals, are essential to improving paid-on-call performance and the paid-on-call organization. When handled effectively, these reviews can help close the gap between what paid-on-call members do and what administration needs them to do.

Paid-on-call members may view evaluations as a negative event, and they can be if not conducted properly. An effective evaluation program should focus on improving the paid-on-call and his or her contribution to the organization.

Presently, the Sun Valley Fire Department does not conduct formal evaluations of members. Rather, the Fire Chief indicated that within 30 to 60 days of a probationary firefighter's start date, the Fire Chief has an informal discussion with the individual regarding his/her performance. The Sun Valley Fire Department may wish to entertain the concept of an evaluation system that not only provides feedback on a member's operational performance, but one that also looks at the establishment of member goals and professional development.

As previously discussed, it is important to know each member's motivations for joining the department. If the organization understands the paid-on-call's motivations for being a member, and it helps ensure that those motivations are met, the paid-on-call will be less likely to leave the department. Members should be asked about their motivations before joining to ensure that they have the right motivation. Officers should occasionally check up on members to make sure that the desires and motivations for being a member are being fulfilled. Thus, a member performance evaluation process could be a time when the officer and the member sit and discuss the individual's needs in order to keep him/her

motivated. If conducted correctly, well-designed performance instruments can energize officers and members and help each see their responsibilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

An evaluation process should also be developed for new members and completed at least once during his or her probationary period, and upon completion of the probationary period. The focus of this evaluation should be on the operational aspects of firefighting to ensure that the individual is properly completing all assigned tasks. Further, there should be an emphasis on attendance at drills during the probationary period to ensure the new member understands all roles and responsibilities, especially at the emergency scene.

### **Recommendation – Performance Management**

The Sun Valley Fire Department should establish a committee of officers and members to develop a simple performance evaluation instrument for all members.

The instrument should outline the basic performance expectations of every member and establish professional and/or organizational goals for the upcoming year.

The evaluation meeting should focus on the desires and needs of the member in order to ensure that the organization is meeting them. Thus the member understands that not only is he/she beneficial to the organization but that the department is concerned about his/her individual needs.

Establish a performance evaluation process for new members during and upon completion of their probation period.

### **Promotion**

The promotional process at the Sun Valley Fire Department is an appointment by the Fire Chief. At this time, individuals do not compete in any type of assessment center, nor does the department maintain an eligibility list. Rather, the Fire Chief indicated that there

is an informal promotional process in which a member must work through all the ranks and demonstrate incident command and fire ground skills. The Captains meet with the Fire Chief to determine who is a viable candidate, and then approach the person to see if he/she is interested in the position. Thus, there are no written promotional criteria, nor do members of the department have the opportunity to express interest in moving up the ranks, at either the time of a vacancy, or during an evaluation process.

## **Future Promotional Process**

The Sun Valley Fire Department should develop a structured promotional process. A committee should be formed that begins to evaluate the promotional process for all officer-level positions.

The department should post the available position, the skills and qualifications necessary, the promotional process, and the application process. The posting should be visible in the station or posted in the locations that the department typically utilizes for communication purposes.

Candidates should be expected to submit a "resume" that addresses the qualifications of the position. Items such as: reason for interest, time and responsibilities within the department, additional training, etc. should be included.

The department should develop comprehensive job descriptions that delineate the skills and qualifications necessary for promotion. The job description, as previously mentioned, should be tied to the performance evaluation and assist in identifying the member's career goals. The focus on performance evaluations should not only be operational; rather, it should also address the professional development of the member for future department positions.

A written exam should be developed that is pertinent to the particular position. At the lieutenant and captain level, the emphasis is on fire/EMS operations and crew supervision

As the level of responsibility increases, however, so should the questioning of management and administrative functions.

The oral interview should focus on management and operational skills. Using the job description, and the traits the department is looking for in the position, a list of questions that are specific to these skills should be developed.

A scoring sheet should be developed that includes the written test results, oral interview and other 'measurable' attributes of the candidate.

Candidates that are not selected should be notified within a reasonable time period and, if requested, should be given ways in which the individual can improve for the next promotional process.

Because the City of Sun Valley is subject to all federal claims of discrimination, the recruitment and promotional process needs to be legally defensible. A paid-on-call member is an employee and has all of the federal discrimination remedies available to him/her. Further, the socialization that is inherent in a volunteer department can lend one to make decisions based on "friendship" rather than qualifications. Thus, implementing a measurable process is a benefit not only to the organization, but also to individual members.

## **Recommendations – Promotions**

Develop promotional processes that are specific to the position. They should evaluate operations as well as supervisory and administrative skills.

Develop performance evaluation processes that have an emphasis on member career goals, not only for member benefit, but also for succession planning within the organization.

Develop a policy regarding the promotional process that includes the retention of promotional materials.

## **Compensation**

In 2005, the Fire Chief submitted a proposal to the City Administrator to increase the number of paid-on-call members in the department and increase the wages. The plan was approved and implemented. Compensation in 2007 is as follows:

New Recruit	\$200 - \$400 – received after completion of Essentials Class
Firefighter	\$15.00/hour for attendance at emergency calls and at training/drills
Engineer	\$1.00 extra/hour
Medic	\$1.00 extra/hour
Captain	\$20.00/hour

There is standby pay available and the rate is variable depending on the client the City has a contract with. Thus, standby compensation can range from \$25 - \$75/day. Most standby duties are in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management. The City has a contractual agreement and through that agreement, compensation is determined.

Members of the Sun Valley Fire Department are paid on a monthly basis. The department submits a time sheet to the City, which in turn calculates and distributes payroll checks. The department does not have a methodology where employees sign off on any type of form to acknowledge the accuracy of the time. Payroll is calculated from the call sheets. In the event of a discrepancy, or in the worst case scenario – an individual making fraudulent claims – there is no record that the department can turn to in which the employee authorizes and verifies his or her hours. The call information should be completed on a weekly basis. To ensure that all members receive credit, a monthly posting of incidents which the member initials might ensure that minimal errors occur in recording of time. Thus the consultant would recommend developing some sort of

employee payroll authorization form that is completed on a monthly basis (tied to monthly payroll).

### **Pay Cycle**

The Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief (temporarily part-time) are the only career employees within the department. Both are considered to be exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act, and therefore are not eligible for overtime compensation.

The pay cycle for the two full-time employees is a 40-hour week, and the City pays on a bi-weekly basis, for 26 pay periods in a calendar year. The paid-on-call members do not have an established pay cycle, other than the monthly pay date. The City must develop a pay cycle for all paid-on-call members and track compensation in the event overtime is accumulated. Because the Fire Department is part of a municipal government, it has the option of using the 7k exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Thus, it can develop a schedule from 7-28 days.

**Table 6: FLSA 7k Exemption Schedule**

<b>Days in a Cycle</b>	<b>Hours Allowed</b>
28	212
27	204
26	197
25	189
24	182
23	174
22	167
21	159
20	151
19	144
18	136
17	129
16	121
15	114
14	106
13	98
12	91
11	83

<b>Days in a Cycle</b>	<b>Hours Allowed</b>
10	76
9	68
8	61
7	53

It is recommended that the City develop a 28-day cycle for all paid-on-call members. Thus, if during the established 28-day period, a member works more than 212 hours, overtime must be paid. The probability that a paid-on-call member will work this many hours is highly unlikely, however, and by establishing the pay cycle, and tracking hours, the City is in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Another reason for establishing a 28-day cycle is due to the scheduling of City paid-on-call members to work for the Bureau of Land Management. There could be situations in which the Bureau "hires" City firefighters to work; if in addition the same individual works hours for the City, this could place the individual in an overtime situation. Presently, if this were to occur, the City does not pay at overtime hours.

Without a defined pay cycle for the paid-on-call personnel, the fall-back would be payment of overtime for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a defined pay period. It is probable that a firefighter could work more than 40 hours in combination of work with the City and work with the Bureau. The City is liable for payment of overtime for all hours worked over 40, regardless of whether the work is for the City or for the Bureau. The Fair Labor Standards Act looks at who is the employer, not where the compensation is coming from. In this case, because the City is the employer, the City pays the member, the City bills the Bureau, and the Bureau pays the City, it will be regarded as hours worked for the City.

The simplest solution is to create a 28-day pay cycle for all paid-on-call members as the probability that the combination of hours within this cycle will not exceed 212 hours. However, on that rare occasion when hours worked do exceed 212 hours, the City will be responsible for paying the individual at time and one-half for all hours worked over 212.

In the event a paid-on-call were to work beyond the 212 hours, the question would be at what pay level the employee is compensated since, a paid-on-call's pay is divided among a City rate and a rate paid by the Bureau. The department would first have to calculate the total rate of pay per category, then take the total compensation calculated and divide by the total number of hours to give a "blended" rate to be used – at time and one-half – for the overtime calculation. Example: An employee on a 28-day cycle is allowed to work 212 hours, but works a total of 236 hours. The overtime calculation would be as follows:

City rate: 24 hours @ \$11.00/hour = \$264  
Bureau rate: 188 hours @ \$16.50/hour = \$3,102  
Total regular compensation: \$3,366  
Worked 24 hours beyond 212 – Overtime Calculation  
 $\$3,366 / 236 \text{ total hours} = \$14.26 * 1.5 = \$21.39$   
Overtime rate  $\$21.39 * 24 \text{ overtime hours} = \$ 513.45$

Total compensation  $\$3,366 \text{ regular hours} + \$513.45 \text{ OT} = \$3,879.45 \text{ gross wages}$

Again, the likelihood that this will occur is rare, however, the City should establish a pay cycle and track hours to ensure that it is compensating individuals correctly.

### **Other Personnel Working in the Fire Department**

The City currently has two additional personnel that work for the City in capacities other than firefighters on a regular basis, and who are trained to respond to emergency situations. One is the City's Building Official, the other is a part-time secretary. An individual who is a paid employee of a public agency cannot also be an unpaid volunteer for the same agency while performing the same type of services that he is employed to perform. In each of these situations, the individuals are volunteering in the same organization but does not perform the same type of work, thus, the current practice is legal as defined by the Department of Labor.

The question becomes as to whether the City is obligated to pay overtime compensation if the individual's regular wages plus "volunteer" wages exceed 40 hours in the defined work week. One must first look to the FLSA definition of a volunteer and the definition of a nominal fee:

"Under the FLSA, public employers are obligated to pay employees at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation. The FLSA, however, exempts public employers from paying minimum wage and overtime to individuals who qualify as 'volunteers' ... An individual who performs services for a public agency qualifies as a volunteer, if:

- The individual receives no compensation or is paid expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee to perform the services for which the individual volunteered; and
- Such services are not the same type of service which the individual is employed to perform for the same public agency" (*Managing Volunteer Firefighters for FLSA Compliance*).

Public employers can pay a *nominal fee* to volunteers. However, the fee must not be a substitute for wages and must not be tied to productivity. Thus, if these two individuals are paid an hourly wage for the time spent responding to an emergency, the wage is tied to productivity and is not considered a nominal fee under FLSA. Thus, the individual would not be considered to be a volunteer, and the City would not be exempt from paying overtime for all hours worked in their regular jobs plus emergency response.

The City can establish two rates of pay – one for their regular work and one for emergencies. For the Building Official, who is an exempt employee in his regular duties, the rate should be a combination of a base rate, plus time and one-half, since all emergency responses outside of regular work hours would be considered time worked over 40 hours. Thus a base rate of \$13.00, plus \$6.50 overtime, for a rate of \$19.50 per hour for all responses to emergencies outside of working hours would satisfy the DOL. A word of caution; if the Building Official works more hours as a firefighter than as a

building official, the exempt status as a building official could be compromised. This does not appear to be the case, but the City must ensure that the majority of this individual's hours are as a building official, not a firefighter.

For the secretarial position, the City should establish an emergency base rate and would end up blending the rates (as described in the paid-on-call section) to determine the overtime rate if the hours worked as a secretary plus a firefighter were greater than 40 hours in a defined work week.

#### Annual Increases

The paid-on-call schedule should be adjusted on an annual basis. It is advisable that, on a periodic basis, the Fire Chief/designee contact surrounding paid-on-call departments to inquire about current pay practices and make adjustments to the department's paid-on-call rates. It would be advantageous to tie increases to some monetary indicator, such as CPI, as well as surrounding market comparables.

### **Recommendations – Payroll & Compensation**

The department should establish a written policy defining the different job classifications, the pay cycle, what constitutes hours worked, compensatory time procedures, pay periods, etc. This can be included in either the department's SOP manual or incorporated into the City employee handbook.

A base rate should be determined for the City's two personnel who also function within the Fire Department. The rate for the exempt employee needs to include an overtime element; the overtime calculation for the non-exempt individual should follow FLSA guidelines and be a blended rate.

A policy should be developed for the payroll procedure as well as for the member's responsibility to ensure his/her name and correct hours are accounted for.

The department should conduct periodic reviews of surrounding departments' pay practices and adjust paid-on-call compensation accordingly.

Future salary increases, in addition to the external market, should be tied to an economic indicator such as the Consumer Price Index.

## **Employee Handbook**

While there are pros and cons to having an employee handbook, most organizations find that, when properly written and administered, the pros outweigh the cons. Traditionally, an employee handbook is a document that contains the policies of the organization. A Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) manual contains procedures for the operations of apparatus, equipment, and daily operations.

The employee handbook should outline all of the guiding principles and policies of the organization and should contain policies for all members and full-time employees. The following is a critique of the employee handbook:

Overall the handbook is very readable and the table of contents makes items easy to find. Some of the policy groupings within sections does not make sense and could be reordered. For example, City vehicles policy is in the middle of what appears to be policies relating to work schedules and hours of work; the resignation/dismissal policy is in the middle of all hiring policies. The policies are fine, just their location could use some evaluation.

Acknowledge of Receipt – might be advantageous to add to this an acknowledge of the understanding that it is an employment-at-will relationship

3.7 Transfers – may want to include language regarding how long one must be in the current position before allowing a transfer to a different position/department.

3.8 Resignations/Dismissals – typically found at the end of the manual if the manual follows a logical employment order. Policy does not give a preference for some sort of advanced notice of resignation – i.e., two weeks.

3.9 Hours of Work – would be a good place to add hours of work for emergency personnel, including the paid-on-call employees.

3.13 City Vehicles – policy does not specify if City-owned take home vehicles can be used for personal business.

4.2 Full-Time and Part-Time Status – the definition of paid-on-call personnel should be included. There is no written documentation either in the City Handbook or in the department that outlines the policies that relate to this group. Either incorporate them into this handbook, or develop a separate manual.

4.6 Salary Plan - #3 Employee Changes in Status –

ii. Involuntary demotions not due to discipline are not included in the policy. The salary should be red-circled and the employee eligible for additional increases when the salary schedule realigns with the frozen salary.

v. Maximum of schedule – first, references to specific salary increases are typically not found in handbooks. Rather it should read something to the effect that the individual will be eligible for a salary increase. In a step system, it is unusual to continue to give a merit increase to individuals at the maximum of the schedule. Rather, the employee is typically limited to any increases to the step schedule; or, the amount of the merit increase is given to the employee in a lump sum bonus.

4.8 Overtime – the policy contains a maximum accrual of compensatory time. However, it should also include a date by which compensatory time must be used. The policy should also state the work cycle for paid-on-call personnel.

Exempt Overtime – if the City allows for flexible time for exempt-level employees, the extent of the flexible schedule should be spelled out. Exempt employees, in some organizations, are allowed to take minimal amounts of time off without using vacation and/or sick time to compensate for hours worked beyond 40. If this is the practice in Sun Valley, flexible scheduling should be articulated in a policy.

5.8 Worker's Compensation Insurance – policy should include the requirement for an employee to report the work related illness/injury; that the incident will be investigated; as well as any light duty provisions. Further, it is the employee's responsibility to keep the City notified during the leave; the requirement for a doctor's release in order to return to active duty; and consequences for making fraudulent claims. If the City conducts drug testing, it is advisable that the City obtain a drug test for any worker's compensation injuries to ascertain if the employee was in any way impaired to do the job.

5.11 A. Professional Development and Education – the policy should also contain language that if the employee leaves employment with the City within a predetermined period, a pro-rated portion of the tuition reimbursement is owed back to the City. This prevents employees leaving immediately upon completion of the course/degree.

5.11 B. Military Leave – typically an organization pays the difference between the employee's City salary and the military salary rather than keeping the employee in a paid status during the leave.

5.11 C. Bereavement Leave – policy should be extended to brother-in-law and sister-in-law.

5.11 D. Court Appearance – policy should add language that requires the individual to report back to work if let out early, or not called to serve on a particular day.

5.11 E. Leave of Absence Without Pay – the benefits accruals section of this policy states that benefits are not accrued during a non-paid leave of absence. Such language should

also be included in the medical leave and FMLA when the leave goes into an unpaid status.

7.5 Harassment Policy – many harassment policies also include harassment for any of the Title VII protections – age, race, national origin, etc. Further new policies are including language indicating that individuals who make false claims of harassment will be disciplined, up to and including termination.

7.9 Dress and Personal Grooming – include in the policy the City’s position on unusually colored hair, body piercings, and the need to hide any tattoos. The policy should also state that the City Administrator has the right to determine what is and what is not appropriate dress.

8.3 Discipline Applicability – the consultant questions the exemption of seasonal, temporary, paid-on-call firefighters or volunteers from the discipline policy. All should be subject to appropriate discipline if performance is not meeting the City’s expectations.

8.7 Informal Review – the consultant questions why part-time and paid-on-call personnel are not eligible for the discipline review.

Appendix A Medical Insurance Plan – It appears that this information has not been updated since November 2004. The consultant would recommend that this appendix be removed from a handbook since providers, plan design, and contributions are subject to annual change. Rather, the handbook should reference an information sheet that is separate from the manual and can be easily updated.

Appendix C Life Insurance Program – should be eliminated from the handbook. Specific benefit information should be given on a supplement information sheet rather than described in the employee handbook.

Cell Phone Policy – again, references to specific providers should be eliminated. The policy should also state the City’s preference for employees talking while driving City vehicles. There have been a number of cases where the organization is brought into a lawsuit if the employee is involved in an accident while on the cell phone.

Electronic Communication Systems Usage Policy – E. 9 indicates that electronic communications are subject to records retention ordinance. The policy should also indicate that electronic communications are subject to open records laws.

**Table 7: Missing Policies**

Missing policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Probationary or orientation period</li> <li>▪ Ethics / Code of Conduct</li> <li>▪ Bulletin boards; use of boards and who is allowed to place materials on</li> <li>▪ Definition of an employee – paid-on-call member</li> <li>▪ Personal mail / phone calls</li> <li>▪ No solicitation &amp; distribution rules during work hours</li> <li>▪ Medical records – where and access</li> <li>▪ Personnel files – where located, who has access, how an employee can view the file</li> <li>▪ Telephone usage / courtesy</li> <li>▪ Payroll policies/ paid-on-call - FLSA cycle</li> <li>▪ Paid-on-call requirements of employment – attendance at training, staffing shifts, etc.</li> <li>▪ Employee Assistance Program (if appropriate)</li> <li>▪ Cell phone policy – use of personal cell phones while working</li> </ul>
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If not already completed, many organizations are now placing the employee handbook on the organization’s intranet so that it is easier to update, and all employee have access.

## **Standard Operating Procedures Manual**

The Fire Chief provided the consultants with a copy of the department's Standard Operating Procedures manual. As previously stated, a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual contains procedures for the operations of apparatus, equipment, and daily operations.

The operational policies should be placed in an operating guidelines manual and grouped according to topic. All of the policies should be dated as to the last revision. Further, it would be helpful if the manual contained a table of contents for ease of finding the appropriate policy.

Members should be required to sign off acknowledging receipt and responsibility to understand. The acknowledgement should be placed in the employee's personnel file.

In addition to the procedures in the current manual, the following are other procedure recommendations:

- Organizational Goals
  - Meetings
  - Rules to conduct business
- Administrative Guidelines
  - Budgeting
  - Purchasing
  - Use of apparatus – private and public
  - Pre-incident planning
  - Code policies
  - Public education
  - Safety
  - Health and accident
  - Funerals
- Operational Guidelines
  - Alarm
  - Dispatch
  - Staging
  - Protective Clothing
  - Respiratory protection program
  - Fire ground safety
  - Incident command system

- Communications/Radio guidelines
- Mutual aid
- Engine/Tanker/Truck operations
- Strategic considerations
  - Sizeup
  - Rescue
  - Confine
  - Exposures
  - Salvage
- Tactical considerations
- Nozzles, hoses, fire streams
- Ventilation
- Ladder operations
- Rescue
- Apparatus placement
- Fire control – interior, exterior
- Small tools
- Incident operations
  - Residential
  - Multi-family
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Vehicle and mobile equipment
  - Mutual aid
  - Ski rescues
- Fire Investigations
  - Cause and origin
  - Arson
  - Referral of other crimes
- Medical/Special Rescue Services
  - Response
  - Small incident
  - Mass casualty
- Inspections
- Training
  - Required training obligations
- Member requirements
  - Number of incidents required to attend
  - Percentage of training events required to attend
  - Required certifications

This is only a partial list of topics which should be included in an SOP manual. Once the topics are identified, then the procedures specific to Sun Valley should be identified and documented. The consultants suggest that the department form a committee to review all current SOP's and develop a comprehensive manual.

## **Policy/SOG Distribution**

As policies and SOP's are developed and approved, it is critical that for effective implementation policies should be distributed and communicated to all members. Officers should be held responsible for ensuring that training for and/or communication of the new policy occurs with all members, and that each member signs off acknowledging receipt of the policy.

It is always a question as to how manuals should be distributed. Some feel that the manual should be a binder and as new policies are developed, deleted, or revised, members are responsible for making the changes in their respective books. Others feel that new manuals should be distributed after each major revision. Both have pros and cons – expense versus the reality that members do not update the binder.

The consultants suggest that after the Employee Handbook and SOP Manual are revised, all active members receive a hard copy of the manual. If possible, the manuals should be placed on the stations' intranet system for membership access.

### **Recommendations – Policy Manual/SOP**

The SOP manual should be reviewed and all operational procedures documented and placed within the manual. Place a copy of the City's employee manual and the department SOP manual on the computer system for ease of administration.

All members should sign a receipt of the SOP. The signed receipt should be maintained in the member's personnel file.

New members should receive training on the contents of the employee manual and SOG.

## **Personnel Records**

Personnel records have three major functions in an organization. They provide a memory or recall to administration and members, they offer documentation of events for use in resolving questions or human resource problems, and they provide data for research, planning, problem solving, and decision-making.

While federal, state, and local laws require that certain employee information be maintained, certain basic records should be retained to avoid errors of memory and to provide information for making management and human resource decisions.

### **What Should Be In Personnel Files**

The contents of human resource files vary by organization, but most human resource professionals accept some common practices. The following provides a checklist of items that may be included in personnel files, and where to keep them. The City's employee manual specifies the contents of personnel files; this list either reinforces the City's policy or adds to it.

#### Main Employee File

- Offer/promotion/transfer letter(s)
- Application form
- Acknowledgement of SOP/employee manual
- Acknowledgement of new policies
- Orientation checklists
- Termination checklist
- Performance appraisals
- Official performance documentation (memos, letters, discipline, recognition, etc.)
- Payroll documentation (change of address, transfer)
- Training requests (with approval and/or denial documentation)
- Copies of certifications, licenses, transcripts, etc.
- Reference checks – in a confidential section

#### Separate Payroll File

- W-4 form
- Group benefit enrollment forms
- Retirement system calculations/benefits
- Insurance claim forms

- COBRA letter sent at time of employment and termination
- Automatic payroll deposit authorizations
- Miscellaneous deductions
- Payroll documentation (change of address, transfer documentation, leave of absences, etc.)

Separate Medical File

- Initial physical documentation
- Worker’s compensation information (doctor reports, letters, etc.)
- Ongoing drug and/or alcohol screening information

Subject Files Kept Separate

(Usually in one folder for all affected employees; information kept in chronological order or by quarter)

- Child support
- DSS requests (Medicaid, etc.)
- Exit interview forms
- Garnishments
- Immigration Control Form I-9
- Investigation notes or reports
- Litigation documents
- Reference checks – non-selected applicants
- Requests for employment/payroll verification
- Wage assignments
- Worker’s compensation claims

The personnel files should have limited access and be kept in a secure filing cabinet. Access to the general file should be restricted to the City Administrator, Department Head and immediate supervisor. Only the City Administrator should have access to the medical file. The Secretary/Clerk should have access to the payroll files.

**Records Retention**

There are always concerns over the length of time records are required to be maintained. The following outlines a few of the major labor laws and their record retention requirements for the department to follow:

*Fair Labor Standards Act:* Retention three (3) years

- a) For employees subject to minimum wage and overtime provisions:
  - Name, address, date of birth
  - Time of day and day of week on which employees’ work week begins
  - Regular hourly rate of pay

- Hours worked each workday and total hours worked each work week
- Total overtime compensation
- Total additions to, or deductions from, wages paid each pay period, along with a record of dates, amounts, and nature of additions and deductions
- Total wages paid each pay period
- Date of payment and the pay period covered by the payment
- Retroactive payment of wages
  - For executive, administrative, and professional employees:
- Basis on which wages are paid, in sufficient detail to permit calculation for each pay period of the employee's total remuneration for employment, including fringe benefits and prerequisites

*Immigration Reform and Control Act:* Three (3) years after date of hiring or one (1) year after date of termination, whichever is later.

- I-9 Employment Verification form and any attachments

*Age Discrimination in Employment Act:*

- a) Three (3) years
  - Payroll or other records, which contain: name, address, date of birth, occupation, rate of pay, and compensation earned each week.
- b) One (1) year from the date of the personnel action; except 90 days for application forms and pre-employment records of applicants for temporary jobs
  - Personnel records relating to the following: job application/resume or any other form of employment inquiry; promotion, demotion, transfer, selection for training, layoff, recall or discharge of any employee; job orders submitted by the employer to an employment agency or labor organization for recruitment of personnel; test papers completed by applicant; results of physical examination when considered in connection with a personnel action; advertisements or notices to public or employee relating to job openings, promotions, training programs or opportunities for overtime work.
- c) While plan or system is in effect, and at least one year (1) after termination
  - Employment benefit plans, seniority systems, merit systems

*Vocational Rehabilitation Act:* One (1) year

- For handicapped applicants and employees, records regarding complaints and actions taken and employment records

These are just a sample of the federal laws that govern record retention. Clearly, the department needs to identify and establish a record retention policy and ensure that at the appropriate time, records are removed and destroyed.

## Sun Valley Fire Stations

The Sun Valley Fire Department operates two facilities. The Headquarters station is located at 100 Arrowleaf Road. The second station is located at 81 Elkhorn Road and is part of the City Hall campus. Neither station has facilities for 24-hour housing although the initial design of the Elkhorn station had included this feature.

The Elkhorn station houses the offices of the Chief, Assistant Chief, and one City Building Official who is a member of the Fire Department. The building is masonry noncombustible construction, built in 1982. It is well maintained and in excellent condition. There are four apparatus bays with 12 x 12 foot apparatus bay doors. All of the apparatus bays require units to be backed in, inasmuch as the building is built into the side of a hill. The overall station is comprised of approximately 7,943 square feet:

- 2,109 square feet – office and support
- 2,444 square feet – apparatus floor
- 3,125 square feet – storage of which 2,375 square feet was originally designed as personnel living quarters but lacked adequate exiting to be utilized as such.

The remaining area is divided for various usage including entry, electrical, furnace, etc.

The station is fully ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Presently renovations are underway to provide a second washroom inasmuch as the current facility is shared. The building is very functional for the current and future service demands. Although the station was initially built with the intention of providing living quarters it would require renovation to add these features. In cases of power failure the building is equipped with an emergency generator. Entry to the building utilizes push button locks for security.

The Headquarters Station driving time map (Appendix A) illustrates (yellow line) a five-minute drive time under normal road conditions. This drive distance would be increased under adverse weather or heavy traffic conditions.

The City has indicated that they are about to seek an architect review of the building to add four to eight housing units for paid-on-call members at the station site. The Fire Chief indicated that he believed the City would build up to ten housing units. In either case the consultants support this endeavor and it will greatly improve response times, especially when the units are occupied.

Sun Valley already owns two housing units, each with two bedrooms. One is occupied by a Fire Department member and the other by a Police Department member. The City has funding for one more additional unit independent of the Elkhorn station additions.

The City Hall station was built in 1978 and houses two pieces of apparatus as well as an antique vehicle. The Fire Chief had requested replacement of this facility inasmuch as it basically is utilized solely for storage and apparatus response by a limited number of paid-on-call members. The entire building is 1,800 square feet with two apparatus bays, each with a 12 x 12 foot apparatus bay door. Apparatus must be backed into the facility.

City Hall station drive time map (Appendix B) illustrates (yellow line) a five -minute drive time under normal road conditions. The five-minute drive time was the maximum drive time goal of the fire administration and is not based on any NFPA standard.

### **Engine Emission Exhaust**

Both Sun Valley fire stations have an approved apparatus emission exhaust system. Current NFPA and OSHA codes require that exhaust emissions be removed from the environment. The system hooks directly to the exhaust pipe of the apparatus and pulls off upon exiting the station.

### **Recommendation – Emission Exhaust**

The removal of engine emissions is very necessary and should be incorporated into all future fire facilities within the City. Emphasis must be placed on hooking the system to

the apparatus inasmuch as during the site visit a number of the apparatus were not connected in the station.

### **Recommendation – Fire Stations**

The Headquarters Station (Elkhorn) is very adequate for existing and future service demands. If paid-on-call housing is to be considered, there is adequate property, and certainly having members living on premise will greatly improve response times. The consultants encourage this addition to the property at the Elkhorn station.

The City Hall station is inadequate for modern-day fire service needs and if consolidation is not implemented relocation of this facility is warranted. This facility is the closest to the Sun Valley Resort complex and this complex is of significant importance to the City. The consultants recommended relocation verses renovation of the existing facility inasmuch as the City Hall campus houses multiple facilities and responding paid-on-call members and exiting fire apparatus need to pass citizen's access to City Hall. The City Hall facility should not remain as a satellite facility regardless of whether Sun Valley chooses to build at a different location or they consolidate with Ketchum.

## Sun Valley Apparatus

Sun Valley and Ketchum have already realized the benefits of sharing apparatus. The cities jointly own an aerial tower that is housed in both fire stations on a predetermined rotation basis. The two departments also share a large motor home that serves as a command center, which is owned by the Ketchum/Sun Valley Volunteers Association, Inc. It too is rotated between the two Fire Departments, being housed opposite the aerial apparatus.

NFPA 1901 “Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus” sets the standard for new fire apparatus used in any aspect of fire protection. Although at one time there was discussion of a standard of life for apparatus, the efforts were abandoned because of the diversity of apparatus usage throughout the country. However, the NFPA standard does address the need to replace or renovate any apparatus that is 24 years old or greater.

Apparatus life expectancy varies greatly based upon usage, preventive maintenance, environmental factors, and the community’s ability to generate replacement funds. Another significant factor in equipment replacement is the rapidly changing technology, much of which is directly related to firefighter safety. Therefore, apparatus technology becomes a factor when considering replacement.

The following safety advancements have been made in fire apparatus within the past ten years:

- Mandatory enclosed cabs for all occupants
- Advanced automatic braking systems
- Noise reduction: (done to reduce the loss of hearing)
  - Engine noise
  - Sound proofing of entire cab – allowable decibel standard lowered
  - Sirens and air horns moved to the front of vehicles
  - Headset to reduce noise and allow an officer, driver, and crew to communicate
- Emergency lighting systems
  - Increase in brightness
  - Positioned to penetrate rear window of passenger vehicles

- Strobe lights that penetrate weather elements
- Reflective striping required – size and placement on all sides of the vehicle
- Seats have seat belts and shoulder harness unrestricted by SCBA (air masks)
- SCBA recess in the back of seat to prevent contact with the occupant in an accident
- Separate electrical circuits for all components; individual breakers – reduces fires
- Pump and throttle controls have electronic overrides to prevent over-pressure on hose lines
- Apparatus rollover
- Anti tilt suspension
- Stronger cab construction – reduces collapse in rollovers
- Air bags including side bags
- Cab seat belts that pull the occupant into the seat upon accident impact
- Independent suspension providing better handling
- Disc breaks for better breaking
- Heavier axles allowing greater weight capacity
- All tires, suspension, and brakes matched to vehicle weight usage
- Meets the Department of Transportation standards

Aerial Apparatus

- Load sensors on aerial ladder to prevent collapse
- Automatic leveling systems and interlocks
- Cab collision avoidance (ladder can't hit the side of the vehicle)

The following Sun Valley apparatus is housed at their Elkhorn station:

**Table 8: Sun Valley – Elkhorn Station**

ID#	Type	Make	Year	Pump GPM/Tank	Status	Owner
62	Engine	Boise Mobile	1996	1500/1000	In Service	SV
63	Tanker	Kenworth	1989	500/3000	In Service	SV
64	Wildland	Ford F-350	1995	300	In Service	SV
C1	Chief's Command	Chevy 4 WD	2003		In Service	SV
C2	Utility/Command	Ford F-250	1999		In Service	SV
	Air Trailer		2004*		In Service	SV
	Snowmobile	Polaris LX	1996		In Service	SV
	Gator	John Deer			In Service	SV
	Trailer		1999		As Needed	SV

\* Refurbished in 2004

SV = City of Sun Valley

K/SV = Joint Ketchum & Sun Valley (includes those owned by the Volunteer Association)

The following Sun Valley apparatus is housed in the two-bay fire station at City Hall in Sun Valley:

**Table 9: Sun Valley - City Hall Station**

ID#	Type	Make	Year	Pump GPM/Tank	Status	Owner
60	Engine	American La France	1981	1500/750	In Service	SV
SSE	Command	Motor home	1985		In Service	K/SV

The aerial and command vehicles are rotated between the cities. Therefore, the consultants will show the aerial and command vehicle located in the station in which they were located when the consultants conducted the apparatus inventory.

### Sun Valley Apparatus Replacement Schedule

The consultants will recommend that the following schedule be utilized in determining the life expectancy of apparatus for the Sun Valley Fire Department:

**Table 10: Apparatus Life Expectancy**

Apparatus Type	Recommended
Engines	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Aerials	23 years front line
Ambulances	7 years front line + 2 years reserve
Squads (not ambulance)	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Tankers	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Utility Vehicles	10 years front line + 3 to 5 years reserve
Vehicles (Car)*	6 to 7 years - no reserve

\* Dependent on mileage and condition

The table below indicates the replacement schedule currently used by the Sun Valley Fire Department compared to the consultant's recommendation on apparatus replacement.

**Table 11: Sun Valley / Consultants Replacement Schedule**

ID#	Type	Year	Sun Valley Replacement Schedule	Consultants Replacement Schedule	Years Over
60	Engine	1981	2007	2004	3
62	Engine	1996	2011	2019	
63	Tanker	1989	2009	2012	
64	Wildland	1995	2010	2010	
C1	Command	2003	2008	2010	

C2	Utility	1999	2007	2014	
SSE	Motorhome	1985	No Schedule	No Schedule	

The Sun Valley Fire Department does not have any reserve apparatus. If the City chooses not to consolidate and remains as an independent Fire Department, the consultants recommend that replacement of Engine 60 is appropriate.

### **Maintenance – Apparatus and Equipment**

Sun Valley apparatus and equipment maintenance is for the most part done in-house with the Assistant Fire Chief performing the work with department volunteers. Weekly apparatus checks are conducted by the volunteers on Saturday mornings from a standardized checklist. Preventative maintenance is contracted out to a repair firm in Ketchum. The same firm would perform limited in-field repairs if necessary.

Fuel for the apparatus is obtained either from a facility in Sun Valley and/or in Ketchum, both open 24/7 with an account for the Fire Department.

### **Apparatus Replacement Funding**

The City of Sun Valley maintains a Fire Department Apparatus fund. The Fire Department places capital replacement items into the annual budget in a five- and ten-year list. The City places money aside in anticipation of future needed purchases, therefore, having the ability to purchase the items when needed and approved by the Board.

### **Recommendation – Apparatus**

The Sun Valley Fire Department does not need any additional apparatus. If the City chooses not to consolidate, then replacement of Engine 60 should occur. If the City chooses to consolidate with Ketchum, both departments should jointly purchase this

apparatus, similar to the arrangement of cost-sharing for the aerial and command vehicles.

Although NFPA is not a mandatory standard, it is prudent for the City to consider these apparatus recommendations. Therefore, the aerial apparatus owned by both Cities should be replaced this coming fiscal year. The cost of such a unit most likely will be in the range of \$750,000 to \$1,000,000. The consultants recommend that the aerial apparatus be a 100 foot aerial platform with a minimum of a 1250 pump and 750 gallon water tank.

## Sun Valley Training

“How you train is how you will perform on the emergency scene during an emergency.”

The foundation of any successful emergency operation is directly linked to the training of its members that provide fire/EMS services. Training is essential for safe operations for both the emergency provider and those receiving the service. Training is never-ending, and the recording of that training is as essential as the training itself. The fire service must rely on training to ensure coordination, consistency, and timely communications for the safety of the citizens and firefighters/1<sup>st</sup> responders, as well as to provide the ability to capably accomplish the emergency tasks that are encountered. Fire departments that provide quality-training opportunities for their personnel are better prepared to handle emergencies within their community. A strong training program is also beneficial in the recruitment and retention of members, both career and paid-on-call.

The State of Idaho training curriculums are based in part on curriculums developed by Oklahoma State University, which are titled: International Fire Service Training Association’s (IFSTA) manuals, also referred to as the “Red Book”. The Idaho Firefighter Certification program is developed and administered by the Idaho College and University system through the Vocational or Occupational training programs. This program is specifically referred to as the “Emergency Services Training program”.

The curriculum developed at Oklahoma State is currently being adopted in many parts of the Country and outlines basic and advanced firefighting skills. This program outlines a number of ways to perform emergency scene evolutions necessary for modern public fire protection. The benefit of listing multiple ways to perform on-scene operations allows the individual fire department training officer the autonomy to match the best procedures to the challenges of the community and the abilities of the organization. However, the department must adopt the “one best way” to ensure safe and efficient emergency scene operations. With this understanding, it is essential that each department have a training manual that is available and used that identifies the one accepted and adopted evolution

from the options outlined by IFSTA. Additionally, the evolution curriculum must document a step-by-step training (evolution) procedure, along with a method to document acceptable performance.

Currently, the Sun Valley Fire Department does not have a training manual that identifies specific evolutions (training events) adopted by the department, nor the outcome or expectation of a training exercise. It is essential that there is a training manual to ensure consistency in the teaching process, in training ground activities, and at the emergency scene. Lack of an updated training manual is a significant safety, as well as liability, concern.

The Chief indicated that, from his experience and insight as to the needs in Sun Valley, he has revised the IFSTA curriculums to methods unique to this department. Although this has been a traditional practice in many departments, it is outdated, and the need for standardization has greatly increased as departments begin to work more closely with their neighbors and during major disasters when one may end up working with departments that are out-of-state. The need for uniform emergency operating methods is greater today than ever before, as emphasized by the Department of Homeland Security. The consultants highly discourage altering the IFSTA curriculums. Rather, adopting one of the “validated” training programs ensures: consistency, course outline, compatibility with neighboring departments, and means to document participant’s ability to perform the task.

The issue of liability is greatly increased by not adopting a tested, “validated” training program. Within the last decade there has been an increased tendency for municipalities to be stripped of their immunity protection when dealing with an employee’s injury or death. It is hoped that Sun Valley never experiences a firefighter’s line of duty death. However, in the event of this occurrence, or a serious line-of-duty injury, a large number of state and federal agencies would conduct independent investigations. The department would need to provide, at minimum, the investigators with the following:

- Comprehensive curriculum of the training topic

- Record of the instructor and his/her qualifications to teach the topic
- Attendance sheet with the individual's signature that they attended – not a check-off box of member's names
- Competency document showing how the department measured the ability of the individual to safely perform at the event in which they were injured
- Historical record showing how frequently this topic was instructed and what other topics supported a safe environment

Lack of such documentation could result in fines from both state and/or federal agencies, as well as open the department and City to civil litigation.

The department has several certified instructors (includes the Chief and Assistant Chief) that conduct training. However, the department lacks lesson plans. A well-developed lesson plan identifies the objectives of the training, indicates materials needed, defines acceptable performance, provides the instructor with an outline and guide, and ensures that there is a method to document the participant's ability to perform the activity. Once developed, the lesson plans should be reviewed annually and incorporate any new activities identified by IFSTA.

The Sun Valley Fire Department needs to create a training manual, which should be kept in both electronic and hard copy. As previously noted, the need for accurate training records is as important as the lesson plans themselves. Members need to sign a sheet that indicates that they received the training and are capable of safely performing the training evolution. Documentation is critical if the department is ever challenged on the ability of a member to perform a function.

The department indicated that they conduct some type of training one night a week. Two evenings a month are dedicated to fire, one to special teams, and one to EMS training. There was no formal written training schedule, but rather the Chief indicated that once a year the Fire Departments get together and develop a plan so that each of them can dedicate some time to joint training efforts. Sun Valley and Ketchum began training together. However, this arrangement was cancelled at about the time the consultants

began this study. The reasons for canceling regular joint training differed depending on which department the consultant spoke with.

The department would benefit from a written training schedule posted and showing planned training for the entire year. This would allow individuals who miss a particular topic to see when the topic would be repeated, and adjust their schedule for attendance. Also, joint training with Ketchum on a weekly basis would be very beneficial, inasmuch as each department responds to each other's structure fires, a situation where consistency of training becomes a major safety factor for the firefighter.

It was ambiguous as to how long each training session lasts. The department indicated that the average training session lasts four hour. However, only one of the forty seven training entries indicated four hours and only one indicated three hours. All of the others indicated two hours in length.

It appeared that, depending on the number of individuals who attended and the topic for the evening, the length of the training session would vary. The department indicated that all members must participate in 80% of all offered training in order to maintain an active status on the department. However, the data presented seriously contradicted this fact. If there were forty-seven training opportunities, then 80% would be 37.6 sessions at 4 hours equaling 150.4 hours per individual.

The department provided the following training records for 2006 (the numbers do not align in an alphabetical order of names):

**Table 12: Sun Valley Training Hours 2006**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Hours</b>
1	227.5
2	190.5
3	154.5
4	138.0
5	138.0
6	102.0

<b>Member</b>	<b>Hours</b>
7	57.5
8	55.5
9	41.5
10	35.5
11	34.0
12	33.5
13	33.0
14	26.0
15	24.5
16	24.0
17	21.0
18	20.5
19	19.0
20	13.5
21	12.5
22	12.0
23	11.5
24	9.5
25	9.5
26	7.0

What is confusing is that the payroll records for approximately half of 2006 indicated that only 14 members received pay. Members are paid for training, so the consultants would have expected the number to align more closely.

The Fire Department's data for training documentation indicates that 19 of 26 members had less than 50 hours of training in 2006. Eight members have less than 20 hours and only six have greater than 100 hours. These figures indicate that only three members would have met the minimum requirements to remain active as outlined by the department. There is a serious difference in information received, pertaining to training, for the department.

The mean (average) number of training hours for a Sun Valley firefighter was 55.8 hours per year, the medium (middle) was 33 hours. ISO requires 20 hours per month or 240 per year of fire training in order to receive full credit during an evaluation. This requirement does not discriminate between career, paid-on-call, or volunteer members.

In addition, there were several items listed in the training records that are questionable as to whether they are truly training events. Removing snow from hydrants, firefighter appreciation day, and stuffing envelopes were such items. One can argue that removing snow from hydrants does familiarize individuals with their location, but the limited amount of time the department has for training could be utilized for better purposes. This is not to suggest that removing snow from hydrants is unimportant, but rather that it should be scheduled as an independent activity not taking limited evening training time and should not be documented as a training event.

The department provided a list of outside training courses such as the tactical firefighting class (essential) taught by the Ketchum Fire Department and two drills that perhaps included other departments. The length of time for these drills – one 15 hours and the other 12 hours – is an extremely long drill period. In both of these drills, three individuals were listed as attending these sessions.

There is no proficiency testing for the department. The Chief indicated he keeps “an eye out,” and if an individual is having problems performing an evolution it is handled on a case-by-case basis. Without questioning the department’s inability to prove that proficiency testing occurs, and that the individual was trained properly, it could be devastating in the event that a fire/EMS member is injured or killed in the line of duty. The need for proficiency testing, documentation by the member that he/she can perform the function and a formal written mitigation plan to address deficiencies is essential.

The Sun Valley training program lacks a number of essential components. Variations from the IFSTA curriculum should be minimal and those variations must be “validated” as a safe method of performing the task. Observation by the Chief or any individual as the means of ensuring proficiency is inadequate, and proficiency testing of members is essential.

The Chief indicated that he encourages outside training and that Sun Valley has hosted several National Fire Academy courses. Officer training and promotional training is accomplished primarily by sending the individual to the Emergency Services Training (EST) program offered by the state college system.

Although the Sun Valley Fire Department trains on an infrequent basis with the Ketchum Fire Department, both departments respond and work together at emergency scenes on a regular basis. Therefore, it should be essential that they train together on a regular basis. Different methods of performing emergency scene tasks are not in the best interest of anyone when they are attempting to work as a team.

**Pulmonary Function Test** – NFPA 1582 and OSHA requires that any individual who uses a self-contained breathing apparatus (mask) have an annual pulmonary function test (NFPA) and a fit test (OSHA) to ensure safety. The test must be administered by a licensed physician who is familiar with the fire suppression tasks and working environment. The physician will provide the department with a certificate of compliance to the OSHA regulation and keep the medical record in his/her possession. Noncompliance with this OSHA regulation can result in fines of up to \$70,000. These records do not exist in the department.

This issue should be addressed immediately in order to come into compliance with the OSHA regulation for any member who might be required to wear self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

### **Department Certifications**

In most states, essential fire training is at the entry level of firefighter and covers a variety of activities a firefighter must be able to perform. EMS certifications begin with the 1<sup>st</sup> Responder and culminate at EMT – P or paramedic level. National Incident Management System (NIMS) is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) command

system for unified emergency command of an incident. There are several levels of NIMS training.

The department listed 25 members' certifications as follows:

**Table 13: Sun Valley Members Certifications**

<b>Certification</b>	<b>Of 25 Members</b>
NIMS	23
Essentials	22
1 <sup>st</sup> Responder (EMS)	5
Hazard Material	4
EMT – B	3
Fire Inspector	3
Avalanche Tech	2
Air Pack Tech	1
Arson Investigator	1

### **Recommendation – Training**

It is always difficult for a paid-on-call member to devote more time, but training is one area that warrants that request. But the need for change is in how Sun Valley approaches training and goes beyond just dedicating more time.

The department should develop lesson plans from the IFSTA curriculum and create a training manual available for all members to review. Instructors should be state certified and utilize the lesson plans in their classes. Department members need to sign a sheet (not a check box after their name) that indicates that they attended the training and could safely perform the evolution. These training records should be kept secure and available only to Chief Officers and/or the training coordinator. Currently, the Fire Chief serves as the primary training person.

Joint training should be scheduled with the Ketchum Fire Department a minimum of two times per month. The department did not list a training coordinator and the consultants got the impression that the Chief or Assistant Chief either conduct or oversee the majority of the training. There is only one member of the department who has more than the five

certifications held by the Fire Chief. However, the department could benefit from naming one individual as training officer or coordinator who would oversee the program, develop the training schedule, coordinate training activities, arrange joint training, and be responsible for documentation and record keeping.

The department should require a minimum of eight hours, and strive for ten hours of fire training a month per member. This will require lengthening the training sessions or adding an additional training session. It is essential that the department establishes reasonable expectations and begins to hold members accountable for meeting the minimum training requirements. If each training session was extended to a minimum of three hours this would result in a 50% increase in training alone. It is important to remember that the ISO requirement of 20 hours a month is limited to fire training only, and inasmuch as 49.7% of Sun Valley's calls are EMS in nature, emphasis must be placed on EMS training as well. Although 20 hours of fire training per month is not achievable by most paid-on-call departments, Sun Valley has considerable room for improvement.

Pulmonary function testing needs to occur annually by a trained physician and those records maintained by both the physician and the department. Inasmuch as pulmonary function test results would be protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, these records must be maintained separately from other employee records.

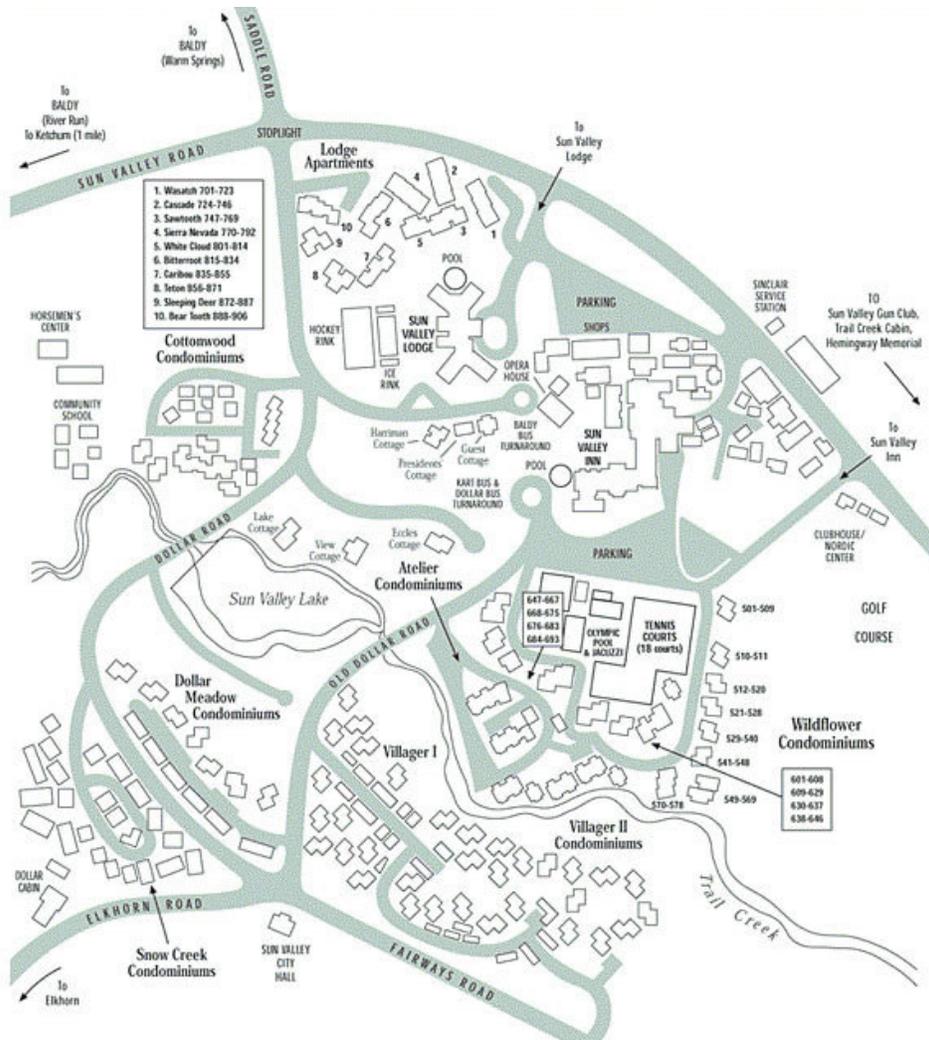
Lastly, the Fire Chief stated that he believes in on-the-job-training, which was a prevalent method a number of years ago. However, with the ever-increasing dangers associated with firefighting it is not prudent to allow anyone without a minimum of successful completion of the essentials' certification to be active on the emergency scene. Allowing new members to perform some less critical functions does encourage participation but places the organization in a very precarious situation if that individual becomes injured or someone else is injured or sustains additional loss due to their actions. The practice of allowing individuals without this certification to respond to the emergency scene, and

issuance of protective gear, and/or pager, thereby allowing them to perform any emergency scene activity, is highly discouraged and should be discontinued.

# Sun Valley Fire Prevention

The Fire Chief indicated that fire prevention activities for the department are primarily limited to the Sun Valley Resort complex, a 148-room lodge along with other amenities.

Figure 10: Sun Valley Resort Complex



Source: <http://www.sunvalley.com/SunValley/info/rst.aspx>

Fire prevention activities are limited to the public areas and do not involve the residential apartments or condominiums. Within the complex is the lodge, dining room, lounge, spa, massage center, sauna, pool, workout facility, bowling alley, and game room.

The City of Sun Valley has adopted the 2003 International Fire Prevention and Building codes along with all referenced codes such as the NFPA Sprinkler and Standpipe codes. Presently, the city is working on adopting the 2006 International Code along with the same referenced codes.

The City has adopted the NFPA Life Safety Code and stated that the department (Fire Chief) is in the complex weekly both for fire prevention and pre-plan purposes. The Chief did indicate that the department does not enforce the occupancy load (number of people allowed in a given area) aspect of the Life Safety Code, inasmuch as the entire complex is protected by fire suppression sprinkler systems. The consultants were not provided with any inspection data or pre-plans.

## **Pre-Plans**

The Fire Chief does the majority of all fire prevention activities, including pre-plans. The Sun Valley Resort complex is currently on paper illustrating the footprint of the structure, water supply, and utility information. The Chief indicated that, in addition to the Resort, there are approximately ten condominiums and several schools that are in the process of being pre-planned.

The Fire Chief indicated that he is trying to upgrade the pre-plans to be able to be viewed from a computer mounted in the fire apparatus. However, without assistance he estimated it would take between five to ten years to complete this project.

ISO requires that in order to receive full credit for pre-plans, all inspectable occupancies must be checked and updated twice annually. The revised pre-plan must then be included in the training curriculum and provided to all mutual aid departments.

The department did not provide the consultants with any department hard copies of existing pre-plans in their data package. Currently there are no mobile computers with the exception of the jointly owned command vehicle.

## **Public Safety Education**

Department members give safety talks at schools during Fire Prevention Week. Monthly fire drills at the school are attended by a department representative. In addition, the department holds three open houses per year for the general public. The Chief indicated that the department attempts to honor any reasonable citizen request, which would include home fire safety inspections. Annually, at the end of May, the Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments jointly put on a day of demonstrations at an area convenient to both departments.

Although not technically public safety education, it is worth noting that the Fire Chief indicated that he trains resort employees, on a rotating basis, in their responsibilities during an emergency, as well as what to expect from the Fire Department.

## **Recommendation – Fire Prevention**

The Fire Chief is very active in all aspects of the department and although the consultants' data package did not include any inspection or pre-plan documentation it is important that this documentation be available to all department members. The consultants encourage the implementation of computers in the apparatus that would allow the company officer the ability to access the fire pre-plan or inspection data on any occupancy.

## **Recommendation – Public Education**

The department might consider adopting, in conjunction with the City Police Department, the Risk Watch Program, an injury prevention program developed by the NFPA in conjunction with Lowe's Home Safety Council, which targets children ages 14 and under in schools. The classroom instructor teaches the program and would be assisted by the

Sun Valley Fire and Police Departments in the form of guest speakers, tours, demonstrations, etc.

Curriculum in the Risk Watch Program consists of the following:

- Poison Prevention
- Choking/Suffocation/Strangulation Prevention
- Motor Vehicle Safety
- Fall Prevention
- Firearms Injury Prevention
- Bike and Pedestrian Safety
- Water Safety

# Sun Valley Fiscal

## Budget Development

The City of Sun Valley Fire Department operates a municipal Fire Department and obtains its funding primarily from the taxpayers of the City of Sun Valley. The Fire Department's fiscal year is from October 1st to September 30th. The process for developing the budget starts mid-year and progresses from that point, usually resulting in final approval by the City Council in September.

## Budget Funding

The funding for the City of Sun Valley Fire Department is generated mainly by the General Fund taxes (91%), and to a smaller degree by the Local Option Sales Tax for liquor, lodging and retail (3% each for a total of 9%), which is a modest sales tax increase allowed to specific communities in Idaho. Therefore, total funding for the Sun Valley Fire Department is provided by the City of Sun Valley, and the City does not receive any funding for its 1<sup>st</sup> Responder program from the Blaine County Ambulance District.

**Table 14: Corporate Funds**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08*</b>	<b>2008/09*</b>
<b>Revenues</b>					
General Fund	\$323,165	\$332,531	\$368,785	\$381,692.48	\$395,051.71
Total FD Budget	\$323,165	\$332,531	\$368,785	\$381,692.48	\$395,051.71
% of FD Funding	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

\*Figures shown for the year 2007/08 and 2008/09 on all tables and figures are projections

The costs for the Fire Department conducting plan review and related services are collected by the City of Sun Valley as part of the building permit fees, and such fees are placed in the General Fund of the City. Additionally, the City of Sun Valley Fire Department does issue a limited number of permits but fees are not assessed for such permits.

## Personnel Costs

In 2006/07, the City of Sun Valley Fire Department's budget was \$368,785. This amount supports both fire and first responder (EMS) operations. The 2006/07 budget included funding for the full-time Fire Chief and the Acting Assistant Fire Chief (\$103,815) and funding for a staff of 23 paid-on-call firefighters (\$50,000). The Fire Chief and Acting Assistant Fire Chief funding decreased from 2005 by \$36,161 due to the fact that the Acting Assistant Fire Chief is currently a temporary position and is being funded as a 'temporary employee' line item at \$36,066 within the Fire Department budget. The paid-on-call firefighter budget increased by \$25,831 in 2005/06 to \$50,000. It is projected that the funding for paid-on-call staff will decrease by \$4,185 in 2006/07. This is a result of current experience projected to the future.

In addition to salaries, personnel costs include a physical incentive program, FICA contribution, retirement contribution, workers' compensation and supplemental accident coverage, health insurance, state unemployment, and housing allowance as shown below:

**Table 15: Sun Valley Personnel Costs**

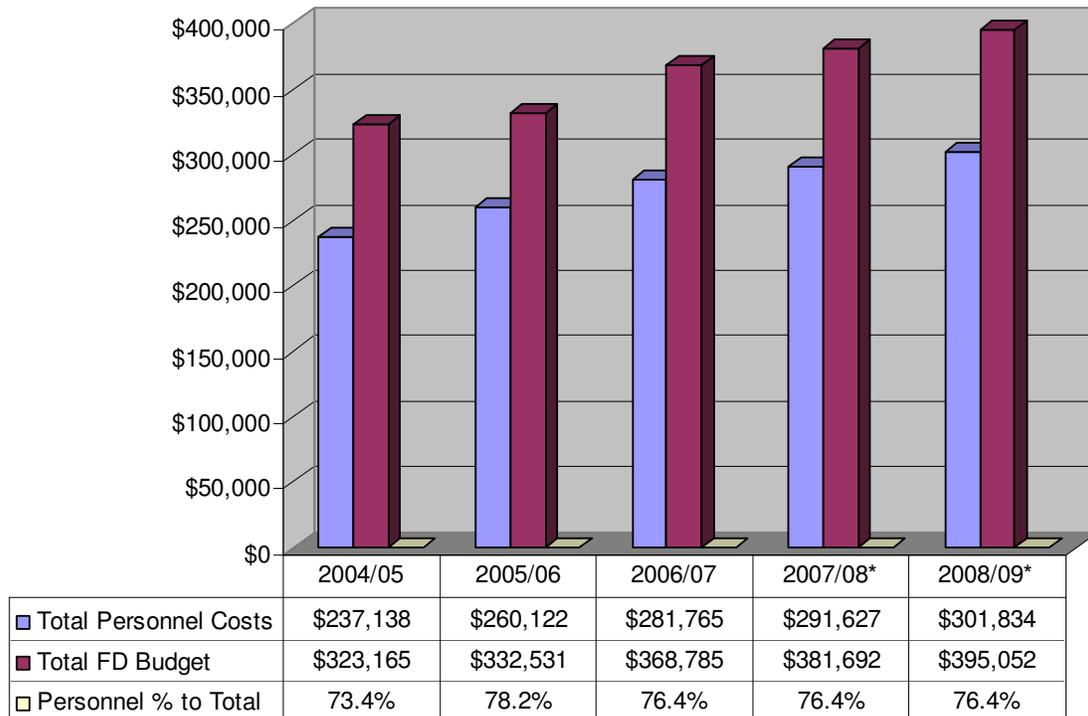
<b>Year</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08*</b>	<b>2008/09*</b>
Salaries/Wages	\$134,734	\$103,815	\$135,448	\$140,189	\$145,095
Salaries/Wages - paid-on-call	\$24,169	\$50,000	\$45,815	\$47,419	\$49,078
Salaries/Wages-Temp Emp.	\$6,120	\$36,066	\$23,250	\$24,064	\$24,906
Physical Incentive Program	\$844	\$5,300	\$5,300	\$5,486	\$5,677
FICA Contribution	\$13,763	\$14,526	\$15,645	\$16,193	\$16,759
Retirement Contribution	\$15,826	\$11,420	\$14,534	\$15,043	\$15,569
Workers Compensation & Acc	\$9,860	\$11,600	\$10,808	\$11,186	\$11,578
Health Insurance	\$21,800	\$17,895	\$24,615	\$25,477	\$26,368
State Unemployment	\$422	\$2,000	\$350	\$362	\$375
Housing Allowance	\$9,600	\$7,500	\$6,000	\$6,210	\$6,427
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$237,138</b>	<b>\$260,122</b>	<b>\$281,765</b>	<b>\$291,627</b>	<b>\$301,834</b>

\* Projected at 3.5% annually

By far the largest portion of the Fire Department budget is related to Personnel Costs, which include salaries, overtime, and benefits. Presently 76.4% of the total funding is personnel related. From 2004/05 to the 2006/07 Fire Department budget personnel costs

have accounted for about 73.4% to 78.27% of the total Fire Department budget as illustrated below:

**Figure 11: Sun Valley Personnel Costs - 2004 - 2007**



\* Projected at 3.5% annually

The current full-time employees include the Chief and the acting Assistant Chief. Both positions are salaried and are classified as exempt employees (not eligible for overtime compensation). The Chief is a full-time employee working a scheduled 40 hour week Monday through Friday. The acting Assistant Chief is classified as a temporary employee and works the same schedule. The Fire Chief envisions the Assistant Chief position as becoming a full-time position in the future.

The paid-on-call staff of the Fire Department consists of 23 individuals. Paid-on-call personnel respond to emergencies on an "as needed" basis. The paid-on-call staff consists of four (4) captains, four (4) engineers, eight (8) firefighters and six (6) probationary firefighters. Salary ranges for the paid-on-call members are as follows:

**Table 16: Sun Valley Paid-On-Call Salaries**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>
Probationary Firefighter (Over 2 years of service)	\$15.00
Firefighter (less than five years experience)	\$16.00
Engineer (or firefighter with more than five years)	\$17.00
Engineer (five years or greater of service)	\$18.00
Captain	\$20.00

A review of the City's pay records for the time period of October 2, 2006 through April 15, 2007 (time frame represents seven (7) pay periods) reveals salaries for 20 paid-on-call members were as follows:

**Table 17: Sun Valley Paid-On-Call - 10/2 - 4/15**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Pay Rate</b>	<b>Other Pay</b>	<b>Total</b>
Allen	35.50	\$15.00	\$373.50	906.00
Black	239.50	\$15.00	\$419.00	4,011.50
Blomquist, J.	0.00	unknown	\$0.00	0.00
Blomquist, M.	0.00	unknown	\$0.00	0.00
Brown	0.00	unknown	\$0.00	0.00
Carnes, C.* (secretarial) (emergency)	482.50 99.00	18.00	\$0.00	10,327.50
Christian	28.00	\$18.00	\$0.00	504.00
Franco	34.00	\$20.00	\$0.00	680.00
Gariepy	0.00	unknown	\$0.00	0.00
Gladics	15.50	\$15.00	\$0.00	232.50
Hoffman	31.00	\$15.00	\$0.00	465.00
Huus	0.00	unknown	\$0.00	0.00
Kanellitsas	10.00	\$15.00	\$0.00	150.00
Prior	150.50	20.00	\$0.00	2,957.00
Reelick	17.00	\$15.00	\$0.00	255.00
Richardson, J.P.	0.00	unknown	\$0.00	0.00
Richardson, J.R.	44.50	\$17.00	\$0.00	756.50
Sedlack	51.50	\$17.00	\$0.00	875.50
Stahn	2.00	\$15.00	\$419.00	449.00
Verrill	50.50	\$15.00	\$0.00	757.50

\*Carnes, C. hours reflect Fire Department secretarial duties as well as emergency response. Therefore only emergency response times were calculated.

The above table indicates that there are 20 paid-on-call fire positions. Of the 20 paid-on-call positions, six (6) of the 20 positions had 'zero' salary indicating that these six persons did not respond to any emergencies or training during the time period of October

2, 2006 through April 15, 2007. Therefore, the actual number of **participating** paid-on-call members is actually 14 persons.

Of the paid-on-call firefighters, the range of participation is between 2 and 239.5 hours. Total paid-on-call member participation during this period equaled 808.5 hours. The mean (average) hours for the time period of October 2, 2006 through April 15, 2007 was 40.4 hours. Taking the average of 40.4 hours over the seven (7) pay periods indicated that the 14 participating paid-on-call averaged 5.8 hours each per pay period (28 days).

### **Worker's Compensation Insurance**

Worker's Compensation Insurance is a large part of 'Personnel Costs' in the annual budget. During the 2006/07 fiscal year, the cost of this insurance was \$6,708. It was reported that the annual number of such claims averages approximately one. While one claim per year is minimal, considering an employee pool of 14 paid-on-call and 2 career employees, one claim per year for a total of 16 employees is a significant amount, noting that the average hours worked per pay period, per paid-on-call employee is 5.8 hours. The department and City need to investigate the reasons and causes for worker's compensation claims. Reasons for an increase in worker's compensation could be due to poor morale, or insufficient personnel, which causes increased work activity, or poor safety conditions. The consultants do not have sufficient data to understand the worker's compensation issue, but the department and City should address this issue not only to decrease its financial liability, but also to ensure the safety of personnel.

### **Supplemental Insurance**

The City of Sun Valley provides supplemental insurance to the employees of the Fire Department. The cost of such insurance is \$4,100 per year. It is anticipated that this cost will remain flat for the near future.

## **Housing Allowance**

Due to the high cost of housing, the City of Sun Valley provides a housing allowance to the Fire Chief. The amount provided is \$6,000 per year. With the entry-level housing in Sun Valley being approximately \$600,000 for a small condo unit and well over \$1,500,000 for a single family basic house, it is difficult for employees to reside in Sun Valley without assistance.

The City of Sun Valley has an Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of approximately \$2,600,000,000. There are 2,339 housing units in the City, with an average of 2.3 persons per unit. Recent census data reveals that approximately 1,427 people reside full-time in Sun Valley. The City has a total bed count of 10,000, but indicated that a high percentage of housing is vacant on a daily basis. Officials report that peak population occurs during holiday periods and festivals.

The history of Sun Valley has shown that property values have exploded since the mid-1970's. It is estimated that the cost of a vacant lot for a single family home is now over \$1,500,000. Such upper-end demographics indicate that traditionally paid public servants would be unable to afford to live in the City. Additionally, with the high level of vacancy due to second and third homes, it will become increasingly difficult to attract and retain paid-on-call personnel without significant housing assistance.

## **Services**

The annual budget for Services, which are primarily the cost of utilities and service contracts, was \$13,702 in 2004. This amount increased to \$16,600 in 2005 or 21.2%. In 2006 Services costs totaled \$18,250 or an increase of 9.9%. A significant portion of this increase is related to the rising cost of motor fuels. It is anticipated that an increase of 5% per year will continue to impact the Services costs.

**Table 18: Sun Valley Budget Service Items**

<b>Services</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08*</b>	<b>2008/09*</b>
Janitorial Supplies	\$1,101	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,365	\$1,433
Motor Fuels & Lubricants	\$8,135	\$7,500	\$9,000	\$9,450	\$9,923
Postage	\$0	\$0	\$50	\$53	\$55
Custodial & Cleaning	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,050	\$1,103
Telephone & Communication	\$1,492	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,575	\$1,654
Rental-Equipment				\$0	\$0
Rental-Other	\$315	\$500	\$500	\$525	\$551
Repair/Maintenance Office	\$20	\$300	\$300	\$315	\$331
Repair/Maintenance Radio	\$1,061	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,100	\$2,205
Laundry	\$1,578	\$2,500	\$2,600	\$2,730	\$2,867
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13,702</b>	<b>\$16,600</b>	<b>\$18,250</b>	<b>\$19,163</b>	<b>\$20,121</b>
<b>% Increase</b>		<b>21.2%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>

\* Project at 5% annually

## Materials/Supplies/Maintenance

The Materials and Supplies portion of the budget was \$62,567 for 2004/05. In 2005/06 this amount decreased to \$54,700 or 12.6%. In the 2006/07 this amount increased to \$62,770 or 14.8%. Estimates are that this amount will increase at a rate of 3.5% per year.

**Table 19: Sun Valley Budget Materials/Supplies**

<b>Maintenance/Supplies</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08*</b>	<b>2008/09*</b>
Operating Supplies	\$5,917	\$8,000	\$8,400	\$8,694	\$8,998
Medical Safety Supplies	\$2,019	\$3,000	\$3,120	\$3,229	\$3,342
Minor Tools	\$907	\$500	\$500	\$518	\$536
Travel, Training & Meetings	\$2,008	\$3,000	\$2,500	\$2,588	\$2,678
Dues/Subscript/Membership	\$1,675	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,070	\$2,142
Turnouts	\$2,123	\$5,000	\$5,150	\$5,330	\$5,517
Repair Maintenance Buildings	\$13,539	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,175	\$5,356
Repair Maintenance Grounds	\$4,409	\$2,000	\$8,000	\$8,280	\$8,570
Repair Maintenance Equipment	\$18,787	\$12,000	\$12,600	\$13,041	\$13,497
Repair Maintenance Automotive	\$9,628	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,350	\$10,712
Uniforms	\$262	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,105	\$3,214
Office Furniture & Equipment	\$1,293	\$1,200	\$2,500	\$2,588	\$2,678
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$62,567</b>	<b>\$54,700</b>	<b>\$62,770</b>	<b>\$64,967</b>	<b>\$67,241</b>
<b>% Increase</b>		<b>-12.6%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

\* Projected at 3.5% annually

## Other

There are three minor categories that should be considered. These are the donations to Community Service, the Rural Fire Grant and FEMA Grants. The Community Service donation (\$6,805) was made in 2004/05, decreased to \$805 in 2005/06 and was not funded in 2006/07. Another grant, the Rural Fire Grant, was received in 2004/05 but was absent in the following two years.

Applications for Federal Emergency Management Agency grants have been minimal in the past three years. The consultants encourage the City to apply for these grants as they provide equipment and/or technology that will greatly benefit the agency.

## Capital Equipment

Capital projections for the City of Sun Valley currently include several Fire Department-related projects. The projects identified in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) are:

**Table 20: Sun Valley Capital Improvement Plan**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Capital Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>2006/07</b>		
	Replace Engine	525,000
	Purchase Pickup Truck	32,000
	Record Management Software	5,300
<b>2007/08</b>		
	Purchase Command Van	34,600
<b>2008/09</b>		
	No Items Identified	
<b>2009/10</b>		
	Fund To Identify Interoperability Radio Issue	17,000
<b>2010/11</b>		
	Purchase Interoperability Radio Equipment	257,000
	Purchase Air Packs	34,200
	Purchase Turnout Gear	57,000

## **Fiscal Summary**

The City of Sun Valley has a very conservative budget, with the majority of funding being generated by property and sales taxes (General Fund) to fund the Fire Department.

In most fire department budgets the largest item is personnel costs, and Sun Valley is no exception. However, funding allocated for Fire Department services, materials/supplies/maintenance, are within reasonable expectations.

## **Recommendation – Fiscal**

The City of Sun Valley may wish to consider the implementation of fire inspection fees for conducting fire prevention inspections. Many municipalities are using this type of fee to generate the additional revenue needed to pay for the costs of conducting fire prevention inspections.

The City of Sun Valley Fire Department should continue to apply for fire grants under the Federal Government's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) as they become available.

It appears that the Fire Department does bill the responsible party for hazardous materials responses, but a City Ordinance should be implemented that supports this billing process.

The amount spent for worker's compensation insurance should be of concern and possible solutions to the high rate increase should be considered. Considering a career staff of two and a paid-on-call staff of 14 to 26, the \$10,808 spent appears to be higher than normal.

The consultants have developed an apparatus replacement plan (apparatus section of this report) which should be adopted by the City, thereby indicating well in advance when apparatus needs to be replaced.

# Summary of Sun Valley Recommendations

## Emergency Data

- The Fire Department greatly needs to improve its data collection and retrieval capabilities.
- The department in partnership with the Ketchum Fire Department should invest in a commercial incident management software program.

## National Standards

- The consultants do not recommend that the department attempt to become accredited, but rather they should use the CPSE standards as the benchmark of quality.
- The City should not adopt NFPA 1720.

## Response Times

- Response time data is important to the management of the department and all components outlined in the report should be obtainable by the leadership of the department.

## Staffing

- The frequency of simultaneous emergency incidents is minimal and does not warrant additional staffing.
- If the two departments consolidate there is not a need to hire any additional career employees. In the case of Sun Valley, if consolidation is rejected, the Assistant Fire Chiefs position should change from a temporary employee to a fulltime employee.
- If the City determines that additional on-duty personnel are needed they should implement a paid-on-premise program.

## Human Resource

- Develop a recruitment program that enlists all members of the department, as well as other methods than word-of-mouth, to find candidates.
- Design an application specific to the needs of the department. The City's application form should include language in the acknowledgement that the correctness of information, falsification or misstatements are grounds for termination; and the statement should define the City as an at-will employer
- Create a separate criminal background investigation authorization form.
- Develop a formal interview program. Involve other members of the department.
- Develop a record retention policy.
- Conduct reference checks on all finalists for paid-on-call positions. Ensure that these are documented and placed in the personnel file or maintained with application materials.
- Develop a post-offer, pre-employment medical examination, including a drug test, and baseline pulmonary and hearing functions. Maintain all medical data in a file separate from the official file.

- Establish a formal probation or orientation program that involves formal evaluation of candidate's skills.
- Implement a new employee orientation program within the department to accustom members to the functions of the department, as well as to all policies and procedures.
- Develop retention strategies in order to maintain personnel.
- Conduct exit interviews with members leaving the department and review on a regular basis to make appropriate changes within the department.
- Develop a formal performance evaluation process on all members of the department.
- Establish a formal promotional process; revise job descriptions to include qualifications for rank positions; incorporate employee aspirations in the evaluation process to "grow" individuals for future openings.
- Establish a pay cycle for all paid-on-call members and track hours to ensure proper payment in the event of overtime.
- Establish an emergency rate of pay for regular employees of the City who also volunteer as paid-on-call personnel to ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- The department's paid-on-call schedule should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure comparability with the market.
- Suggestions have been given for the City's employee handbook and the department's SOP manual.
- Suggestions have been given for contents of employee personnel files, and City record retention guidelines.

### **Fire Stations**

- Engine emission exhaust systems are very important and should be incorporated into any new facility.
- The headquarters station (Elkhorn) is very adequate for current and future needs.
- Paid-on-premise housing at the Elkhorn station would be very advantageous and is highly encouraged by the consultants.
- If the City rejects consolidation, the City Hall station should be replaced in a different location with a modern satellite facility.

### **Apparatus**

- The City does not need any additional apparatus.
- The consultants have developed a replacement schedule and recommend that the City adopt and fund that schedule.
- If the City does not consolidate they should replace Engine 60 in the current fiscal budget.
- The aerial apparatus should be replaced in next year's budget and should be purchased in a joint agreement with the City of Ketchum.

**Training**

- The Sun Valley training program needs considerable improvements, including but not limited to standard curriculums, training manual, yearly training schedule, instructor certification review, proficiency testing, and better documentation.
- Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments should train together a minimum of two times per month.
- The department should strive to have each member obtain eight to ten hours of documented training per month.
- Pulmonary function testing meeting the NFPA and OSHA regulations should occur annually for each member.
- A better method of testing members for proficiency is needed.

**Fire Prevention**

- Building pre-plans should be made available to all department members and utilized in the training curriculum.
- Implementation of the NFPA and Lowe's Home Safety Council program should be utilized in conjunction with the City's Police Department.

**Fiscal**

- The City should implement a fire inspection fee for conducting fire inspections.
- The department should continue to apply for Federal AFG grants.
- The number of worker's compensation claims needs to be addressed in conjunction with the insurance carrier.
- The City should adopt and fund the apparatus replacement program developed by the consultants.

## Part 2: Ketchum Fire Department Overview

This section addresses issues pertaining to the Ketchum Fire Department. The recommendations are based on the premise that the City of Ketchum will not adopt any additional form of consolidation and will attempt to maintain the status quo agreement with the City of Sun Valley. The consultants do not believe that after this report is issued that Ketchum will continue to embrace the status quo if consolidation is not adopted in part or whole. Incentives for and obstacles to consolidation with Sun Valley will be addressed in a separate section.

The City of Ketchum is approximately 3 square miles, and receives fire protection from a municipal Fire Department consisting of 12 career and 36 paid-on-call members. The Fire Department also staffs the two fire stations owned by the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District, covering an additional 43.7 square miles. In addition, the department staffs the Blaine County Ambulance District units housed in either the City or Rural fire stations. Ketchum Fire Department provides paramedic service to approximately 1,000 square miles which includes the northern part of Blaine County – all area north of the Greenhorn Bridge on State Highway 75.

The relationship between the career and paid-on-call is for the most part excellent. Numerous career members indicated that their purpose is to support and augment the paid-on-call. The department requires considerable time and commitment from the paid-on-call and the data within the report will show that this group is very active.

Emergency incidents increased by only .43% in 2006 over 2005, representing an actual increase of four calls. 67% of these incidents were EMS in nature, representing a 2.3% increase in EMS in 2006 from 2005.

The department provides hospital transports to other medical facilities when the local hospital determines that the patient needs exceed their capability. They also provide

rendezvous (meeting other ambulances that request paramedic intervention), most often either within or near the rural district boundaries.

Simultaneous incidents occurred 11% of the time, and although they increase the challenge of providing service, they have not been overly difficult for the department. False alarms account for 12.2 percent of all incidents in 2006. Ketchum false alarms are 32.6% higher than the national average.

Although the department provided a considerable amount of data, much of it had to be hand-tallied, inasmuch as the current incident management system was unable to retrieve the data. Coupled with the fact that some of the data was contradictory, the department needs to improve its data entry and retrieval process. The department would benefit from replacing its current emergency incident recording software with commercial software that is more compatible with those used by fire departments across the United States. It would be very advantageous to jointly purchase and share an incident recording software program with the Sun Valley Fire Department inasmuch as they respond to each other's incidents frequently.

The response time data provided by the Fire Department for the City and Sun Valley, as well as for the rural district under a different NFPA standard, was well within national standards. However, once again the department was unable to tally a full year of response times; rather the consultants were given a sample of three years consisting of four months for each year.

The career employees are placed on three 24-hour on-duty shifts with a fourth shift serving to reduce the fiscal impact of the mandatory FLSA overtime provision. Minimum staffing is two with one being a paramedic. The consultants will recommend that minimum staffing be increased to three per shift. The position of Senior Lieutenant or Lieutenant should be eliminated from the organization chart and the position of paid-on-call Lieutenant created if more supervision is deemed necessary.

After increasing career minimum staffing to three per shift, the department should implement a paid-on-premise program and encourage existing paid-on-call to augment on-duty personnel at the station. All new career employees should be required to obtain and retain a paramedic certification throughout their career.

Overall, the City of Ketchum has a number of well-developed human resource systems. The programs are formalized and well-integrated between the Fire Department and the City.

The City of Ketchum has one fire station that is housed in the City complex. The building is inadequate for today's fire/EMS needs and inconsistent with the image of the community. If the City does not consolidate with Sun Valley, the consultants recommend replacement of this facility and discourage any renovation efforts. However, consolidation with Sun Valley would eliminate the duplication of each City's need to build a fire station, and thus they could consolidate into one facility. The City does not provide any housing for fire/EMS personnel. However, the rural Fire Department does, with housing units available at both rural stations.

The Ketchum Fire Department does not need any additional apparatus. However, if they do not consolidate with Sun Valley they will need to replace an engine. Again, both Cities need an engine, and jointly they could purchase a single unit and share it by rotating between Cities, much as is currently done with the aerial and command van.

The Ketchum Fire Department has an excellent training program and places considerable emphasis on firefighter/EMS training and safety. Although the program is excellent it could be improved by centralizing the training curriculums into a training manual. Proficiency testing is conducted and record keeping is adequate. The department needs to conduct annual pulmonary function testing for all employees who are required to wear self contained breathing apparatus (mask).

There is considerable area for improvement in the area of fire prevention, especially fire inspections. Only 33% of the systems are inspected annually and pre-plans are in need of attention. Public education efforts are good but consideration of the NFPA and Lowe's Risk Watch program in conjunction with the City and County police is encouraged.

Fiscally, the City of Ketchum does not have nor fund an apparatus replacement program. To offset the fiscal challenge of funding apparatus, the consultants suggest investigation into the lease/purchase programs offered by most major apparatus manufacturers. The City and department should also work to reduce the number of worker's compensation claims. A joint effort with the insurance carrier could result in a safer work environment.

Although the consultants will note a number of areas for improvement within this section, one should not lose sight of the dedication of the members of the department. The Ketchum Fire Department should be proud of its professional services and those professionals, both career and paid-on-call, who provide those services.

## Ketchum Fire Department Emergency Data

This section highlights the emergency fire and EMS activities of the Ketchum Fire Department for the calendar years 2004 through 2006. The Fire Department protects approximately 46.7 square miles, which includes the City of Ketchum, approximately three square miles. They also provide EMS – paramedic treatment and ambulance transport to the northern half of Blaine County, approximately 1,000 square miles.

As with both departments, the consultants requested considerable amounts of data. Ketchum, although in the midst of changing their computer system, was able to provide a large quantity of data which provided a more descriptive assessment of their emergency activities. However, the system was not able to provide all the data requested, and therefore considerable effort was extended by department personnel in conducting hand tallies of some categories of response.

The consultants have found that some departments have difficulty in retrieving data that is consistent. Ketchum Fire Department experienced some problems in this area. Data that was inconsistent when queried from different computer fields was a concern of the department's leadership and only reinforced his belief that a new data system was essential.

The consultants request considerable amount of data when conducting studies of this nature. The ability of the department to provide that data is very dependent on a number of factors including: importance the department places on this type of information, accuracy of data input, computer software program utilized, and whether the data is utilized, for example for quality control purposes. The request for data pertaining to emergency activities in the last four years included:

- Number of emergency responses divided into each year
- Nature of the incident (i.e. structure fire, auto fire, fire alarm, EMS, etc.)
- Incidents by time of day
- Incidents by day of the week
- Incidents by month
- Incident breakdown by area (City, District, Town, etc.)

- Response time
- Mutual/automatic aid – given and received – with whom
- Simultaneous calls

The table below better defines each category of the nature of the emergency to which the Ketchum Fire Department responds.

**Table 21: Ketchum FD - Emergency Response Categories**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>EMS</b>			
EMS-Trauma	194	182	192
EMS-Medical	209	215	220
EMS-Ski Run	116	123	121
EMS-Rescue	11	8	8
Rendezvous	16	21	17
Good Intent	18	34	40
Service Call	6	13	22
<i>EMS % of Total</i>	<i>63.0%</i>	<i>64.6%</i>	<i>66.9%</i>
<b>Fire</b>			
Fire-Structure	15	11	12
Fire-Vehicle	4	1	4
Fire-Wildland	12	13	11
Fire-Other	31	17	20
Hazmat	53	45	46
Good Intent	27	47	35
Service Call	73	81	73
False Alarm	120	112	106
<i>Fire % of Total</i>	<i>37.0%</i>	<i>35.4%</i>	<i>33.1%</i>
<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>927</b>

It is important to remember that the Ketchum Fire Department provides EMS to the entire north half of Blaine County, with the dividing line being the Greenhorn Bridge on State Highway 75.

Fires have decreased nationally by 17.8%, or approximately 1.8% annually, in the last ten-year period. (Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency – U. S. Fire Administration – National Fire Data Center – *Fires in the U. S. 12<sup>th</sup> ed.*) Unlike police and fire, which have national reporting systems, there are no definitive national figures for EMS. EMS is recorded at most state levels but there is no consistency as to how the data is obtained and/or interpreted. The consultants have reviewed EMS trends in this multi-state area and the

data suggests that emergency medical services are increasing an average of 6.4% annually. (Source: National Fire Protection Association – from *Protecting Emergency Responders*, Vol. 2.)

The department’s average three-year percentage of EMS incidents to their total emergency responses represents 64.8% of their total emergency responses. This is average for departments that provide both fire and EMS. EMS calls normally account for 65% to 70% of all incidents. Also, like most fire departments that provide both services, fires account for the least amount of the emergency responses.

## **Emergency Medical Services**

Blaine County Ambulance District provides the highest level of pre-hospital care to the County residents. Trained EMT-Paramedics (EMT-P) provide advanced life saving techniques, including drug treatment, at the emergency scene and prior to the patient’s arrival at the hospital. With early intervention, including the use of automatic external defibrillators and paramedic care, the patient’s chances of survival are greatly increased.

Idaho EMS Bureau Training Standards Manual, published by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, indicates the following minimum hours for certifications in the State of Idaho. The initial courses are also required to pass the National Registry exam. The project medical director for each paramedic system can increase the hours for certification in any of the courses, which is often the case. The Ketchum Fire Department is required to meet the following hours for certification and/or recertification:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Responder                      70 hours didactic. Recertification every three years.
- EMT – B (basic)                      110 hours didactic plus 10 hours clinical.  
Recertification 24 hours + 24 hours of continuing education.
- EMT – I (intermediate)              EMT – B certification required plus 70 hours.  
Recertification 24 hours at basic level + six hours at advanced level + 24 hours continuing education.

- EMT – P (paramedic) Prerequisite EMT – B plus 1,000 hours.  
Recertification 72 hours as specified by the EMD.

All career members of the Ketchum Fire Department are trained and certified to a minimum level of advance EMT-I (Intermediate). Of the department's 49 members 12 are certified as paramedics, 11 as EMT-I, and five as EMT-B.

## **Hospital Transfers**

Unlike many fire departments, the Ketchum Fire Department provides medical transports/transfers of patients from the local hospital to other medical facilities when the local hospital determines that the patient needs exceed their capability, or are better served at a hospital that specializes in a particular patient need. They will also provide ambulance transport from the hospital to the individual's residence, or the airport for visitors.

Blaine County Ambulance District divides the County in half, with Wood River Fire Department providing paramedic service to the southern half and Ketchum Fire Department to the northern half. The primary receiving hospital is St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center, which is located almost half-way between the two providers. Prior to 2006, the Wood River Fire Department performed all patient transfer (inter-hospital) in the County. Beginning in 2006, transfers are now split between the two departments.

The Fire Department defines transfers as patient movement from a medical or nursing facility to another location – other hospital, nursing home, residence, or lesser medical facility. In 2006, the Fire Department "Transfers" accounted for 12 incidents to the following destinations:

- Five from hospital to home
- Two from hospital to airport
- Two from hospital to Boise
- Two from hospital to St. Luke's Magic Valley (SLMV)
- One from hospital to Idaho Falls

Transfers accounted for only 1.3% of the department's total activities in 2006, and therefore, a small portion of its calls. Only one transfer occurred in 2004 and four in 2005, all of which were transfers of patients from the hospital to their residence. Transfers could and have included patient movement out-of-state, most notably Salt Lake City, Utah.

Patients transferred by the department are billed and collected by the Blaine County Ambulance District. Both Wood River and Ketchum receive compensation from the Ambulance District for providing these services. All revenue generated by billing patients is received by the Ambulance District.

## **Rendezvous**

Rendezvous are occasions when other ambulances request assistance when transporting patients through or near the north Blaine County area. In most instances, rendezvous patients are being transported by a lesser level of care (basic EMT) or need assistance due to deteriorating patient condition. The ambulance will, under these conditions, request the response of Ketchum paramedics to assist, or in most cases complete, the transport to the hospital. Rendezvous accounted for 2.7% of all EMS incidents in 2006.

## **Identifying Emergency Service Trends**

When analyzing a department's efficiency, or addressing future resource needs, it is prudent to examine the historical occurrences of emergencies in order to identify trends that could improve existing services and/or address future needs. The following factors are of significant importance to Ketchum when examining call data:

- Simultaneous Incident
- By Time of Day
- By Day of the Week
- By Month
- Distribution by Shift
- Distribution by Area

## **Simultaneous Incidents**

Often overlooked as a critical component of a department's ability to respond in a timely manner is the department's ability to respond to simultaneous emergency incidents. By definition, a simultaneous emergency involves times when the fire department is handling a fire and/or EMS emergency incident, and another unrelated emergency incident requiring immediate fire department response occurs within the City/District.

The Ketchum Fire Department was unable to generate this data directly from their database, and therefore spent considerable effort in manually reviewing call data over the three year (2004 – 2006) period. The data, taken from a four-month random sample over a three-year study period, indicated that approximately 11% of the calls occur simultaneously. The four months were varied for each year in an attempt to give a better sampling of simultaneous incidents. Throughout this section the consultants will refer to the "three year sample," thus referring to the above time period and the manual computation of data.

The department was unable to indicate whether they had multiple simultaneous incidents occurring. For example, if the department was already handling two incidents simultaneously and a third incident occurred, this would be defined as multiple simultaneous incidents. Although uncommon, these are especially important situations for department leadership to address and evaluate.

Although simultaneous calls are a challenge for all departments and will most likely continue to increase proportionally to total incidents, the number of simultaneous events for the Ketchum Fire Department is not of a significant volume to warrant additional staffing. Most organizations begin to increase staffing when simultaneous calls account for 15% to 20% of all incidents.

## Incidents by Time of Day

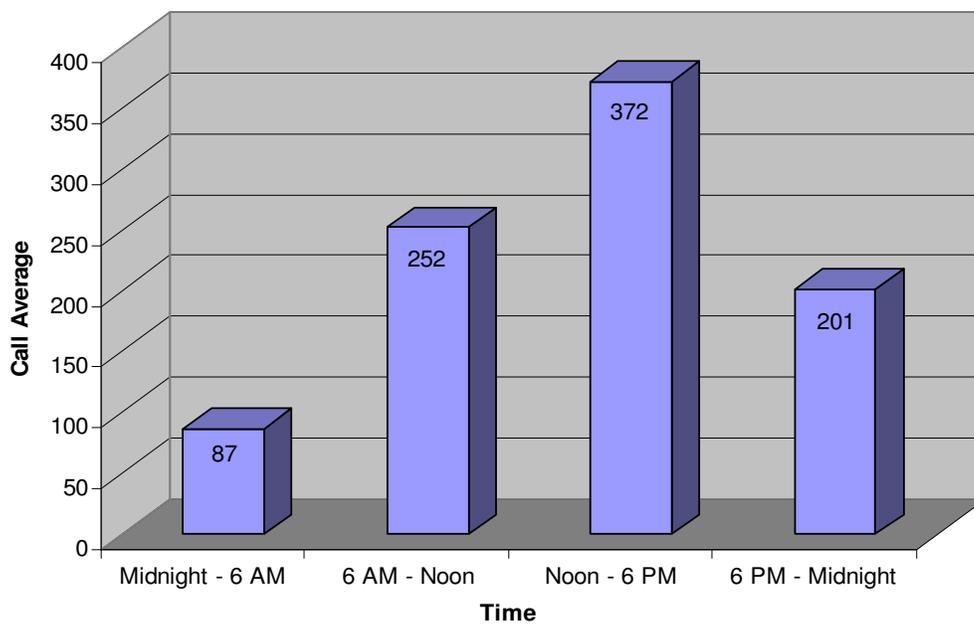
In some cases, fire departments notice an increase in alarms during certain time periods of the day. This could be the result of vehicle accidents during peak traffic hours or other community activities that routinely result in demands for fire/EMS services. In most departments, incidents charted by time of day follow a pattern similar to a “bell curve” with calls beginning to increase somewhere near 8 A.M., peaking in mid-afternoon, and diminishing to the fewest incidents in the early morning hours.

The Ketchum Fire Department provided their time of day data using a format consisting of four blocks of time:

- Midnight to 6 A.M.
- 6 A.M. to noon
- Noon to 6 P.M.
- 6 P.M. to midnight

The consultants average the data for the three year period (2004 – 2006) as illustrated in the figure below:

**Figure 12: Incidents By Time of Day - Ketchum 2004 - 2006**

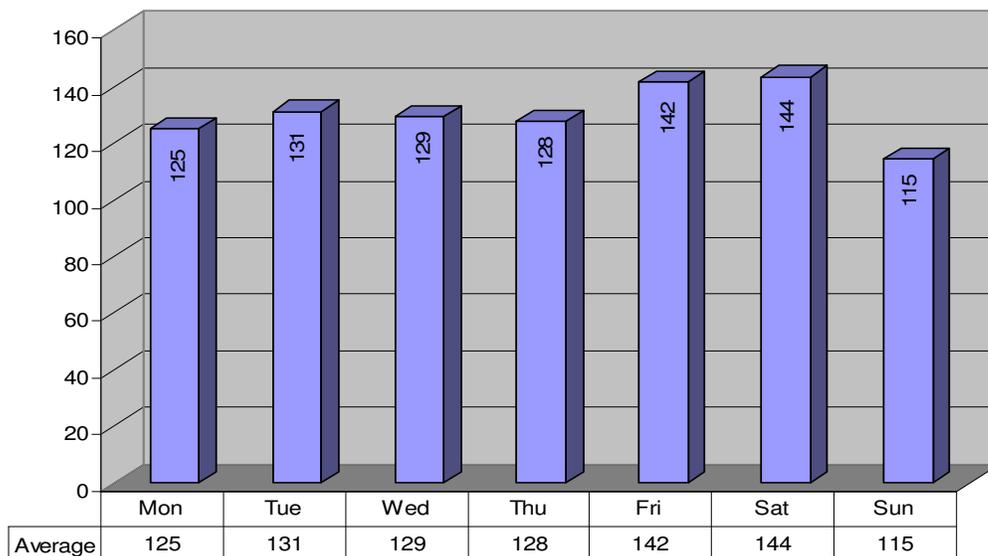


The Ketchum time of day data is not an exception to the norm found in most fire departments. Although the fewest number of incidents occur between midnight and 6 AM, this is also the time period when most civilian fire deaths occur in the individual's residence, while the occupants are sleeping. Those most in danger are the very young and old, who often are less able to escape and protect themselves.

### Incidents by Day of the Week

One examines day of the week and time of day in order to establish whether there is a need to consider peak staffing (augmenting existing on-duty personnel for selected time periods). A fire department in the Midwest protected a large, nationally recognized theme park and discovered three patterns of peak incidents: just prior to the park opening and closing (auto accidents); on Wednesdays and Saturdays, which had larger crowds; and the month of August, when calls significantly increased due to the heat and year-end vacations. Considerable cost savings occurred to the department through the hiring of part-time individuals during these periods. The figure below is a three-year average of calls by day of the week.

**Figure 13: Incidents by Day of the Week – Ketchum 2004 - 2006**



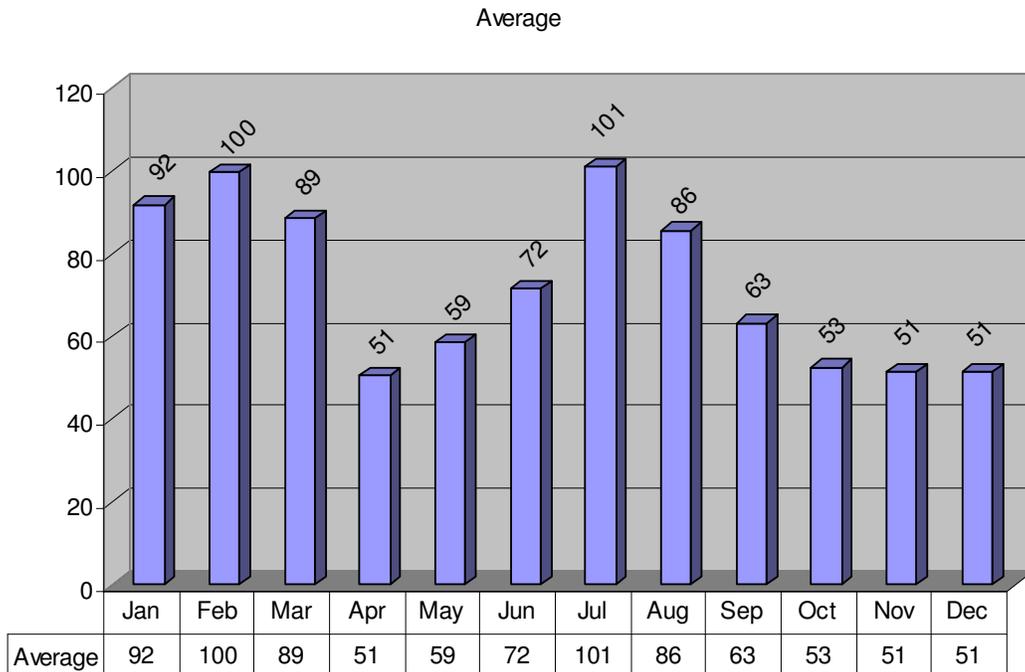
The incidents by day of the week are very consistent and do not lend themselves to any staffing changes.

### Incidents by Month

Traditionally, most fire departments are busier in the summer months than in the winter. However, the Ketchum/Sun Valley area is noted for its winter ski activities, and therefore the consultants expected to see the peak activities during the winter months. However, the Fire Chief indicated that summer activities, including fishing, hiking, biking, and other outdoor activities has greatly increased.

The figure below illustrates that the Ketchum Fire Department has peak activities both in the winter (February) and summer (July), confirming the Chief’s observations that outdoor activities are now year-round occurrences.

**Figure 14: Incident by Month - Ketchum - 2004 - 2006**



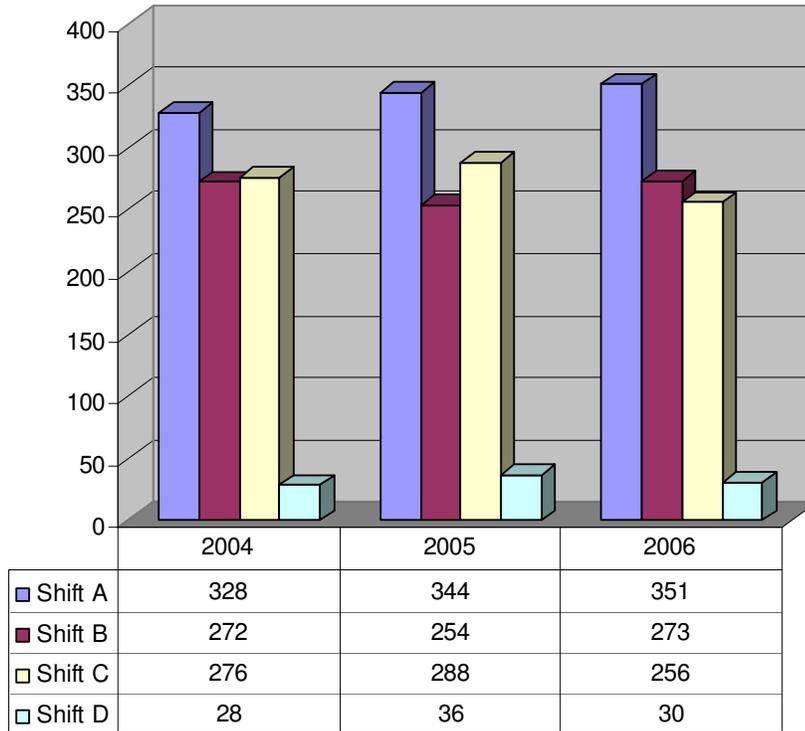
## Call Distribution by Shift

In most studies the consultants do not include incident distribution by shifts. Incident distribution by shift is normally of little value to the leadership of the department and serves primarily as bragging rights for a particular shift of employees. Ketchum utilizes a traditional three-shift platoon, with a fourth shift utilized for elimination of some of the mandatory Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA) overtime. Therefore, the fourth shift (D shift) is comprised of shift personnel with the schedule altered to allow employees to take time off verses paying them overtime under the Federal law.

Call distribution by shift numbers are usually very close and any deviation can be traced to a particular event like a major storm that generated a number of calls on a particular day. However, the figure below, representing a three-year period, illustrates an interesting trend, with Shift A having the greatest number of incidents all three years by: 5.74% in 2004, 6.07% in 2005, and 8.53% in 2006.

When questioned as to why Shift A was always the busiest, the department indicated that if a call is not entered to a particular shift, the computer defaults to Shift A. These entries should be unacceptable, inasmuch as the call originated when a particular shift was working and other than inaccurate data entry there is no reason for these occurrences. In addition, a single incident was listed as "Other" both in 2004 and 2005, the meaning of which was unknown, and the total calls by shift in 2006 were less than the total calls indicated in other data received. In cases of litigation, contradictory or inaccurate data is devastating to the organization and the City and is a concern that needs to be addressed.

**Figure 15: Incidents by Shift - Ketchum**



### Incident Distribution by Area

The Ketchum Fire Department's current computer system was unable to provide a breakdown by area. The department was able to provide a sample of the last three years by manually calculating data as illustrated in the table below:

**Table 22: Incidents by Area - Ketchum**

Area	Percentage of Total Calls
City of Ketchum	51%
Ketchum Rural	30%
Sun Valley	13%
Rendezvous North	4%
Mutual Aid South	2%

## False Alarms

False alarms are a drain on a department's resources, and in the case of the Ketchum Fire Department represent the highest percentage of fire incidents. False alarms slightly exceed the NFPA average when compared to the total number of incidents handled.

False alarms prevent emergency personnel from responding to legitimate emergencies, are costly, and subject personnel to the second leading cause of firefighter death – vehicle accidents. Vehicle accidents, in 2005, account for 17% of all firefighter deaths in the United States.

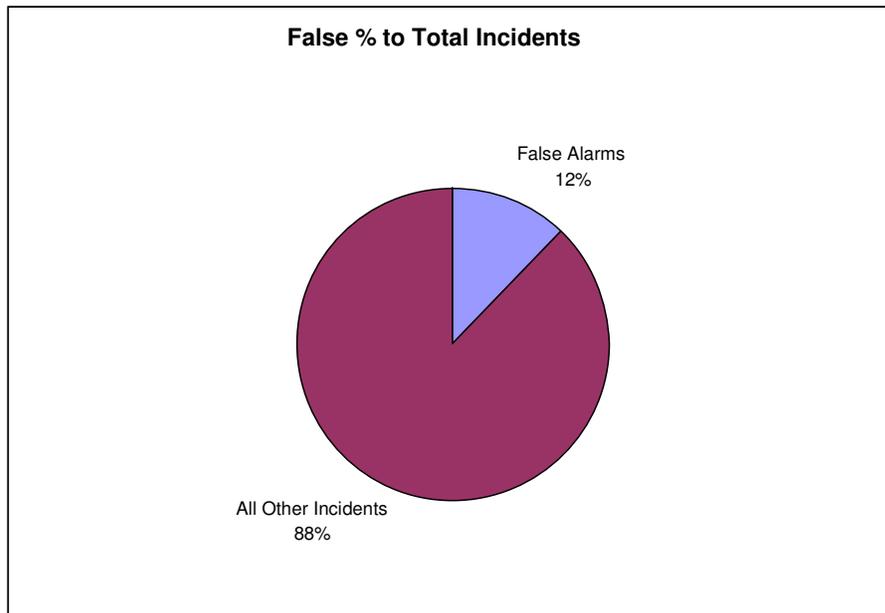
The Ketchum Fire Department provided the following false alarm data:

**Table 23: False Alarms - Ketchum**

<b>False Alarms</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>Total/Average</b>
False Alarms	120	112	105	337
Total Fire Incidents	335	327	306	968
False % to Fire Incidents	35.8%	34.3%	34.3%	34.8%
Total Incidents	905	923	926	2754
<b>False % to Total Incidents</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>

Although false alarms represent 34.8% of all fire calls, they only represent 12.2% of the total calls. NFPA statistics indicated that fire departments responded to 2.2 million false alarms in 2005, which accounted for 9.2% of all incidents. As illustrated in the figure below, Ketchum Fire Department's three-year average of false alarms are **32.6%** higher than the national average for the three-year average study period.

**Figure 16: False % to Total Incidents – Ketchum 2004 - 2006**



Shift personnel should be able to ascertain the cause of most false alarms. It is important to separate alarms that are transmitted due to a situation, i.e. burnt popcorn, verses alarms that are system malfunctions, unintentional, or malicious. Regardless of the cause of the alarm, follow-up as soon as possible by the fire prevention bureau is essential.

Business or home owners who do not repair their fire alarm systems within a reasonable time should be charged for Fire Department responses. The number of false alarms per business or home is a matter determined by the City. However, it is common for City ordinances to allow no more than three per year and charges for fire department response greatly increases for each alarm over that number. Most business and home owners will act responsibly and have their systems repaired immediately. Some, however, might think the fine is cheaper than having the system repaired, so most false alarm ordinances have significant fines attached to multiple false alarms.

## Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid

Mutual aid is an agreement between departments to respond to the host’s emergency upon request. In return, those departments will respond in kind when requested by Ketchum. The Ketchum Fire Department has mutual aid agreements with the following:

**Table 24: Ketchum Mutual Aid Agreements**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Agreement</b>
Sun Valley Fire Department	Written
Hailey Fire Department	Verbal
Wood River Fire and Rescue	Written
Bellevue Fire	Verbal
Freedman Memorial Airport	Written
Sawtooth Valley Rural Fire	Verbal
US Forest Service	Written
Bureau of Land Management	Written
Stanley Ambulance	Verbal
Challis Ambulance	Verbal
Thompson Creek Mine Ambulance	Verbal

Although Sun Valley is listed in the data provided as a mutual aid agreement, in reality the agreement, in most cases, would be better defined as an automatic aid agreement. Automatic aid is a predetermined agreement with another emergency service provider to respond automatically when the host department receives an alarm at a given location or area.

The Ketchum Fire Department listed the following automatic aid agreements:

- Fire automatic aid given:
  - Sun Valley – structure fires
  - Wood River Fire & Rescue – fire calls in their side of the auto aid zone
  - Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management – initial fire attack
- EMS automatic aid given:
  - Wood River Fire & Rescue – fire calls in their side of the auto aid zone
- Fire automatic aid received:
  - Sun Valley – fires within Ketchum’s city limits
  - Wood River Fire & Rescue – fire calls south of the auto aid zone
- EMS automatic aid received:
  - Calls within the City of Sun Valley – by the Sun Valley Fire Department

- Wood River Fire & Rescue – their side of the auto aid zone

The consultants recommend that all mutual and/or automatic aid agreements should be in writing and updated every two years.

### **Recommendation – Emergency Data**

Although the department was able to generate copious amount of data, the consultants were surprised as to the number of items that required hand tally. The Fire Department needs to improve its data collection and retrieval capabilities. Accurate data is essential in managing an organization as well as ensuring cost effective service delivery.

The department was in the process of changing its incident management software program. It would be beneficial if Sun Valley and Ketchum utilized the same recording program. However, accurate data entry can remain a problem regardless of the software program utilized. During interviews with the shift officers, none of them personally took shortcuts in recording the data. They were aware of others who did, however. This is a common challenge in the fire/EMS service and only after considerable training and frequent review of data entry can this challenge be overcome.

The data the consultant requested is critical in any quality control program overseen by the department's leadership. Accurate data allows better allocation of resources and is essential in the planning of future needs. Monthly summaries of the department's activities should include emergency call data, a comparison to the previous year's activities, and be provided to all governing officials in a easy-to-read format.

## **National Standards**

Prior to consideration of the staffing options for the City of Ketchum it is prudent to discuss national standards that impact the fire and EMS service. Those that govern are the only individuals who can determine the implications to the City, inasmuch as most of the standards are not mandatory.

Until 1999, no nationally recognized standards existed for the fire service pertaining to staffing and response times. Unlike law enforcement, and a host of other public agencies that have national standards, the fire service remained absent of such standards. This lack of standards put both the City Council and the Fire Chief at a disadvantage when attempting to ascertain what level of service to provide and what resources would be needed to accomplish that goal.

The City of Ketchum is ultimately responsible for providing fire and EMS protection to its residents. The City has considerable discretion in determining how it wishes to accomplish this responsibility. The majority of municipalities receive protection from either a municipal fire/EMS department or a fire protection district. Other alternatives include private corporations (legal non-profit corporation) or privatization by contract. Regardless of how the City chooses to provide protection, the level of protection reflects the quality of life standards of the community.

### **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)**

Historically, the fire service has made attempts to create national standards for staffing and response times. In 1997, a technical committee (NFPA 1200) and a sub-committee of NFPA 1500 (Fire Department Occupational Safety & Health Program) was appointed to create a standard for both career and volunteer departments. The efforts were abandoned when the technical committee failed to reach a consensus.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is the organization recognized by the fire service for standards and codes. NFPA codes and standards are widely adopted

because they are developed using an open, consensus-based process. All NFPA codes and standards are developed and periodically reviewed by more than 5,000 volunteer committee members with a wide range of professional expertise. These volunteers serve on more than 200 technical committees and are overseen by the NFPA Board of Directors, which also appoints a 13-person Standards Council to administer the standard-making activities and regulations.

In 1999, two separate standards were created and later adopted by the NFPA. The two standards are **NFPA 1710** (Organization and Development of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by **Career** Fire Departments), and a sister standard, **NFPA 1720** (Organization and Development of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by **Volunteer/paid-on-call** Fire Departments).

The determination of whether a fire/EMS organization falls under the standards of NFPA 1710 or 1720 is not dependent on the number of members who are career versus paid-on-call. Rather, the determination is made by the status (career or paid-on-call) of those that make the decisions. Therefore, in an organization like the Ketchum Fire Department, where there are two Chief Officers and career staff, the components of NFPA 1710 would apply. These NFPA 1710 standards are appropriate throughout the city limits of Ketchum.

#### **NFPA 1710 – Career (for both fire and EMS)**

- Four firefighters staffing the initial response (can respond in separate units)
- A Company shall be staffed with a minimum of four on-duty personnel
- First engine arrival within four (4) minutes travel time 90 percent of the time
- And/or full first due assignment within eight (8) minutes (all initial equipment sent on alarm)
- Turnout time cannot exceed 60 seconds
- Staffing level declaration is required
- Alarm escalates beyond an initial full-alarm, the incident commander must upgrade the rapid intervention crew (RIC) to four fully equipped and trained fire fighters

- A safety officer shall be deployed to all incidents which escalate beyond an initial full-alarm assignment or when risk warrants
- Collective bargaining agreements cannot reduce the NFPA 1710 standard

Needless to say the NFPA 1710 standard is more detailed. However, the consultants have highlighted the components that are most significant to the Ketchum Fire Department.

The department needs to develop a quadrennial report. A quadrennial report is a document prepared by the Fire Chief and sent to the authority having jurisdiction (City Council) every four years. This report must include areas not currently meeting the standard, predictable consequences of those deficiencies, and the steps necessary to achieve compliance. The standard required the first quadrennial report due in September 2005.

Specifically, the NFPA 1710 Decision Guide\* states: “Components of the quadrennial report identify the areas within the Fire Department that do not meet the NFPA 1710 standard in the following categories:

- Event types (fire, EMS, Haz Mat, etc.)
- Geographic areas
- First-arriving unit response time (90<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Last-arriving unit response time (90<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Turnout time (90<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- On-scene staffing, first arriving unit
- On-scene staffing, for initial full alarm assignments

By non-compliant geographic area:

- Predictable consequences of deficiencies could include: increased fire loss, increased fire death and injury rates. The economic impact could include increased dollar losses, as derived through a risk analysis

- Steps necessary to achieve compliance could include: addition of fire fighting resources, increased costs to local government, or determination that current level of risk is acceptable

\*NFPA 1710: A Decision Guide, copyright @ 2001, IAFC

Conventional wisdom indicates that the Fire Department could not provide this level of response to the rural fire district. Although a single department cannot be categorized as both a NFPA 1710 and NFPA 1720, it would be appropriate to highlight the standards that should be the expectations within the rural district.

**NFPA 1720 – Volunteer/paid-on-call (for both fire and EMS)**

NFPA 1720 standards are much less restrictive than are NFPA 1710 standards. However, in 2004 NFPA 1720 standards were revised, to include staffing and response time standards. These staffing recommendations were the first required since the NFPA 1720 inception. The response standard is shown in the table below:

**Table 25: NFPA 1720 Staffing & Response Times**

Demand Zone	Demographics	Staffing/Response Time	Percentage
Special Risk	AHJ*	AHJ	90
Urban	>1,000/mi <sup>2</sup>	15 staff / 9 minutes	90
Suburban	500-1,000/mi <sup>2</sup>	10 staff / 10 minutes	80
Rural	<500/mi <sup>2</sup>	6 staff / 14 minutes	80
Remote**	≥ 8 miles	4 staff / NA	90

\*Authority Having Jurisdiction

\*\* Upon assembling the necessary resources at the emergency scene, the fire department should have the capable to safely commence an attack within two minutes 90% of the time

The table above indicates that in rural areas the department would need to respond with a certain number of individuals and within a given time depending on the number of residents living within a square mile. For example: if there were less than 500 residents within one square mile in the rural area, the department would need to respond with a minimum of six firefighters within 14 minutes 80% of the time. Distances greater than eight miles from the fire station (City or Rural) are classified as remote in the above table.

Additional NFPA 1720 standard highlights are:

- Four members assembled before interior suppression at a working structure fire
- Hazardous areas require a minimum of a two person team
- Must have a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) for interior attacks (2 In – 2 Out)
- Tasks cannot be abandoned if critical to perform rescue of firefighter operating at incident
- Initial attack operations shall be organized that allow for less than four members to operate if imminent threat of life or serious injury could be prevented
- Capability of sustained operations beyond that of initial attack
  - Search and rescue
  - Forced entry
  - Property preservation
  - Ventilation
  - Dedicated RIT
- Mutual, automatic and fire protection agreements must be in writing addressing topics of: liability, staffing, equipment, ICS, etc.
- Organized to insure for the delivery of EMS functions
- Patient transport in appropriate vehicle for uninterrupted care while enroute

System requirements include:

- Safety and health system for personnel – NFPA 1500
- Incident management system in place and utilized
- Training system to ensure for the proper training of members commensurate with service levels

It is appropriate for the leadership of the Fire Department to utilize the NFPA 1710 standard within the City of Ketchum limits and have the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District set their expectations to those standards in the NFPA 1720 standard.

It is important to emphasize that NFPA standards are just that, “standards,” and not mandatory by law for a municipality or fire department to meet. However, once an incident occurs, the fire department will be judged on its performance as compared with the NFPA standards. That is why NFPA standards are sometimes viewed as a double-edged sword. The fire department does not have to meet them, but if a serious incident occurs (for example, serious injury or death of a firefighter), the community will be judged against the NFPA standard. It is not recommended that any community intentionally disregard these NFPA standards, but should work to meet them.

## **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**

Before fire mitigation can begin, the following standards must be considered: NFPA, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation 29 CFR 1910.134 paragraph (g) (4). These standards outline the “Procedures for Interior Structural Fire Fighting,” which dictate the number of fire fighting personnel required to be assembled on the fire ground prior to any interior fire fighting efforts. This standard requires two stand-by personnel and two fire suppression personnel on-scene prior to the commencement of interior fire suppression activities. This rule is commonly known in the industry as the 2 In/2 Out standard. There is an exception to this rule noting that if a victim is known to be trapped and there is a chance for a lifesaving rescue such action can be taken, but this exception must be recorded in the incident report. This standard applies to all career, paid-on-call, and volunteer departments.

## **Insurance Service Offices, Inc (ISO)**

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) publishes and utilizes the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) to “review available public fire suppression facilities, and to develop a Public Protection Classification for insurance purposes.” Although the primary purpose of this tool is to rate fire protection from which insurance rates can be established, ISO ratings have been one of the few standards to compare community fire protection. Realizing the true intent of the ISO classification, it should not be the sole determining factor in establishing public fire protection. Rather, the schedule should be considered an instrument for comparison and an additional factor from which to make a decision.

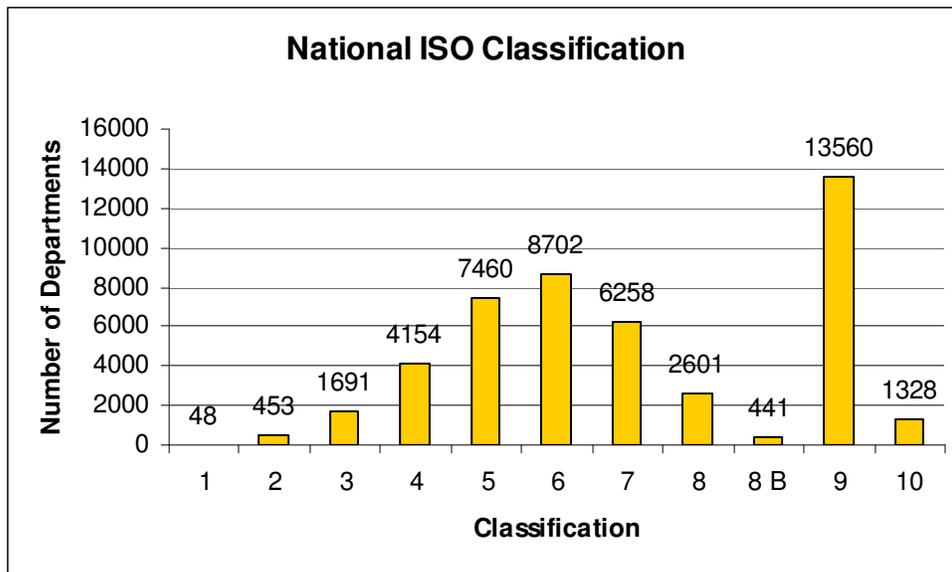
The Ketchum Fire Department was last evaluated by ISO in October, 1999 and was classified as a Class 3/5/9/10 at that time. A combination classification, such as the 3/5/9/10, means the City, businesses, and residents are classified as an ISO Class 3; any building with an approved water supply (dry hydrant or cistern with more than 10,000 gallons of water) within 1,000 feet and within five miles of a fire station is classified as an ISO Class 5; any building more than five miles but within 10 miles of a station and

without an approved water supply is classified as a ISO Class 9, and buildings more than ten miles from a station are classified as an ISO Class 10.

ISO had traditionally reevaluated fire departments every 10 years but in the majority of the states they have reverted to every 15 years due to insufficient staffing. The Chief, however, indicated that the Rural Fire Department would be evaluated in 2007 by the request of an insurance company. It did not appear that the City would be reevaluated at that time. Therefore, the City will most likely be reevaluated in 2014.

In 2006, there were 46,698 communities, nation-wide, that were classified by ISO. Only 3.8% of those departments had a Class 3 rating. This class would include career, combination, paid-on-call, private corporations, and volunteer.

**Figure 17: Nationwide ISO Classifications**



ISO also lists rating comparisons at the state level. Forty-five of the fifty states are included in the ISO data base. Unfortunately, Idaho is not one of the states for which ISO provides state comparisons.

The ISO classification assigned to a community is based on three categories: fire department (50 percent of the total points), water supply (40 percent), and emergency

communications (10 percent). The total points are compared to a chart with ten classes, each of which represents about ten points, for a total of 100 points. Class 1 is the highest and Class 10 is the lowest. Very few communities are Class 1 or 2, and rural communities are generally rated Class 9 or 10. Most urban cities are in the Class 2 – 4 categories, while most suburban communities fall into the Class 4 – 8 categories.

Paragraph 560 of the Schedule states, “the built-upon area of the city should have a first due Engine Company within 1½ miles, and a ladder-service company within 2½ miles.” This distance is recognized by ISO as an acceptable level of fire protection. One can determine how long it takes for fire units to travel this distance in order to meet the ISO standard. Based on the 1½-mile distance standard, a community may determine its desired average travel time by plugging in its approximate vehicle speed of responding fire equipment. Given the topography, road system, actual time and distance studies, it is reasonable to figure an average vehicle speed of 35 mph for the present apparatus, and thus, it would take approximately 2½ minutes travel time to cover 1½ miles. The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule also indicates that when the fire flow requirement is less than 2,000 gallons per minute (GPM) and the area is primarily residential, it is generally acceptable to have the first due Engine Company as much as two miles away. Given an average speed of 35 mph, it would take approximately 3½ minutes to travel two miles. Obviously, higher or lower average vehicle speeds will impact the distance covered and the travel time.

It is important to note what the ISO rating means to the City of Ketchum. The ISO purpose is to determine a fire insurance classification, which may be used in the calculation of property insurance premiums. State Farm Insurance, the largest residential insurer of property in the United States, had previously discontinued the use of ISO in ascertaining insurance rates. They experimented with a zone figure classification, which took into account a number of other risk factors. However, State Farm Insurance has abandoned the zone system and returned to ISO ratings.

An ISO rating is not conducted for property loss prevention or life safety purposes, and no life safety or property loss prevention is recommended by the ISO. The ISO

classification system was designed to be used primarily to figure property insurance premiums for commercial property, not residential properties. Most insurance companies use the ISO rating as a benchmark and then use market data to establish competitive rates for residential properties.

Moreover, about 90 percent of the insurance companies will group Classes 1 – 4 together, and then look separately at Class 5, Class 6, Class 7, and so on. In essence, the ISO rating is only one factor in establishing premiums, and certainly not the primary one. It is this **perceived link** to insurance rates that for years has driven communities to base their decisions on the level of fire protection appropriate for their community.

The value of the ISO rating continues to be questionable as a determining factor in a community's level of fire protection. The ISO survey is not a complete assessment of a community's fire protection program, defenses, or performance. The ISO does not rate response times, the quality of the fire prevention program, built-in fire suppression systems, fire loss and property saved, or the actual competence and performance of the fire suppression personnel and operations. The ISO only rates those pieces of the fire protection program which they feel are important to assign insurance rates.

Ketchum Fire Department's classification of ISO Class 3 should not be interpreted that its continual commitment and resources are not necessary. It is an indication that the leadership of department has made a commitment to service using the best tools for measurement available at the time.

### **Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)**

A better evaluation tool exists today. The International Fire Chief's Association (IFCA) has developed a program, Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), formerly the Commission of Fire Accreditation International (CAFI). The Center for Public Safety Excellence measures the quality and performance of a particular fire service agency and will award national accreditation to those departments that pass the stringent criteria. Any future effort by the Ketchum Fire Department to demonstrate competencies should

be channeled towards the CPSE accreditation. The consultants do not recommend that the department, at this time, attempt to become accredited, but rather that they should use the CPSE standards as the benchmark of quality.

## **CPSE – Standard of Response Coverage (SORC)**

The lack of national criteria by which a community can judge the level and quality of fire, EMS, and other services has been increasingly problematic for community leaders, as well as for fire chiefs, who are faced with increased public pressure to provide more for less money. These same governing officials are hard-pressed to justify any increase in expenditures unless it can be attributed directly to improved service delivery in the community.

Many community and/or district's governing officials have rejected the standards presented in NFPA 1710 and/or 1720 as a "one size fits all" approach to measuring service performance. The CPSE program is a method of measuring performance based on the community's expectations, and serves as the benchmark for evaluating department performance. The standard used is called the Standard of Response Coverage (SORC) and requires self-examination to quantify the department:

- Remain organizationally effective
- Achieve the goals, objectives, and mission of the department
- Identify the areas of success of the department
- Encourage quality improvement through a continuous self-assessment process
- Foster pride in the department with both the internal and external customers

Standard of Response Coverage is determined by the community absent any non-mandatory requirements and consists of analysis of the following seven components:

- Existing Deployment
- Community Outcome Expectations
- Community Risk Assessment
- Distribution Study
- Concentration Study
- Historical Reliability (addresses simultaneous calls)
- Overall Evaluation

What is particularly difficult for those that administer fire/EMS organizations is the absence of the second component – community/district outcome expectations. In most cases, those that govern and provide funding for fire departments concentrate on the fiscal aspects of providing that service. Although this is an essential responsibility for those that govern, many do not articulate exactly what level of service they expect. What are acceptable response times? What level of EMS service do they want to provide to the citizens? What non-emergency services can the fire department provide to the community? Thus, in many cases, the Fire Chiefs, not a unified team of governing officials and fire department leadership, determine the SORC for the community.

Governing community/district officials are constantly faced with the issue that there are more good district causes than tax dollars to provide those services. Therefore, they strive to provide as many services at the highest level as possible with available dollars. Absent “citizen outcry,” governing officials have little incentive or motivation to suddenly change service levels. Thus, fire and EMS services are a “quality of life” issue that must be determined by community/district leaders.

CPSE accreditation is a structured process for documenting the levels of fire safety, prevention, fire safety education, suppression services currently provided, and for determining the future level of service that the department should provide. CPSE accreditation asks the community/district to determine and document if its fire protection services are appropriate, adequate, and effective.

The advantage to the CPSE program lies in the process of completing it. The department must literally examine every aspect of its existence and determine the most cost effective means of providing service. This program requires a time commitment and effort on the part of the fire administration. It is recommended that a single individual be assigned full-time for the completion of this project.

Critics of the program emphasize the cost and time commitment needed for completion. These critics miss the point that the process of compliance with CPSE standards may keep the department and district from catastrophic failure in the system of service

delivery. Other critics claim it is nothing more than bragging rights, similar to an improved ISO classification. Again, the point is missed that a department that develops pride can often translate that pride into better performance and morale, which is priceless.

Some fire departments have incorporated student interns from schools such as Oklahoma State University, which has one of the leading Fire Protection Safety Engineering Technology programs in the Country, to assist the department in the accreditation process. These students usually work 8 – 12 weeks during the summer and live in the fire station, responding to calls for experience. The students receive compensation that has been negotiated with the department. Other students who have graduated from this program are often available to oversee and participate in the entire process, which can easily take 12 – 18 months.

### **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**

The International City/County Management Association collects and publishes data pertaining to fire department operations from municipalities across the country by establishing a standardized format for the collection of data. This allows a district the opportunity to compare itself to other like districts in establishing its benchmark.

The advantage of this data collection is the ability for governing officials to compare themselves to other like districts in a format that is consistent with what they are attempting to measure. The disadvantage is that the ICMA does not set any benchmarks or recommendations, and therefore the data collected is, by nature, subjective to the individual(s) collecting the data.

### **Emergency Medical Services Standards**

The standard utilized by a host of governing EMS organizations such as the American Heart Association (AHA), American Medical Association (AMA), American Association for the Surgery of Trauma (AAST), and others utilize the initial arrival of EMS within six minutes allowing for a four-minute travel time. The AMA notes “every

minute of delay clearly has a huge negative impact on survival.” The American Heart Association indicates that brain death starts to occur within four to six minutes after an individual stops breathing and cardiac arrest (including ventricular fibrillation (VF) or pulseless ventricular tachycardia (VT). The AHA also indicates that for every minute that passes without medical intervention the patient’s chances of survival drop 7 to 10 percent. Patient resuscitation after 10 minutes is rarely successful.

These standards are consistent with the NFPA 1710 medical response standard of four-minute travel response for basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support within eight minutes.

### **Recommendation – National Standards**

The City of Ketchum should not adopt NFPA 1710 nor the rural department NFPA 1720. The adoption of the NFPA 1710 and/or 1720 standard includes the adoption, by reference, to all OSHA and NFPA standards listed. Rather, the Fire Department should utilize these standards as a benchmark for comparison.

The department should familiarize itself with the evaluation standards of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. Any efforts for quality improvement or benchmarking for excellence should evaluate the department’s programs against these standards.

## **Ketchum Fire Department Response Times**

Response time is a calculated measurement used to determine fire department effectiveness in responding to emergencies. There is a direct correlation between response times to fires and the outcome of those fires on life and/or property loss. It can be argued that response time to EMS incidents is as important, if not moreso, than response time to fires. Longer response times to fire and emergency medical calls can have a significantly negative impact on the outcome of any emergency.

Although there are national standards referencing response times for fire and EMS incidents, the final decision is the standards set by those that govern the community. Levels of public safety are truly a “quality of life” issue in a community.

As previously noted, numerous EMS organizations recommend that the initial arrival of EMS intervention should occur within six minutes, allowing for a four-minute travel time. Death to the human brain without oxygen begins to occur within four to six minutes and survival drops 7 to 10 percent for every minute beyond that time. Patient resuscitation after 10 minutes without oxygen to the brain is rarely successful.

These standards are consistent with the NFPA 1710 medical response standard of four-minute travel response for basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support within eight minutes. The Ketchum Fire Department would fall under the NFPA 1710 standards.

With response times to fires, there is a direct correlation between response times to the incident and the outcome of those fires on life and/or property loss. There are many factors that affect the growth of a fire, but once ample fuel and oxygen mix, fire growth can expand at a rate of several times its volume per minute. Time is the critical factor for the rescue of occupants and the application of an extinguishing agent. The time segment between fire ignition and the start of fire suppression activities is critical, and has a direct relationship to fire loss.

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO), the leading underwriting information service for the insurance industry, considers the distribution of fire companies. ISO requires the first due engine company to be within 1.5 road miles of the protected properties and ladder-service company within 2.5 road miles. ISO bases its response time in minutes calculated through a formula developed by the RAND Corporation. The culmination of their extensive studies has resulted in ISO adopting a 3.2 minute response for an engine company and 4.9 minute response for a ladder-service company. RAND concluded that the average speed for a fire apparatus responding with emergency lights and siren is 35 mph. That speed considers average terrain, average traffic, weather, and slowing down for intersections.

The misunderstanding of response time is also compounded by the fact that most departments erroneously consider response time to be the time it takes responders to arrive at the scene of the emergency from the time the fire department was notified. In actuality, this criterion only defines two components of the overall response time: the turnout time and the travel time.

## **Response Time Components**

The actual measurement of response time must be a total system understanding of all components of response time, including:

1. **Detection Time:** The time it takes to detect the emergency incident and dial 9-1-1.
2. **Notification Time:** The time from when the call is received by dispatch to the time the department is notified.
3. **Turnout Time:** The time it takes personnel to prepare and leave quarters after notification.
4. **Travel Time:** The time the first fire apparatus leaves the station to the time it reports on the scene.
5. **Mitigation Time:** The time the first apparatus arrives at the scene to the time when actual extinguishing/treatment efforts begin.

1. Detection time. This first component is considered to be uncontrollable by the fire department. However, there are requirements related to fire detection that some communities require commercial properties to follow. Communities that require automatic detection systems to send an electronic alarm directly to the communication center versus a third party will reduce the time it takes for the fire department to be notified.
2. Notification time. All land-line 9-1-1 calls originating in the City of Ketchum are received in the Ketchum Communication Center. Under NFPA 1221, dispatch time (time the call is answered to the time the emergency unit is notified) cannot exceed 60 seconds. The Ketchum Communication Center provided average notification times for the last quarter of 2005 and the first quarter of 2006. The average for these two quarters was 75.5 seconds.

Cellular 9-1-1 could be answered by either the County or Ketchum. No notification time data was received from the County communication center.

3. Turnout time. The time it takes the fire/EMS personnel to prepare to leave the station after notification of the incident. This time is controllable by the fire department and involves personnel dressing themselves in their protective clothing and equipment and staffing the emergency unit.

Ketchum could not provide any turnout times. Without question the Ketchum Fire Department would be classified under the NFPA 1710 standard. Under NFPA 1710, (career department) the turnout time cannot exceed 60 seconds.

4. Travel Time. This represents the actual time it takes the apparatus to drive from the fire station to its arrival at the emergency scene. Weather conditions and traffic congestion will be a factor in the length of time it takes the apparatus to arrive on the

scene. Under NFPA 1710 (career departments), first due apparatus must reach the emergency scene within four minutes 90% of the time.

Ketchum Fire Department meets the NFPA 1710 standard for areas within the City of Ketchum as well as the City of Sun Valley. To respond to the Elkhorn area, the standard is exceeded by one minute.

5. Mitigation Time. For EMS incidents, mitigation time represents the time the first emergency unit arrives to when patient treatment begins. In the case of a fire incident, it represents the time from arrival of the first fire apparatus to when actual mitigation/extinguishing efforts begin. Although NFPA 1710 does not identify a time within which the mitigation should begin, the standard implies that arriving units should be staffed to allow for immediate mitigation activities.

Therefore, NFPA standards require the Ketchum Fire Department to be capable of beginning mitigation of the emergency incident immediately upon arrival of the first engine, or ambulance.

### **Ketchum Response Time Data**

The Ketchum Fire Department provided average response times for a sample three year period. The times represent the first mitigation unit (engine or ambulance). The average response time for the Ketchum Fire Department were:

- City of Ketchum (core) = 2 minutes
- Sun Valley City = 3.5 minutes
- Elkhorn = 7 minutes

The department was unable to provide a comprehensive list showing the various components of response time for all incidents in 2006. Rather, department members took samples over each year and averaged the data. The core data was never provided to the consultants; therefore, the consultants are unable to determine an average response time as compared to the total number of incidents. The leadership of the Fire Department

needs all the components of response time in order to ensure cost effective and efficient services.

The department did indicate that they anticipate changing computer software for incident recording that should provide these essential numbers. The component of response times is an excellent quality control component in assessing the efficiency of responding to emergencies. In addition, this type of data is requested in any litigation against the department brought by a party who might bring action against the City.

### **Recommendation – Response Times**

The department needs to consider implementing a software program similar to “Firehouse™” that keeps all the components of response time in-house. “Firehouse™” is also compatible with most state recording systems, and thus, rather than sending the data to the state on disk, it can be downloaded electronically. The state of Idaho utilizes both NFIRS and/or the Idaho Fire Incident Reporting System (IFIRS).

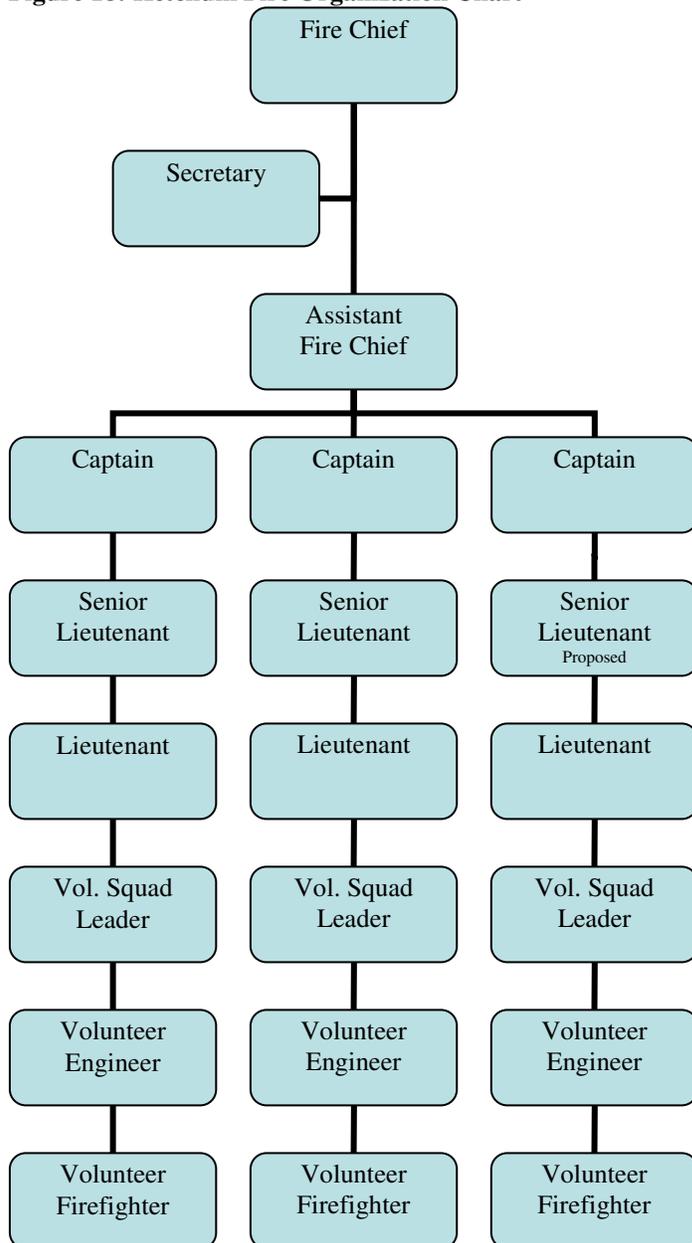
The consultants highly encourage both Ketchum and Sun Valley Fire Departments to utilize the same incident management software program. The Federal government is actively attempting to get fire departments across the nation to standardize their data programs so that national statistics are available.

Regardless of the system utilized by the department, response time data is a critical component and one that needs to be easily retrievable for quality control as well as inquiries pertaining to a particular incident. The department should develop a means of retrieving this information in-house.

# Ketchum Fire Department Staffing

The Ketchum Fire Department has 49 members consisting of 12 career (full-time), 36 paid-on-call, and one civilian secretary. All career members are assigned to the headquarters (City) station as their primary station, and most to a rural station as a secondary response assignment. All of the officers' positions (10) are held by the career employees.

Figure 18: Ketchum Fire Organization Chart



There are multiple factors that influence how communities staff their fire/EMS departments. Factors include: population, size of the area protected, social/economics of area, community risks, level of fire and EMS services desired, fiscal capabilities of the community, future area development, politics, other service provider options, citizen expectations, and availability of mutual aid.

Excluding the secretary, the department has 27 members certified in EMS, or 56.3% of the department members. 8 of the career and 4 of the paid-on-call are paramedics, including the Fire Chief. The remaining four career employees are Advance EMTs along with seven paid-on-call, and five paid-on-call EMT basic certifications as illustrated in the table below:

**Table 26: Ketchum EMS Certifications**

<b>EMS Certifications</b>	<b># of Members</b>
Paramedic	12
Advance EMT	11
EMT	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

Of the twelve career members, the Chief works a traditional 40 hour work week of five eight-hour days. The Assistant Chief works four ten-hour weekdays with Monday and the weekends off; the remaining career members are assigned to a shift. The rank and file shift is an adaptation of the traditional 24 hours on duty followed by 48 hours off duty schedule.

**Table 27: Ketchum Career Work Schedule**

<b>On-Duty Hours</b>	<b>Off-Duty Hours</b>
24	24
24	96
24	48
24	24
24	96
24	24

The cycle than repeats itself and each individual (usually the entire shift) are on their own 19-day cycle. In reality, each individual will work six shifts in a 19-day cycle. One of those shifts might be the (D Shift) which is designed to off-set the FLSA mandatory overtime (covered in the Human Resource section of this report).

The department assigns a minimum of two paramedics per shift and has two shifts with three individuals assigned and one shift that has four personnel assigned. In any given year (except leap year) two shifts will work 122 days and one shift will work 121 days within the calendar year.

The Fire Department provides fire suppression/prevention services to the City of Ketchum with an estimated 2005 population of 3,145; the fire rural district has an estimated population of 5,500. The department is one of two in Blaine County that provides EMS, including ambulance transportation, to an estimated 10,700 people within a 1,000 square mile district.

The department estimated that there are approximately 865,000 visitors/tourists annually, with the peak seasons being Christmas week and Presidents weekend when the population will swell to 10,000 daily. An even larger influx of visitors/tourists will occur during the summer on Labor Day – Wagon Days, a local event, which can increase the daily population to an estimated 13,500. The department will utilize peak staffing, if needed, when these events occur. The visitors/tourists figure obtained grouped both Ketchum and Sun Valley and there was insufficient information to be more exact for each community.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) commonly classifies fire/EMS departments. These four classification include: *Career departments* refer to departments where all firefighters/medics are career employees. *Mostly career* refers to departments that are combination – the majority are career supported by volunteer/paid-on-call. *Mostly volunteer* refers to departments that are a combination, where the majority of employees are volunteer/paid-on-call. *All volunteer/paid-on-call* refers to departments that have no career firefighter/medics.

The figure below compares Ketchum Fire Department staffing to the national average as published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA compares residential population of a community to the type of staffing utilized by the fire department. The consultants will highlight both the fire and EMS comparisons by shading them in different colors.

**Table 28: Type of Staffing Compared to Population - National**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Career</b>	<b>Mostly Career</b>	<b>Mostly Volunteer</b>	<b>All Volunteer</b>	<b>Total</b>
> 1,000,000	73.3%	26.7%	0%	0%	100%
500,000 – 999,999	63.0%	33.3%	3.7%	0%	100%
250,000 – 499,999	47.7%	40.9%	11.4%	0%	100%
100,000 – 249,999	80.5%	14.6%	4.3%	.6%	100%
50,000 – 99,999	71.6%	17.3%	9.3%	1.7%	100%
25,000 – 49,999	44.4%	22.5%	22.5%	10.6%	100%
10,000 – 24,999	20.4%	18.1%	37.8%	23.8%	100%
5,000 – 9,999	3.4%	6.0%	32.3%	58.2%	100%
2,500 – 4,999	0.6%	1.5%	15.1%	82.7%	100%
<b>Under 2,500</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>93.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

 = EMS  
 = fire

Source: FEMA U.S. Fire Administration 2006 – Survey of the Needs of the U.S. Fire Service

Inasmuch as the Ketchum EMS district is considerably larger and has a greater population than just the fire district, the consultants have shown a comparison of both the EMS and fire staffing to population on a national level.

Although the Ketchum Fire Department falls under the NFPA 1710 (career) standard, the NFPA determines which standard applies based on the employee classification of the department’s decision-making members. Whereas, FEMA bases the population comparison on which classification of employees (career or paid-on-call) are in the majority.

The Ketchum Fire Department compares nationally to 37.8% of departments in the US in providing EMS, and 32.3% of US departments in providing fire protection. It is important

to remember that the EMS district is approximately 1,000 square miles and encompasses the entire north half of Blaine County

FEMA also provides population comparison to types of department staffing compared to population for each state. In Idaho 194 fire departments responded to the survey illustrated in the figure below:

**Table 29: Type of Staffing Compared to Population - Idaho**

Population	Career	Mostly Career	Mostly Volunteer	All Volunteer	Total
50,000 – 99,999	66.7%	33.3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
25,000 – 49,999	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%	0.0%	100%
10,000 – 24,999	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	100%
5,000 – 9,999	0.0%	0.0%	58.8%	41.2%	100%
2,500 – 4,999	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	100%
Under 2,500	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	94.1%	100%

= EMS  
 = fire

\* Volunteer could include employee classification of paid-on-call and/or volunteer

Source: FEMA /USFA and NFPA Survey of the Needs of the U.S. Fire Service 2004 – based on 194 of Idaho fire departments responding to the survey.

All of the 192 Idaho department survey respondents which protect populations between 10,000 to 24,999 staff by using mostly volunteer (paid-on-call) for EMS. The department compares to 58.8% of departments in the US (largest category) in how they staff in providing fire protection services.

This national and state data does not include employees assigned to duties outside of firefighting and/or EMS activities, nor does it include fire prevention and support staff.

## Future Staffing Needs

The consultants were impressed with the number of career members who told them that their position was to assist the paid-on-call. These statements were made in a positive manner and with sincerity, indicating that the position of paid-on-call in the Ketchum Fire Department was respected and recognized. Without question the City is very

dependent on the paid-on-call personnel who offer the primary response from the two rural stations.

The Ketchum Fire Department’s minimum staffing is two full-time per shift. When all employees are available, two shifts have three members assigned and the other shift has four members assigned. Two shifts work 122 days a year and the third shift works 121, with the exception of leap years. However, due to time off and moving individuals to cover the D Shift, the department is often at minimal staffing levels.

To determine how often the department is at minimum staff the consultants have investigated how often any single employee might be off. The table below takes into account vacation, sick days, outside department training, compensatory time (at 1.5) and other anticipated and unanticipated employee absences for the current Ketchum membership. The number of vacation days is based upon the tenure of the individual and where he/she is placed in the City’s vacation policy.

**Table 30: Ketchum Employees Average Days Off**

<b>Days Off</b>	<b># of Days</b>
FLSA	0
Vacation	18.6*
Sick	2.5
Other	12.0**
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.1</b>

\* Average of the ten current career employees

\*\* Based on compensatory time @ 1.5 & training

Note that the table above shows no time for FLSA. Under a 19-day FLSA cycle each member would accumulate eight hours per cycle of overtime just by coming to work on their scheduled days. The department, instead of paying this overtime, has created a “D” shift that moves existing members around to offset the eight hours. The consultants will address the FLSA issue in the Human Resource section of this report.

The category of “Other” includes compensatory time paid at 1.5 for hours an employee accumulates when above the FLSA maximum hours in a pay cycle; this includes but is not limited to: training and response to “full page” alarms. An average of 12 days (mostly due to compensatory time) is an inordinately high amount and the department needs to examine methods of reducing the amount of off-duty overtime accumulated by members.

A general rule of thumb for staffing a career department with this type schedule is that one additional employee is needed for every three on shift. This is most often referred to as four-for-three coverage. In reality, a more accurate figure for Ketchum is 0.75 additional employees for every three-shift personnel. This number varies with the average longevity of the group but better represents the current employee tenure and benefits received in Ketchum.

Therefore, if an employee works 122 days a year, and the shift had three assigned to it, and if he/she took the average number of days off (33), there would only be 22 shift days when all three employees were on-duty simultaneously. On the shift that has four assigned, there would be no shift days when all four would be on-duty. The consultants will recommend that minimum staffing be increased to three per shift, which means that four individuals will need to be assigned to each shift.

Although there are numerous methods of determining when the City should hire additional employees versus paying overtime, the decision is usually based solely on the fiscal impact. When the cost of overtime exceeds the cost of an additional employee plus their benefits (approximately +30.2% of salary), it is advantageous to hire the individual(s).

The consultants highly discourage minimum staffing of two and recommend that number be increased to three per shift. There are a number of reasons, but the primary reason is firefighter safety. The consultant has been told that on occasion, Ketchum engines have responded with two firefighters to an emergency incident involving a structure fire. The consultants caution the City in allowing this situation to occur. A two-firefighter engine is

not adequately staffed to protect the citizens or provide safety to the firefighters themselves.

If death or serious injury arose from actions, or lack of actions, by a fire crew of two firefighters arriving on an engine to a working structure fire, the consultants would expect serious condemnation from state and federal agencies investigating the incident.

The Ketchum Fire Department alerts its members both on-duty and off-duty through a signal transmitted over the radio and received by pagers. There are two current types of alarm alerts:

- Single page – limited to fire alarms, ski runs, and vehicle accidents with no reported injuries but leaking of fluids from the vehicle.
- Full page – all other incidents including all EMS calls. The purpose is to notify all off-duty personnel that any simultaneous incidents will need their response as well as to encourage both paid-on-call and off-duty career to respond to the scene. The Fire Chief estimated that 70% of all calls are toned as full page, thereby allowing individuals to respond to the station.

The recommendation by NFPA is that engines should be staffed with four firefighters when responding to a reported structure fire. The principle of four personnel assigned to an engine company has been the topic of considerable research. Significant studies conducted in the late 80's and 90's by departments such as the Dallas Fire Department, Phoenix Fire Department, Seattle Fire Department, and Austin, TX Fire Department have all addressed optimal engine and/or ladder truck staffing.

Engine staffing studies were conducted in the above-mentioned cities to evaluate maximum productivity, reduction of property loss, reduction of extinguishment time, and reduction of firefighter injuries. The results indicate an improvement in all areas when four individuals are assigned to an engine. Assigning a fifth individual only slightly improved the categories, and did not indicate the degree of improvement that four personnel did over three personnel.

With the consultants recommending minimum staffing at three it would appear they are contradicting themselves from the recommendations of NFPA. Although four on the primary response engine is optimal staffing level, it would be cost-prohibitive for the City of Ketchum. Three individuals on-duty accompanied by the Assistant Chief (when on-duty) or help from the rural stations and/or mutual/automatic aid from Sun Valley should minimize the amount of time during which only three individuals are at the scene prior to receiving assistance.

Although the NFPA 1710 standard indicates that engine companies should be comprised of four individuals, it does not require that four individuals be assigned to an engine. Rather, four individuals should perform engine tasks on the fire scene, and they can arrive on multiple units.

The department responds to EMS calls with two individuals (minimum of one medic). A minimum daily staffing of three allows one individual to remain in the station for a simultaneous incident (currently at 11% of the time) and brings some relief to the “full page” that allows all off-duty career and paid-on-call members to respond. Rather, there could be some restriction placed on the number of off-duty career responding to callbacks. For example, the career callback could be limited to just the shift going off-duty, allowing the next day oncoming shift to be fully rested. The one individual remaining in the station would need additional personnel in order to respond to a simultaneous incident, and therefore some of the callback could be directed to the station verses the scene.

The department does not have an excessive amount of members whom they can recall, especially during the weekday hours. However, the overtime cost of allowing all career members to respond on a “full page” is an expensive way to conduct business. Minimum staffing of three on-duty personnel should help to eliminate the need for all career members to respond on all “full page” incidents.

## **Recommendation – Staffing**

Fifty-six percent of the department members are certified as EMTs, and 25% of the department members are paramedics, which is beneficial since the department's primary response (66.9% in 2006) were EMS incidents, not fire. There was an average of one structure fire a month in 2006 and that included fires in Sun Valley where the department responded as mutual aid. Thus, all career (full-time) shift members should be required to obtain and retain the certification of paramedic throughout their career.

The department ratio of officer to line personnel (includes all members) is significant, and slightly greater than one officer to every three line personnel. Certainly, in today's management world, organizations are becoming flatter at supervisory positions. The consultants view the role of each supervisor as follows:

- Assistant Chief – major function is administrative, oversees all operational aspects of the department and assists the Fire Chief in the vision and strategic plan for the department.
- Captain – serves as the shift commander and oversees all aspect of the crews for the entire shift. Depending on the staffing option implemented, this could include crews at two or three stations.
- Lieutenant – is assigned to a particular apparatus or crew and serves as the team leader, ensuring safe operations on the emergency scene.

The position the consultants question is the Senior Lieutenant. Inasmuch as all career (full-time) are assigned to the headquarters station for a normal shift, the following officers could be in the station at the same time:

- Chief
- Assistant Chief
- Captain
- Lieutenant (or Senior Lieutenant)
- Firefighter/medic

In other words a shift of three working a weekday could have one firefighter with four supervisors. In some cases, when the shift personnel are filling in for off-duty personnel, all on-duty shift members could be officers. In either case, the ratio is questionable at

best. The consultant realizes that at large events involving numerous paid-on-call there is a need for more officers. Perhaps the answer is paid-on-call Lieutenants and elimination of either the Senior Lieutenant or Lieutenant at the career level.

All officers are responsible for the productivity of the duty crews when not in emergency situations. This would include training, data entry of reports, apparatus maintenance, station duties, fire pre-plan, public safety education, and other tasks as assigned by the department leadership.

The City of Ketchum should increase minimum daily staffing of the Fire Department to three, which will require four individuals assigned to each shift, or one additional employee per shift. If each individual's starting salary was \$36,564, plus benefits, it would cost the City \$47,606 for each employee, or approximately \$142,819 for the additional three employees.

The City should consider any additional staffing (beyond the three previously recommended) as paid-on-premise in 12-hour shifts. These shifts could be filled with existing paid-on-call members and/or hiring off-duty firefighter/EMS personnel from other departments. Different from a POC member who responds from his/her private life, paid on premise are 'volunteers' who are assigned to be at the station waiting for the alarm. Since the City is requiring them to be there, per the FLSA, the hourly rate must be at least Idaho's minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour or \$61.80 per shift per individual. There would be FLSA issues to be addressed if this type of staffing were implemented.

The City and department should take every effort to eliminate any two-person engine response. Rural engine response should also include a minimum of three when possible, but response time might prohibit this goal.

The department should develop a call-back system that restricts the number of career employees from responding on all "full page." The increase in minimum staffing to three and a call-back policy should greatly reduce the overtime expense to the department.

## **Ketchum Human Resource**

This section of the report will discuss all of the aspects related to human resources – hiring, promotion, policies, and performance management, and it will touch upon compensation, as they relate to the Ketchum Fire Department.

### **Recruitment**

The hiring of personnel is one of the most important functions of any administrator, as the quality of the staff will directly reflect on the administrator and the agency. The hiring of personnel is also a great liability for the City since the organization can be sued for negative hiring and retention. The mentality and skill set of an individual to be successful as a firefighter must be verified through a number of testing processes prior to being hired. The community must also be assured that the individual applying for the position truly wants to work in Ketchum. The applicant should be made familiar with the City and the functions of the position. Too many times, individuals take the job of firefighter only to become discontented because of a lack of understanding of the training and time commitments the position requires. The time and cost invested by a community in hiring and training an employee should not be wasted on poor hires.

The current recruitment process for the City of Ketchum occurs on an annual basis. It has been the past practice and policy of the Ketchum Fire Department to hire career personnel from the pool of paid-on-call personnel. Traditionally, in August of each year, the City advertises in local media releases and radio that it is accepting applications for paid-on-call firefighters. According to the Chief, the department has not yet had a difficult time attracting individuals to apply. The department will sponsor approximately six individuals in the Essentials of Firefighting Course.

Individuals interested in becoming a firefighter are asked to complete an application packet. The packet contains the following materials:

- Welcome letter

- City of Ketchum application
- Ketchum Fire Department questionnaire
- At-Will employment statement
- Disability policy beneficiary card
- Driver insurance information form
- I-9 Citizenship Verification form
- Emergency contact information
- Federal tax withholding form
- Direct deposit payroll form
- Medical history form

Applicants are interviewed by the Assistant Chief and the Training Coordinator with a standard set of questions. Finalists are interviewed by the Fire Chief. In addition, the department asks that applicants come to the fire station for a tour, and to undergo some simple tests for claustrophobia and acrophobia. Finally, the selected applicants are invited to an orientation meeting.

The Ketchum Fire Department has a very thorough process for identifying applicants for paid-on-call positions. The department should be commended for having a tour and orientation prior to the start of the class. This is an excellent way to give applicants a realistic preview of the job responsibilities and time commitment. If the department does not already do this, the tour could also be open to family members. Getting their commitment is a great way to retain members.

As with any process, there is room for suggestions. The following are some areas in the recruitment process that could be enhanced and/or added:

**Job Descriptions** – The consultants reviewed the job descriptions currently in use for the Fire Department. The job descriptions are an essential part of the recruitment process and should be accurate and thorough. Review of the fire job descriptions found them comprehensive and slightly difficult to read. It might be helpful to categorize the

numerous skills and responsibilities on each job description under subheadings in order to assist the reader in identifying his/her tasks as well as the requirements for the position.

Positions below the lieutenant level are not required to operate any office machines, i.e., telephone, copy machines, computer, radios, pagers, etc. The consultant does not assume that paid-on-call personnel are not allowed to use these and if that were the case would challenge the department; thus, the requirements to use this equipment should be consistent on all job descriptions. Paid-on-call personnel should be able to enter data into the appropriate software and complete required reports, and thus there is a need to use such equipment.

The job descriptions for all positions require a certain amount of fire and/or paramedic training. The job descriptions do not indicate, for officer positions, any skills and/or education requirements in supervisory training, or experience at a supervisory level. The duties indicate that the position exercises supervision over subordinate personnel, but does not spell out what those duties entail. The exception is the Senior Fire Lieutenant position, where the position conducts performance evaluations. It is recommended to include more supervisor duties and responsibilities, as well as skill requirements within the appropriate officer job descriptions.

It was nice to see that the position of Fire Chief requires a bachelor's degree. Although this has been a trend in law enforcement for many years, the requirement of a four-year degree in the fire service is relatively new, and thus speaks highly of the City. However, the qualifications for the Chief's position are specific to fire skills rather than administrative requirements, such as the ability to develop and implement a budget, department strategic plan, or supervisory skills. Therefore, the qualifications section of the job description could use some enhancement.

Finally, it would be advisable if each of the job descriptions be reviewed as to qualifications, especially special and/or supervisory training, and utilized during the

evaluation process. The job description, along with an evaluation form, can be a great tool for establishing the professional development of Fire Department personnel.

A copy of the job description should be given to all applicants. In some organizations, a copy is signed by the new hire assuring that he/she is capable of performing the essential job functions. The consultants would recommend a review of the descriptions to ensure that they are up-to-date. The date listed on the job descriptions given to the consultant are September 29, 1998, and thus may be in need of some updating.

**Job Announcement & Recruitment** – A job announcement is developed for each position and posted within the fire station for a specified period.

The consultant did not receive a vacancy announcement for the paid-on-call positions but did receive samples of announcements for full-time positions within the department. These announcements are very detailed and well-constructed. The announcement describes the position as well as the recruitment process, including a timeline of events. If a vacancy announcement is not established for paid-on-call personnel, the consultant would highly recommend instituting the practice. The recruitment process of Ketchum relies on word-of-mouth, and posting the next class may solicit recruitment efforts from the department's current membership.

Although one must be cautious of strictly utilizing word-of-mouth advertising, it is critical that each employee within the City of Ketchum become a spokesperson and market the department to potential applicants. Continual recruitment efforts are essential to maintaining a viable work force. Every member of the department is responsible for recruiting new members. Simply stated, the department that recruits the best is the department that markets itself the best.

As part of the vacancy process, the applicant is to submit an application, resume, and a past performance review. The only comment by the consultant is the need for an application, except for external applicants. Rather, an updated resume indicating what

the employee has accomplished/achieved or completed since his or her time of hire would appear to be sufficient. The consultant is not sure what value completing another application brings to the process.

In addition, the announcement should specify where the applicant can get further information and a copy of the job descriptions.

## **Application Packet**

**Values of Department** – The first item in the application packet is a statement of values by the Fire Chief. The memo sets the groundwork for the types of values and mission of the department to new applicants.

**Application** – The packet contains a standard Application for Employment for the City of Ketchum. The application is not designed specifically for the Fire Department. It would be advantageous if the application form was slightly modified to include a section on certifications and/or licenses held. This would be beneficial not only for the Fire Department, but for the Police Department and other areas of the city where certifications and/or licenses may either be required or preferred. Also, the education section of the application could be modified to include "degree earned" rather than major subjects. An individual indicating 2 years in the college section may not necessarily have an associate's degree, rather only finished 2 years of college. Thus, the type of degree earned, major, and minor would be more informational than what is currently on the form.

The statement near the end of the form asks the applicant if the City can contact the present employer. This statement would be better situated within each employer box, rather than at the end. It can be revealing if an applicant checks that a past employer cannot be contacted.

Finally it is interesting that the application is only good for 30 days. It is not uncommon that applications are usually good for a specified period of time, but 30 days seems a bit short. The consultant recommends moving that to six months.

**At-Will Statement** – The At-will statement is definitely a good document to have. However, this is usually incorporated into a statement given with the employee handbook. In addition, this statement should incorporate that the individual has received a copy of the handbook and is obligated to abide by the policies and procedures of the City.

The consultant questions as to why this statement is signed at the application stage. Although it is not harmful, it would appear better served if presented and signed once the applicant has become an employee.

**Beneficiary Form** – It is unusual for an applicant to sign a beneficiary form prior to becoming an employee of the City. The consultant recommends that this form be given at time of employment and not as part of the application process.

**Personnel Information for Insurance** – The consultant is unclear as to the purpose of this form. Paid-on-call personnel are not eligible for insurance benefits of the City, and as such, this form would be meaningless. If it is for a background check, then the information should be sought after an offer has been made, and prior to start of employment. The information requested – date of birth – although not intended to be used for screening purposes, could put the City in a liability situation for discriminatory practices.

**Employment Eligibility Verification – I9 Form** – Must be completed by all employees of the City at time of hire and maintained in a file separate from the individual's personnel file. Again, since the applicant needs to provide information that can disclose date of birth, national origin, race, this is better left to completion once an offer of

employment has been made. The City's application form asks if the individual is able to work in the United States, and that should be sufficient at this time.

**Emergency Contact Information** – Should be completed at time of hire, not as part of the application process.

**Federal Tax Form** – The application packet contains the federal tax withholding form. However, the instructions specify that this needs to be completed no later than the appointment date. Again, leave this out of the packet and establish a new employee packet that contains the entire post-offer required forms. The consultant did not see an Idaho State withholding form, assuming that the State of Idaho taxes compensation.

**Direct Deposit Form** – Include this form in the post-offer packet, not in the application process. This is information that the City does not want to have unless the individual has accepted employment.

**Firefighter Candidate Questionnaire** – No recommendations on the questionnaire.

**NFPA 1582 Medical History Form** – NFPA 1582 was revised in the year 2000 whereas the Ketchum Fire Department is utilizing the 1997 edition. NFPA 1582 provides guidelines for the Fire Department as to the medical testing of applicants, as well as annual testing requirements for department members. The purpose of this section is to provide confidential medical testing by qualified physicians.

NFPA 1582 4.1 indicates that the Fire Department "shall establish a medical program that includes medical evaluations for candidates and members." This section does not distinguish between volunteer, paid-on-call, or career employees. "The fire department shall have an officially designated physician who shall be responsible for guiding, directing, and advising the members with regard to their health, fitness, and suitability for duty as required by NFPA 1500." At this time, the Ketchum Fire Department does not have a post-offer, pre-employment physical established. Thus, the information gathered

on this form serves no purpose for the Fire Department. Its members are not certified physicians capable of making medical decisions regarding an applicant or current member, and thus this form should immediately be eliminated from the application materials.

At this time, the City is in a discrimination liability position, as well as possible HIPPA violation for soliciting medical information from an individual.

The consultants recommend that the City work with a regional occupational facility to establish a post-offer, pre-employment physical appropriate to the physical requirements of a firefighter. This would include SCBA fit-testing and physical strength testing, as well as getting baseline information on hearing. NFPA 1582 also indicates testing that should be completed on an annual basis for all members of the department, and thus, it is recommended that such testing be instituted.

Any results received from an established physical testing program, as well as other medical information obtained on an member during his or her tenure with the department, should be maintained in a confidential personnel file, separate from the official personnel file. Such information should have restricted access. Recommended personnel able to access the medical file are the Fire Chief (appropriate department head) and City Manager. The Fire Chief can work with the training officer in the event that job responsibilities and/or training needs to be modified due to an individual firefighter's inability to perform the function.

**Oral Interview** – When conducting the oral interview, standardized questions should be used with all applicants along with a uniform grading system. The questions should not only analyze the required skills, education, and background, but also attitudinal questions reflecting the mental aspects of the position, such as the ability to perform well in stressful situations.

The department currently does not have a “formalized” list of questions for the interview process. Rather, they typically ask questions pertaining to where and how long have you lived in the valley, prior experience, why interested, knowledge of any current members of the department, and if they have any arrests/convictions.

It would be beneficial for the department to develop a more formalized list of questions that not only get to the qualifications for a firefighter, but also past experiences or situations that demonstrate the candidate’s ability to handle stressful situations, work as a member of a team, the impact of “running out of birthday party” on the family, etc. If one were to review the job descriptions, questions should be developed that seek both the physical and mental aspects of the position. Although this is a “formal” list of questions, the interviewers can use this as a discussion guide so that the process is less formal and less threatening.

The consultants recommend adding behavioral questions into the mix, and thus, when asking the applicant if they have been involved in a major conflict, the question could be, “Describe a situation when you were involved in a major conflict. What was the conflict and how did you handle the situation?” The rephrased question goes beyond the textbook answer and asks the applicant to describe a time when the individual was actually involved in a conflict situation. This gives the interview team a better picture of the applicant’s understanding of the job responsibilities and the ability of the applicant to perform them.

If a second round of interviews is necessary, these questions should be tailored to the candidate and address questions or concerns that came from the initial interviews.

One note of caution. The application asks the applicant if he/she has had any convictions so this could spur additional questions if it is checked in the affirmative. In talking with the Assistant Chief, it was mentioned that a question was also asked about arrests/convictions of candidates. It is unlawful to question about arrests, and therefore the consultant would recommend dropping this from the list of questions.

**Background Check** – The department currently does not perform a formal background check, but rather relies on information gathered from current members who may know the individual. References should be checked on all final applicants to ascertain the validity of the information given on the application form. It is not uncommon to ask for transcripts or copies of certifications to ensure that the applicant has indeed earned them. Checks should be conducted for any prior illegal activity to protect the City against any negligent hiring claims. The background examination is the most important component of the testing process.

The Fire Department should work with the Police Department to assist in conducting background checks. In some communities, a member of the Police Department participates in the interview process to help gauge the trustworthiness of the applicant. Information obtained from the investigation should be kept in a confidential personnel file in City Hall. The department should ensure that the background check includes verification and/or obtaining of any transcripts and copies of licenses and/or certifications. Copies of these should be kept in the employee's official personnel file.

Because the department hires its career employees from its paid-on-call personnel, the background check should be conducted when the applicant is applying for the paid-on-call position. There is nothing worse than allowing an individual to work as a paid-on-call, and then, when eligible for a full-time position, something in the background check prevents the promotion. This can leave the department in a very sticky situation. Rather, get the background investigation completed at the initial date of hire.

**Medical Examination / Drug Test** – As discussed, the department should set up a pre-employment medical exam. It would be beneficial for the department to work with its worker's compensation carrier and/or local medical facility and design a medical examination that provides baseline health data, as well as tests for any physical conditions that might hinder the individual in the performance of his/her position, including a baseline hearing and pulmonary function test. Because of the cost of

physicals and the protections afforded under the American with Disabilities Act, collecting medical data just for the sake of having it no longer makes sense. All medical examinations should be job-specific and relate to the overall health of the individual to perform the job functions.

In addition, the department should require all applicants be drug tested. Drug tests should also be conducted for all worker's compensation claims, as well as vehicle accidents.

Note: Medical examinations and drug screenings must be conducted after the applicant has been offered employment. Any type of offer communications should be contingent upon successful completion of the medical exam and drug test. The department may consider backing up its recruitment process – to July for example – so that the medical and drug testing can be conducted prior to final selection and the department's orientation program.

### **Recommendation – Recruitment**

Overall, the department has put together a comprehensive recruitment program for its paid-on-call program. Through the tour and orientation program, applicants are not only screened, but gain an understanding of the requirements and time commitments of volunteering with the Ketchum Fire Department. The consultant has made some suggestions to the process. Divide the current application packet into forms and information needed to make a hiring decision and a second packet for when the individual has been given an offer of employment. There should be a time period between employment offer and finalization of that appointment when the applicant undergoes a pre-employment medical screening, drug test, and background check. Once these are completed, the department can finalize the individual's appointment with the City.

Until the department can establish a medical testing program, the use of the Medical Health History should be discontinued. Copies of this form which have already been

completed by members should be placed in a confidential medical file that has restricted access.

The recommendations in this section apply to individuals who are applying to the department as paid-on-call members, as well as individuals who may have previous fire experience and are applying to the department as career employees. Other than the possibility of omitting the training class for already-certified applicants, all applicants should go through the same process. The consultant highly recommends that the department continue to recruit its career employees through its paid-on-call personnel. Nationally, it is becoming harder to recruit individuals for a paid-on-call position, and thus the Ketchum Fire Department may find that future paid-on-call recruitment will become more difficult as the population ages, cost of living becomes a more significant factor, and less individuals “volunteer” their time and service to the community.

## **New Employee Orientation**

The new employee orientation process is an extremely important function for the successful integration and orientation of an individual, and one that is most often ignored. The Ketchum Fire Department has developed an orientation program for new hires and the consultants were given a copy.

It appears that the new hire is given a thorough indoctrination to the department and the operations of being a firefighter. The consultant would suggest that the department establish a checklist of activities that need to be completed, and equipment/uniforms that need to be distributed to ensure that all of these activities are completed. In addition, the checklist should highlight significant policies or SOG's of the department, such as sexual harassment, ethics of the department, etc. The checklist should have a place for the trainer(s) and new hire to sign off, acknowledging that the tasks have been completed and are understood by the employee. A copy of this checklist should be placed in the individual's personnel file.

Once the formal orientation program is completed, the employee should be assigned an individual to serve as a mentor. The consultants do not feel that the organization needs to adopt a formal mentor program at this time, but to assign the new employee a "buddy" within his or her assigned platoon whom he/she can ask questions, be shown the ropes, and be assisted in gaining an understanding of the "informal" organization.

In essence, the more a new employee understands the organization and feels a part of it, the more likely that he/she will have that "Commitment to Serve" and become a valuable part of the organization.

The department has established a very comprehensive probationary program for all new members of the department, including a checklist of activities that must be completed in order to move off of probationary status. The document is very thorough and appears to discuss all of the technical aspects of being a firefighter. Emphasis should also be placed on the soft skills needed for the position, including expectations within the firehouse such as cleaning up, station responsibilities, care and use of equipment etc.

The City has also established a rather comprehensive new employee orientation program. The new hire meets with a representative of the City and goes over the employee handbook and the benefits available. The consultant would recommend that the City also create a checklist that is reviewed with each new hire (can be in groups to be more time efficient) and have the new hire sign a copy of the checklist. This provides documentation that the City has given the new hire all of the necessary information, including copies of appropriate handbooks and policies. The orientation meeting can be utilized to get some of the forms back immediately, while others may need a few days to make decisions and complete.

Group orientation programs are also advantageous in that new hires develop acquaintances with others in the department/City, as well as gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the entire organization and benefits. Relying on employees just to "read" the materials is not always in the best interest of the City.

Overall, both the City and department have a good base orientation program in place and should be commended for their efforts.

## **Personnel Records**

Personnel records have three major functions in an organization. They provide a memory or recall to administration and employees, they offer documentation of events for use in resolving questions or human resource problems, and they provide data for research, planning, problem solving, and decision-making.

While federal, state, and local laws require that certain employee information be maintained, certain basic records should be retained to avoid errors of memory and provide information for making management and human resource decisions.

## **What Should Be In Personnel Files?**

The contents of human resource files vary by organization, but most human resource professionals accept some practices. The following provides a checklist of items that may be included in personnel files:

### Main Employee File

- Offer/promotion/transfer letter(s)
- Application form
- Acknowledgement of by-laws/SOG/employee manual
- Acknowledgement of new policies
- Orientation checklist
- Termination checklist
- Performance appraisals
- Official performance documentation (memos, letters, discipline, recognition, etc.)
- Payroll documentation (change of address, transfer)
- Training requests (with approval and/or denial documentation) (Note: May be kept in a department training file rather than the 'official' personnel file)

- Copies of certifications, licenses, transcripts, etc.

#### Separate Payroll File

- W-4 form
- Group benefit enrollment forms
- Retirement system calculations/benefits
- Insurance claim forms
- COBRA letter sent at time of employment and termination
- Automatic payroll deposit authorizations
- Miscellaneous deductions
- Payroll documentation (change of address, transfer documentation, leave of absences, etc.)

#### Separate Medical File

- Initial physical/medical documentation
- Worker's compensation information (doctor reports, letters, etc.)
- On-going drug and/or alcohol screening information

#### Subject Files Kept Separate

(Usually in one folder for all affected employees; information kept in chronological order or by quarter)

- Child support
- DSS requests (Medicaid, etc.)
- Exit interview forms
- Garnishments
- Immigration Control Form I-9
- Investigation notes or reports
- Litigation documents
- Reference checks
- Requests for employment/payroll verification
- Wage assignments
- Worker's compensation claims

The personnel files should have limited access and be kept in a secure filing cabinet with the City Manager/designee. Access to the general file should be restricted to the City Manager, Fire Chief, and City Clerk. Only the City Manager and designated administrative personnel should have access to the medical file. The person performing payroll functions should have access to the payroll files. Command staff involved in the promotion process should have limited access to potential employee officer candidates. Information should be limited to past performance evaluations, and if appropriate, past

commendations and/or disciplinary notices. Command staff should view no other information within an employee's personnel file.

The City's employee manual has an extensive policy as to where files are to be kept and who has access to what policies. Other than a defined process for an employee to review the contents of the file, the policy is very adequate.

The Fire Department should maintain limited information regarding an employee and what information they have should be kept in a locked file with access only by the Fire Chief and administrative assistant. Information should be copies of disciplinary actions and performance evaluations. All other information on an individual should be kept in the City's official file. During the consultant's visit, it appears that both the department and City have a coordinated effort of personnel information and where it is maintained and who has access.

Individual officers should maintain a confidential employee file that is utilized to store information to assist in the development of a performance evaluation. This documentation should be the basis for the completion of a performance evaluation form or a disciplinary action. Once completed, the official documentation (disciplinary action or performance evaluation), along with the information from the confidential supervisory file, should now be placed in the individual's official personnel file.

## **Employee Access to Records**

The City's employee manual does not have a policy allowing for an employee to access his or her own personnel file. The policy should specify when and how to review the file. The request should be made in writing and there is a set number of days in which the request should be honored; the employee should not be allowed to access the personnel file alone; and finally, copies should be made based upon the request of the employee.

Further recommendations to the City handbook will be made in a separate section of this report.

## **Records Retention**

There are always concerns over the length of time records are required to be maintained. The City currently has a five-year retention policy. Because of lack of storage space, terminated personnel files and other documents are stored in an off-site facility.

## **Performance Management**

Performance appraisals are among the most valuable and important tools available to a supervisor. Evaluations, or performance appraisals, are essential to improving employee performance and the organization. When handled effectively, these reviews can help close the gap between what employees do and what administration needs them to do.

Employees may view evaluations as a negative event, and they can be if not conducted properly. An effective evaluation program should focus on improving the employee and his/ her contribution to the organization.

Performance evaluations are conducted every three months until the individual has passed probationary status. Then, evaluations are given on six month intervals until the individual's salary is at or above the wage scale midpoint or the individual has been in that job classification for at three years. Once either of these benchmarks has been achieved, evaluations are given on an annual basis.

What is interesting about the performance evaluation is that the emphasis of the evaluation and performance discussion centers on accomplishments of the employee over the past rating period, and development of goals and the action plan to achieve these goals for the next evaluation period. The second part of the form is a review or summary of the past evaluation period's performance.

The department provided a copy of its current evaluation instrument to the consultant. The following is a review of the form and process:

The grading system is very simple and direct. There are three options to choose from: Below Expectations, Meets Expectations or Exceeds Expectations. The only recommendation by the consultant is to require the supervisor to develop an action plan for categories that might be ranked “below expectations.” There does not appear to be a place for such comments and one cannot assume that these would be redirected to the goals section of the evaluation form.

The evaluation form should have a few components that evaluate an officer and his or her supervisory skills such as setting and following up on goals, coaching, effective discipline, etc. The focus of the evaluation appears to be more on operational and technical aspects and omits some of the “soft” skills of management.

The employee is able to provide to the supervisor, during the evaluation, comments on past accomplishments or improvements. Since new employees are evaluated every six months, one would expect that the employee should be prepared to provide these statements at the review. However, it would be beneficial if, prior to the evaluation discussion, the supervisor notified the employee that his or her evaluation was forthcoming and to prepare the list of improvements/accomplishments, status of previously set goals and ideas for future goals. This way, the performance discussion can be more meaningful for both parties. It might be beneficial for the employee to complete a very brief form prior to the supervisor completing the evaluation so that the employee comes prepared, and the supervisor gets a heads up on the opinions of the employee. Even if this process is completed, as the performance discussion ensues, modifications can always be made if the direction changes.

Finally, the City’s policy is to complete an evaluation on an individual during the first three years on a six-month basis. It would appear that this entire form would be

cumbersome to complete every six months. Thus, the consultant would recommend that on the six-month review, the current form be re-utilized and a short status update be attached to the evaluation. This serves the purpose of meeting with the individual to discuss the status of the performance, status of goals established, and a determination of a merit increase, yet eases the paper-work portion of the process.

It is refreshing to see that the evaluation process has an impact on whether an individual is granted a step increase rather than what typically occurs with step systems. The consultants encourage the City and department to maintain the system and enforce the non-step movement for poor performers.

Overall, the City and department need to be commended on the evaluation form and process. It is very simple, yet gets to the heart of a performance appraisal discussion.

## **Payroll & Compensation Issues**

First, the department should be commended for adopting an FLSA cycle and for complying with the law under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). However, it would be advisable to specify the Fire Department pay cycle in either the department's standard operation guidelines or in the City's personnel handbook.

### **Paid-on-Call Compensation**

There is a fine line, however, between the definition of a volunteer and an employee. Once the organization crosses that line, all of its practices must comply with FLSA. Under the FLSA, public employers are obligated to pay employees at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation. The FLSA, however, exempts public employers from paying minimum wage and overtime to individuals who qualify as "volunteers" – individuals motivated to contribute service for civic, charitable or humanitarian reasons. An individual who performs services for a public agency qualifies as a volunteer, if:

- The individual receives no compensation, or is paid *expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee* to perform the services for which the individual volunteered; and
- Such services are *not the same type of services* for which the individual is employed to perform for *the same public agency*.

If an individual meets the above criteria for volunteer status, he or she will not be considered an employee covered by FLSA minimum wage and overtime provisions. A public employer can pay a nominal fee to volunteers; the fee must not be a substitute for wages and must not be tied to productivity. The City of Ketchum has created an employment relationship with its members who function as full-time employees, and those who are considered as paid-on-call personnel. Therefore, the department is not exempt from the FLSA and must compensate at least with Idaho minimum wage and for all hours worked. (Note: Idaho minimum wage will increase from \$5.15/hour to \$5.85/hour on July 24, 2007.)

Wages for paid-on-call are divided into three categories: an hourly rate for attendance at drills, a base hourly rate for attendance at an ambulance or fire call, and a flat rate for standby duty. 2006-07 paid-on-call rates are as follows:

**Table 31: Paid-on-Call 2006-07 Compensation**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Drill</b>	<b>Ambulance/Fire*</b>	<b>Standby</b>	<b>Shift Coverage</b>
Probationary Firefighter	\$8.00	\$12.00	\$20.00	\$11.94
Firefighter	\$9.00	\$13.50	\$20.00	\$14.75
Engineer I	\$11.00	\$16.50	\$20.00	\$14.75
Engineer I/EMT Engineer II Senior Firefighter/Advanced Medic	\$12.00	\$18.00	\$20.00	\$14.75
Engineer II/EMT Squad	\$13.00	\$19.50	\$20.00	\$14.75
Engineer II/Advanced EMT Squad	\$14.00	\$21.00	\$20.00	\$14.75
Squad/EMT	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$20.00	\$14.75
Squad/ Advanced EMT	\$16.00	\$24.00	\$20.00	\$14.75
Engineer I/Medic	\$17.00	\$22.50	\$20.00	\$16.38
Senior Engineer/Medic	\$18.00	\$27.00	\$20.00	\$16.38
Senior Engineer/Medic	\$19.00	\$28.50	\$20.00	\$16.38

\* Base rate – paid at time and one-half

For the most part, the paid-on-call salary appears to have some basic logic to it. The more advanced certifications, the higher the drill and call rate; however, there are two classifications that do not appear to make sense – two individuals with the squad classification are at two different rates, although one has .82 years of more of experience. The other is the senior engineer/medic – two individuals are assigned this title, but are in different pay rates. However, the higher pay rate is assigned to an individual with less years of service than the lower pay rate.

It is recommended that the Fire Department develop a written compensation program for paid-on-call personnel. The above chart can be the basis for compensation. However, the department should clarify how one is assigned to the schedule, how years of service affects movement within the schedule, and if appropriate, how attendance at drills and calls affects placement within the schedule.

Based on conversations with the Fire Chief, the paid-on-call pay scale has not been adjusted in a number of years. However, last year, the department expounded and delineated some of the engineer positions, adjusting the compensation levels. The paid-on-call pay schedule should be adjusted on an annual basis. It is advisable that, on a periodic basis, the Fire Chief/designee contact surrounding paid-on-call departments to inquire about current pay practices and make adjustments to the department's paid-on-call rates. It would be advantageous to tie increases to some monetary indicator, such as CPI, as well as surrounding market comparables.

Paid-on-call personnel are paid on a quarterly basis. The department posts the hours assigned to each category and paid-on-call personnel are required to initial the hours recorded. The consultant did not perform an audit to ensure that paid-on-call time sheets were initialed. However, it is prudent that the department continue this practice. A review by personnel helps alleviate problems with incidents not recorded or recorded in error.

Similar to regular employees, paid-on-call personnel should have an established pay cycle. Unlike career or full-time employees, who have a greater chance of working hours beyond the established work cycle (example 40 hours per week), the organization must track hours of paid-on-call personnel and determine if the hours worked have made them eligible for overtime compensation. The department can either establish a 40-hour per week cycle, or utilize the 7k exemption of the Fair Labor Standards Act to determine a pay cycle. It is recommended that the City establish a 28-day cycle for all paid-on-call personnel. Thus, within a defined 28 days, any hours worked above 212 would be paid at time and one-half. The consultant realizes that the probability that this will occur is extremely limited if at all. However, the work cycle must be clearly established and tracked.

In the event a paid-on-call were to work beyond the 212 hours, the question would be as at what pay level the employee is compensated, since a paid-on-call's pay is divided among a drill rate, an on-call rate, and possibly a shift coverage rate. The department would first have to calculate the total rate of pay per category; take the total compensation calculated and divide by the total number of hours to give a "blended" rate to be used, at time and one-half, for the overtime calculation. Example: An employee on a 28-day cycle is allowed to work 212 hours, but works a total of 236 hours. The overtime calculation would be as follows:

Drill time:	24 hours @ \$11.00/hour =	\$264
On-Call time:	188 hours @ \$16.50/hour =	<u>\$3,102</u>
Total regular compensation:		\$3,366
Worked 24 hours beyond 212 – Overtime Calculation		
	$\$3,366 / 236 \text{ total hours} = \$14.26 * 1.5 =$	\$21.39
	Overtime rate $\$21.39 * 24 \text{ overtime hours} =$	\$ 513.45

Total compensation \$3,366 regular hours + \$513.45 OT = \$3,879.45 gross wages

### **Paid-on-call Training Requirement**

There is no requirement, once an employee completes his or her probationary period, for a paid-on-call member to attend a certain number of drills and/or training events within a specified time period. One could make the argument that since these skills are not used on a consistent basis, there is a need to continually train on them so that when an emergency occurs, the individual is qualified to perform the tasks. All career employees must attend a minimum of 50% of the drills; the same requirement should be established for paid-on-call personnel. Although training is important for all members, it is probably more important for individuals who do not have the opportunity to use these skills on a consistent basis. Training should occur on a specific night(s) of the week each month in order for paid-on-call personnel to plan their schedules. As with career personnel, paid-on-call should be required to successfully demonstrate the evolution and the trainer sign off, therefore limiting future liability in the event of a serious injury or death of the member.

### **Career Compensation**

Career employees are placed on the City’s compensation schedule. The City has a step schedule. The City’s schedule is comprised of 9 steps. The range from step 1 to step 9 is 28%, slightly less than a traditional salary range. Also slightly atypical is that the distance between steps is usually equal; however, the range has unequal percentage increases. The job titles of City employees have been categorized into 17 paygrades. This represents the hierarchy of the organization as well as the worth assigned to the position. There is an 11% difference between paygrades.

**Table 32: Analysis of City's Step Compensation Structure**

<b>Step from-to</b>	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9
<b>% Difference</b>	3.5%	3.40-3.43%	3.28 – 3.31%	3.18 – 3.20%	3.08-3.09%	2.99 – 3.01%	2.90 – 2.93%	2.82-2.94%

Note: Differences in paygrades for fire classifications only

Each year the City adjusts the salary schedule and employees receive the range increase. Individuals move to the next step on the schedule on either October 1 or April 1st based upon performance.

Para-military organizations such as police and fire usually experience a problem called compression when these rank positions are placed into a standard compensation schedule. Compression occurs when an individual's salary plus overtime is greater than their supervisor's compensation level. To alleviate compression issues, police and fire personnel are placed within their own salary schedule with a greater percentage difference between ranks. The City's salary schedule has an inherent 11% difference between paygrades, whereas the standard in compensation philosophy is 5% between paygrades. Thus, the City's salary schedule should be sufficient to avoid compression problems within the Fire Department.

One area that could be troubling is the combination of positions and the salary range. Step 1, paygrade 6 of the City's compensation schedule includes these positions: engineer, firefighter and paramedic. Utilizing the formula given to the consultant by the payroll department, the hourly salary of step 1, paygrade 6 is \$13.22 per hour. Thus a new career firefighter, paramedic, or engineer would earn \$36,563/year at \$13.22 per hour and would need to work 144 hours before earning overtime, whereas a probationary paid-on-call firefighter starts at \$12 per hour, but to incent personnel to show up for calls the department pays all paid-on-call who respond to a call at time and one-half or \$18 per hour. (Note: Career employees who are called back for an emergency are paid at time and one-half if hours are above 144, which in most cases means that the call back places the employee in an automatic overtime situation.)

The City's salary schedule should have a paygrade assignment for a career firefighter, a slightly higher paygrade for engineer and in some cases a slightly higher paygrade for an individual who a paramedic license, rather than have one paygrade for all of these positions. A suggestion for the City is to either establish a compensation schedule separate from the regular employee schedule to account for all of the certification

combinations or to establish a base salary and add an incentive for each additional required certification. For example, the City could continue to have firefighters in paygrade 6, but add a \$200 stipend (for example) for a firefighter who has an EMT certification. Either way, the City and department need to work to assure internal equity among all paid-on-call and career positions.

The consultant did not perform a compensation study to see if the base salaries of employees within the Fire Department are comparable to surrounding career departments and/or comparable resort communities.

The consultant would recommend that the City and Fire Department revise the City’s compensation schedule to include all Fire Department positions and appropriate placement within the schedule.

### **Fair Labor Standards Act**

Under the Fair Labor Standard Act, a municipality can designate a work cycle for fire and police utilizing the 7K-exemption component for relief of overtime. FLSA allows the municipality the ability to designate a work cycle from 7 to 28 days. Each cycle has an associated number of hours that the employee is allowed to work before the payment of overtime. Hours actually worked over the allowable amount under the law must be paid at one and one-half the normal rate.

**Table 33: FLSA 7K Exemption Table**

<i>Cycle</i>	<b>Hours Allowed</b>	<b>Hours Worked</b>	<b>FLSA Overtime</b>
28	212	224	12
27	204	216	12
26	197	208	11
25	189	200	11
24	182	192	10
23	174	184	10
22	167	176	9
21	159	168	9
20	151	160	9
19	144	152	8

<i>Cycle</i>	<b>Hours Allowed</b>	<b>Hours Worked</b>	<b>FLSA Overtime</b>
18	136	144	8
17	129	136	7
16	121	128	7
15	114	120	6
14	106	112	6
13	98	104	6
12	91	96	5
11	83	88	5
10	76	80	4
9	68	72	4
8	61	64	3
7	53	56	3

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that overtime be paid for hours worked beyond the established number. Thus, in a 28-day cycle, overtime would be paid for hours worked beyond 212 hours. There needs to be a distinction between "hours worked" and "hours paid." The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that overtime be paid for actual hours worked. Thus, under federal law, an individual who takes time off for vacation, sick, holiday, etc. would receive the hours as pay. However, the hours would not count towards the calculation of overtime.

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that the organization specify its work cycle. The City of Ketchum has established a 19-day cycle. Thus, an individual must work in excess of 144 hours in a 19-day period to be eligible for overtime. Per the employee handbook, overtime is calculated on a combination of hours worked (in excess of 144 hours) and on hours paid. When an individual is scheduled for holiday or vacation time, those hours are not only paid, but also are utilized to determine if an individual has gone into an overtime status. An individual who takes time off and designates it as sick time gets paid for those sick hours used, but the hours are not utilized in the computation of overtime.

### **Current System**

The Ketchum Fire Department has an established 19-day cycle for all career, non-exempt employees. However, unlike traditional compensation programs, the City has not established a set 19-day period in which overtime is calculated, but rather each individual (or shift) has its own 19-day period. Within that 19-day period, the career employee's hours are tracked, and bi-weekly payroll is submitted to the City. Employees are paid for all hours worked within that pay period, as well as any overtime that has been calculated within the 19-day cycle. Although the department has developed a rather unique interpretation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, it is legal and has limited the use of overtime.

Overtime, however, still has a financial impact to the City, not because of the 7k exemption work cycle, but due to the insufficient full-time staffing. Career employees are regularly called back to duty to cover emergencies, resulting in overtime compensation above the 144 hours. The consultant, therefore, is not making any recommendations to alter the work cycle, but rather the department needs to analyze its minimum staffing requirements.

## **Recommendations – Payroll & Compensation**

The department should establish a written policy defining work cycle for all paid-on-call personnel. The consultant recommends a 28-day cycle.

The City and Fire Department need to evaluate the compensation schedule. Although the overriding philosophy of the organization is that "career employees supplement paid-on-call personnel," and career employees receive benefits, the compensation should have more internal equity.

The department should conduct periodic reviews of surrounding departments' pay practices and adjust paid-on-call and career compensation accordingly. The established paid-on-call schedule should be adjusted annually to maintain its market competitiveness.

## **Promotion**

The department has a process in place for individuals who want to advance within the department. When needed, the department posts the position(s) that will be tested for. Interested individuals must complete an application, submit a resume, and forward a copy of their last performance evaluation to the designated individual by the established date. For most positions, an assessment center is developed and all candidates participate. Individuals are ranked and the top three individuals proceed to formal interviews.

The department should continue with an assessment center testing process. In addition, the department should update the job descriptions to include promotional requirements so that all employees know the position's required skills, abilities and qualifications. Qualifications for upper ranks should also include either coursework and/or training in supervisory skills.

Other than updating job descriptions to ensure all skills and qualifications are listed, there are no recommendations to change the promotional process.

## **Policies & Standard Operating Guidelines**

While there are pros and cons to having an employee handbook, most organizations find that when properly written and administered, the pros outweigh the cons. Traditionally, an employee handbook is a document that contains the policies of the organization. A Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) manual contains procedures for department specific policies, care and use of equipment, and daily operational procedures.

What organizations often fail to realize is that the way the employee handbook is structured communicates the organizational culture of the organization. Thus, for paramilitary organizations such as police and fire, the manuals tend to be more structured, whereas organizations that are customer service-oriented will have more philosophical manuals, explaining the reasons for the policy. Neither is right or wrong, but is reflective

of the message that the governing officials want to communicate to employees. The consultants briefly reviewed the current City handbook.

The following is a brief critique on the City's handbook:

Format/Structure:

- o Well laid-out and easy to find information.
- o Nice incorporation of different policies relating to the Fire Department.

*Code of Ethics and Values:* Very nicely done. Hopefully emphasized during new employee orientation.

*3.7 Personal Telephone/Cell Phone Calls:* Suggest strengthening the language regarding cell phone usage during work hours. Add a statement that it is management's discretion to determine if an individual is utilizing either City or cell phones excessively.

*3.8 Electronic Mail:* The last line of section 3.8.1 indicates that "Employees may be granted an exemption by their respective Department Head." The consultant is unsure as to what this means. All electronic communications are subject to open records or inspection by the municipality, and thus there is no exemption or perception of confidentiality of electronic communications.

*3.1.2 Political Activities:* The City may wish to consider adding to the policy the status of an employee who wishes to run for a municipal office. Some organizations require the individual to resign his/her employment once his/her candidacy has been established; others require the individual to resign in the event the individual is elected to the position. The preference of the City of Ketchum should be clearly delineated in this policy.

*4.0 Discriminatory Harassment Policy:* The City may wish to consider adding a paragraph to the policy indicating that individuals who are found to have filed a false claim of discrimination will be investigated, and subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

*8.4 Freeze on Step Increases:* The City's policy is to limit the increases of individuals who attain step 9. Once an individual reaches the top step, for two years the individual is eligible to receive the cost-of-living increase, and after that, the salary is frozen. Considering the City's salary range is only 28%, and the number of increases during the first three years of employment, the freezing of salaries would appear to dis-incent employees and/or cause morale problems. The consultant would recommend reexamining either the distance between step 1 and step 9, or allowing an individual with acceptable performance to continue to receive the cost-of-living increase and maintain at the top step.

*8.11 Payroll for Salaried and Hourly Employees:* Add the established pay cycle for paid-on-call employees.

*8.18 Work Week Defined:* The section defines hours worked – typically utilized for the calculation of overtime benefits. Federal law constitutes all hours paid, but not physically worked – vacation, holiday, sick – as time not used in the calculation of overtime. Organizations can go "above" the law and designate benefit hours as hours eligible for overtime – again, vacation, sick, etc. The Fair Labor Standards Act allows public employees to earn compensatory time or take time off in lieu of receiving pay, as long as the compensatory time is earned and taken at time and one-half. It is very unusual to see the use of compensatory time included in the definition of hours worked. Thus, an employee can earn additional overtime while using compensatory time – in short, a form of double dipping. The consultant would recommend eliminating use of compensatory time as time worked for the calculation of overtime.

*8.20 Compensatory Time:* The City should establish a limit to the amount of overtime that can be earned within a defined period of time. The policy states that forty (40) hours of compensatory time may be carried into the following year. However, a deadline should be established as to when that carry over has to be used or paid out. The longer it is carried by the City, the higher the wage is paid out. The policy does not state whether

fire personnel are eligible to accrue compensatory time. If they are not, it should be stated. If they are, a limit should also apply.

*8.24 On Call Pay:* The policy should spell out what is on-call pay, and who is eligible for such pay. The policy is very vague and confusing.

*8.28 Demotions:* Demotions for non-performance reasons usually result in a pay freeze, and having the pay red-circled rather than giving the employee a pay decrease. This is something the City may want to consider, especially if the demotion is no fault of the employee.

*8.32 Military Leave:* The City may want to consider placing a cap on the payment of the salary differential between military and regular pay.

*9.3 Holidays:* As with compensatory time, the City may wish to consider placing a date upon which the carried over holiday time must be used or paid out.

*9.4 Other Disability Leave:* The consultant does not understand the exemption of pregnancies in this policy. Pregnancies cannot be treated differently from other disabilities.

*9.7 FMLA:* There is a bold statement regarding employers of less than 50 employees. The statement should be eliminated since the City of Ketchum is greater than 50 employees. The policy should state that all other time off provisions – disability, leaves of absence, etc. -- run concurrently with FMLA.

*10.6 Removal of Statutory Employees:* It might be beneficial to give a sample list of what constitutes a "statutory employee."

*12.1 Personnel Records:* The policy should outline a process for employees to view the contents of his or her personnel file. Policies usually include the requirement of a written

notice; a set number of days in which the City must comply; the employee cannot view the file alone – a representative of human resources is with the person; the file cannot be taken out of the office; and copies will be made upon request.

Suggestions for future policies:

**Table 34: Missing Policies**

Missing policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inclement weather – business closure</li> <li>▪ No solicitation &amp; distribution rules during work hours</li> <li>▪ Telephone usage / courtesy</li> <li>▪ Uniforms / general appearance guidelines</li> <li>▪ Jury duty guidelines</li> <li>▪ Welcome statements</li> <li>▪ Policy for pregnancies within the Fire Department</li> </ul>
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In addition to the City employee manual, each department should have a manual(s) that specifies the operations and policies of the department. The employee should be required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt, similar to the general employee manual, and the copy should be placed in the personnel file.

Finally, many organizations are taking advantage of internal Intranets to publish employee handbooks and SOP manuals. The obvious advantage is the ability to update and communicate the change to all employees in an efficient manner. Regardless of the format – on the internet, or in paper form – employees should complete some acknowledgement that they are aware of the policies, that it is their responsibility to know and understand them, and that failure to comply with policies may result in termination of employment, and the form should be placed in their respective personnel file.

**Standard Operating Guidelines**

As previously stated, a Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) manual contains procedures for department specific policies, care and use of equipment, and daily operational procedures. The Ketchum Fire Department provided the consultants with an

electronic copy of the department's SOG's. Overall, the files appear to be comprehensive, but are in need of updating and codifying. There are a number of policies that are repetitive in different files; others are mere memorandums rather than policy, along with opinion letters. The uniform policy, for example, appears in three different areas, all with different dates, and in some cases different criteria.

In some of the files there is no table of contents, and thus it would be difficult to locate a policy, let alone know if it is the most current. Most items do not have adoption and/or revision dates.

It is recommended that the department complete a revision and update of the entire manual. Policies which are covered within the City employee handbook but are different in the Fire Department should be spelled out. As with the City handbook, fire personnel should be expected to sign an acknowledgement that they have access to and that the manual has been reviewed (most likely during the probationary period), so that all employees understand the rules and regulations of the department. It is further recommended that as the training officer designs drills and training programs, the appropriate SOG be distributed to all personnel in the training program. This should also be a mechanism to update the policy as procedures change.

## **Succession Planning/Turnover**

All organizations need to be concerned with succession planning and turnover, especially as the United States population is aging, and fewer individuals are entering the workplace. The Ketchum Fire Department has some issues to deal with regarding the age and years of service of its members. Sixty-one percent of its current members (paid-on-call and career) are under the age of 40. In addition, 54% of the current department has five years or less of service with the City.

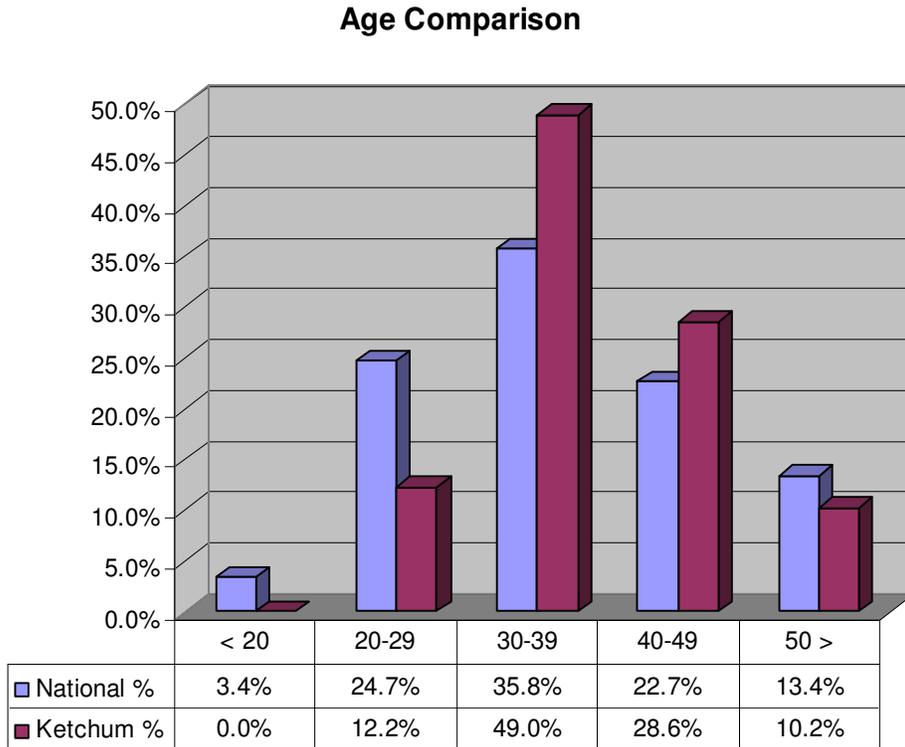
**Table 35: Ketchum Age Breakdown**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
Under 20 years of age	0
21 – 30 years of age	6
31 – 40 years of age	24
41 – 50 years of age	14
51 – 60 years of age	4
Over 61 years of age	1

**Table 36: Ketchum Years of Service**

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b># of Members (paid-on-call &amp; Career)</b>
Probationary	5
1 Year	8
2 Years	3
3 Years	4
4 Years	4
5 Years	2
6 Years	2
7 Years	2
9 Years	1
10 Years	1
11 Years	1
12 Years	3
13 Years	1
14 Years	3
16 Years	1
19 Years	1
21 Years	2
27 Years	2
30 Years	1
32 Years	1

**Figure 19: Age Comparison to National - Ketchum**



In comparison to the national average, the Ketchum Fire Department has a younger workforce than the average fire department in the 20 – 29 category. However, as with the national average, 60% of its workforce is under the age of 40. This can create challenges for the department in retaining younger workers, especially those who tend to have larger family commitments when in the late 20’s to mid-30’s.

Nationally, the highest turnover in paid-on-call members occurs within the first year, while 38.6% of turnover occurs within the first five years. On average, the consultants found that in most paid-on-call departments, only one in three recruits remains with the organization after one year from entry. This turnover rate increases to an additional 23.9% by the ten-year anniversary date.

**Table 37: Ketchum Reasons for Leaving the Department**

<b>Reason for Leaving</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
Relocation	3	0	6
Too Much Time Commitment	2	5	2
Terminated	4	0	0
Retired	1	1	
Elected to Office	1	1	1
Other	1	0	1
Total	12	7	10

The consultant has concern over the numbers of individuals that are leaving due to too much time commitment and those being terminated. The reason for two of the four terminations in 2006 was due to lack of emergency response. Thus, it is recommended that the department step up its efforts during the interview process to inform individuals of the time required to serve as a paid-on-call firefighter. During the interview and tour process, as previously suggested, it might be beneficial to invite family members to the event so that they also understand the commitment. Further, invite a prospective member to ride-along for a shift, again to gain an understanding of the type of work and commitment required of an individual.

Another area of concern is the number of probationary firefighters who have left the organization either by choice or by the Fire Chief. In 2006, 6 of the 12 terminations were probationary firefighters, almost the entire group that the department sent to the training course. Again, this is a reflection of the hiring process and the need to thoroughly interview individuals to understand their goals and aspirations in becoming a volunteer, as well as the individuals gaining an understanding of the commitment to the job responsibilities.

What is also concerning is that the recruitment process occurs only once per year, August with a September emergency training course. If individuals graduate from the course by October and leave within five months, that leaves the department short-staffed for almost another year. The department might want to look at running the training course two times per year in order to keep a flow of recruits in the process.

Individuals volunteer to serve their community because there is a need to fulfill some level of commitment not found in their regular job. Thus, it becomes incumbent on the administrative staff to find what that need is and try to fill it. Further, individuals will commit to serving if they feel that they are part of a group and that their services are needed. Thus, the department may want to look at its policy of not requiring paid-on-call personnel to attend a certain number of drills, as those events can serve dual purposes. The first ensuring the individuals are adequately trained to perform the functions of the job, as well as a social event. Many volunteer organizations have a social after the training event to promote the camaraderie and fellowship within the members.

In addition to socials, the department needs to focus on reward and recognition of those individuals who have completed training events, years of service, etc.; again, trying to fulfill the individual's need for volunteering.

The last challenge of a young workforce is keeping them interested in the job, hopefully for a long time. With a small organization, chances for promotion are rare, and thus the Fire Chief needs to be creative in keeping individuals interested, trained, and challenged. Promotion of training, specialized certifications (beneficial to the organization) and the ability to participate in the leadership of the organization need to be emphasized within the department. As suggested previously, possibly restructuring the compensation program to allow for additional stipends/compensation for achieving additional certifications; developing an "acting" pay program, etc. are ways in which members can participate in a variety of emergency activities without getting bored and disinterested. This is especially important as time commitments from work and family pull on the member.

The combination of a young workforce with less than five years tenure with the organization will be a challenge for the Fire Chief and administration.

## Ketchum Station

The City of Ketchum has a single fire station (Station 1) within the City Hall complex located at 480 East Avenue North. The Ketchum Rural Fire District has two facilities: Station 2 (Greenhorn) located 5 miles south of Ketchum on State Highway 75, and Station 3 (Griffin Butte) located 3 miles north on State Highway 75. The rural stations are staffed with Ketchum Fire Department personnel.

Station 1 was built in 1973 as a car dealership. The City purchased the building in 1979 and converted it into its present usage. Currently, the building houses all of the City Hall offices, Police Department, and Fire Department. Although the building has been renovated over the years it is inadequate for the needs of a modern fire department. The entire complex is not consistent with the image of the community or the surrounding businesses.

Station 1 serves as the Headquarters station and is approximately 7,155 square feet:

- 5,307 square feet – apparatus
- 1,848 square feet – offices and living quarters, most of which comprise a portion of the second floor

The Fire Chief's office is on the first floor near the entry to City Hall, and is separated from the fire personnel area on the second floor. The Assistant Chief's office is in the corner of the apparatus bay, and had been converted from a storage area.

There are five apparatus bays, each having a 12 x 12 foot overhead door. The two ambulance bays exit onto Fifth Street, whereas all the remaining fire apparatus exit through the three remaining bays onto Alpine (the size of an alley) at the rear of the station. All apparatus needs to be backed into the station bays. The career personnel have a limited amount of space on the second floor, which includes three bedrooms, offices, kitchen, and living area. Access to the apparatus is either by sliding a fire pole (damaged by being hit by a truck) or descending a staircase.

This building is of masonry non-combustible construction but is not ADA compliant, including no elevator to second floor areas. The facility has an emergency natural gas generator, which powers dispatch and some of the fire station, including the overhead apparatus bay doors during power failures. The apparatus floor has a partial apparatus emission exhaust system.

The City of Ketchum fire station drive time map (Appendix C) illustrates (yellow line) a four minute drive time, consistent with NFPA 1710, under normal road conditions. The Insurance Service Offices, Inc. (ISO) engine 1½ mile standard is illustrated as a circle (blue line). Drive times would be increased under heavy traffic and/or adverse weather conditions.

Appendix D illustrates the same information as Appendix C, with the exception that the mapping parameters were reduced allowing the mapping program to show the secondary streets. Drive time and ISO parameters remained unchanged.

## **Engine Emission Exhaust**

Station #1 has a partial system (three of five bays) emission exhaust system, although at the time of the apparatus survey none of the system was connected to the apparatus. Station #2, which is comprised of two facilities has no emission exhaust in the north building but has a system in the south building. Station #3 does have an emission exhaust system for two of the bays.

Apparatus emissions, diesel, and other engine exhausts have been proven to be harmful to the health of those exposed even at low concentrations for an extended time or within an environment that subjects individuals to this exhaust. The lack of an approved OSHA and/or NFPA exhaust removal system is a proven health and safety issue.

There is disagreement in the industry on what is an acceptable apparatus emission exhaust system. The issue is: should engine emission exhaust be captured directly from

the apparatus before being released into the atmosphere of the station, or can it be released into the station and have air monitoring systems (usually ceiling mounted) that detect exhaust fumes and scrub the air to remove the impurities. Currently, all three stations have an air scrubber system. The argument as to the best system is further complicated by which code is used in addressing engine emissions.

The revised NFPA 1500-43, 2002 edition, section A.9.1.6 addresses exhaust emission, "...no less than **100% effective capture.**" 100% capture does not allow for the release of the fumes into the apparatus bay, but rather they are removed by an exhaust system hooked directly to the apparatus' exhaust. The State of Wisconsin has a cancer presumption bill that protects employees who after five years of being a firefighter develop the medical condition of cancer which wasn't detected at the hiring physical. They or their surviving spouse are able to collect benefits at the expense of the municipality. Although Idaho currently does not have similar legislation, many state firefighter unions have been investigating such.

The consultants believe that conventional wisdom suggests that 100% capture prior to release into the environment has greater health benefits than releasing the exhaust into the station and then attempting to clean it. However, no system is fool-proof and individuals must follow procedures that require the running of apparatus engines outside the facility whenever possible. Even with this being accomplished, most fire departments will, during apparatus check, start small engines (i.e. gasoline powered saws) during the daily or weekly apparatus equipment check. These fumes are not captured by a system that attaches directly to the apparatus. Therefore, the consultants are now finding that many new fire/EMS facilities utilize both systems; one system that hooks directly to the apparatus and a smaller system of air scrubber(s) to remove any other type of exhaust emissions.

### **Recommendation – Emission Exhaust**

The removal of engine emissions is very necessary. How they should be removed is a point of disagreement especially between the manufacturers. The consultants believe that conventional wisdom suggests that capturing and removing emissions prior to release to the atmosphere would be preferable than releasing emissions and then attempting to remove them from the air. However, the department should have the manufacturer show that they meet both the OSHA and NFPA standards on exhaust emissions in any future exhaust system installation.

### **Recommendation – Fire Station #1**

At best, the Station #1 is inadequate for today's fire and EMS delivery needs. Significant renovation to the existing building is not recommended, but rather replacement is needed. The consultants witnessed mold growing in the living areas, the building lacks a fire suppression sprinkler system, the air compressor filling station lacked needed safe guards, the apparatus floor was uneven and difficult to walk, and overall the building is showing its age. The City of Ketchum needs to replace its Headquarters Fire Station with a modern five-bay drive-thru facility which includes housing for career and paid-on-call members. The consultants will recommend a joint facility with Sun Valley, which can better serve both communities, in the consolidation section of this report. If the City chooses not to consolidate, a new headquarters station should be built close to the existing facility.

### **Rural Fire Stations**

Station #2 complex is owned by Ketchum Rural Fire District and located at 12226 Highway 75 and 100 Fire Station Drive and referred to as the Green Horn Station. The complex consists of two fire stations separated by a large driveway and parking area. A total of six housing units are available for paid-on-call members to live.

The northern building (100 Fire Station Drive) has three apparatus bays: one door opening 10 x 8 and two door openings 10 x 12. A fourth bay is a garage for living units attached to the station. The building was built in 1989 and lacks an apparatus emission exhaust system and emergency generator. The building consists of approximately 3,666 square feet:

- 1,480 square feet – apparatus
- 1,629 square feet – two living units
- 557 square feet – residential garage

Attached are two residential apartments: a one bedroom and a two bedroom. Two residential duplex buildings (total four apartments) are behind this facility as living quarters built in 2003 for paid-on-call members.

The southern building (95 Fire Station Drive) has two apparatus bays with 14 x 12 overhead doors. The building was constructed in 2003 and has approximately 2,166 square feet of apparatus and support area. The building lacks an emergency generator but does have an emission exhaust system that hooks directly to the apparatus.

Total square footage of Station #2 is 10,818 square feet, with 4,300 utilized for apparatus and support and 6,518 square feet for residential.

The Rural Station #2 driving time map (Appendix E) illustrates (yellow line) a five-minute drive time under normal road conditions. This drive distance would be increased under adverse weather or heavy traffic conditions.

Station #3 is located north of Ketchum at 13100 Highway 75 and is referred to as the Griffin Butte Station. The fire station consists of a single three-bay facility with 12 x 12 overhead doors. The building was constructed in 1994 with masonry noncombustible material, and two residential units were constructed in 1998 for the paid-on-call live-in members, each with a garage. The station has no emergency power generator but does have an approved emission exhaust system.

The total square footage of Station #3 is:

- 2,719 square feet – apparatus
- 2,500 square feet – residential

The Rural Station #3 driving time map (Appendix F) illustrates (yellow line) a five-minute drive time under normal road conditions. This drive distance would be increased under adverse weather or heavy traffic conditions.

### **Recommendation – Fire Station #2 & #3**

Both stations are in excellent condition and from the exterior appear in good shape. Both stations need emergency power in case of power failure. The longer a power failure, the more likely emergency services will be needed, so fire stations facilities should be equipped with emergency generator to power as close to 100% of the buildings needs as possible.

The facilities that do not have apparatus emission exhaust systems should be renovated to include this OSHA and NFPA required systems. Lack of emission exhaust removal system is a health issue for those that work or live in that environment.

## Ketchum Apparatus

The City and Rural District, as well as the Blaine County Ambulance District, own apparatus that will be covered under this section. All of this apparatus is staffed by employees of the City of Ketchum and the apparatus is either housed in the City or Rural fire stations.

NFPA 1901 “Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus” sets the standard for new fire apparatus used in any aspect of fire protection. Although at one time there was discussion of a standard of life for apparatus, the efforts were abandoned because of the diversity of apparatus usage throughout the country. However, the NFPA standard does address the need to replace or renovate any apparatus that is 24 years old or greater.

Apparatus life expectancy varies greatly based upon usage, preventive maintenance, environmental factors, and the community’s ability to generate replacement funds. Another significant factor in equipment replacement is the rapidly changing technology, much of which is directly related to firefighter safety. Therefore, apparatus technology becomes a factor when considering replacement.

The following apparatus is housed in the City of Ketchum fire station located at 480 East Avenue North.

**Table 38: Ketchum Apparatus Station #1**

ID#	Type	Make	Year	Pump GPM/Tank	Status	Owner
AT	100' Tower Quint	Sutphen	1987	1500/300	In Service	K/SV
E1	Engine	Pierce	2004	1500/750	In Service	K
E10	Engine	Vanpelt	1984	1500/1000	In Service	K
A21	Ambulance	Chevy	2002		In Service	AD
A23	Ambulance	Chevy	1997		In Service	AD
SQ1	Squad/Support	Suburban	2001		In Service	K
C1	Chief Car	Ford	2002		In Service	K

K = City of Ketchum

K/SV = Joint Ketchum & Sun Valley (includes those owned by the Volunteer Association)

AD = Ambulance District

The following apparatus is house in Station #2, the building owned by the Rural District located at 12226 Highway 75 – 100 Fire Station Drive:

**Table 39: Ketchum Apparatus Station #2**

ID#	Type	Make	Year	Pump GPM/Tank	Status	Owner
E2	Engine	Pierce	2003	1250/750	In Service	R
E20	Rescue/Brush	Ford	1990	250/300	In Service	R
T2	Tanker	Kenworth	1990	500/3000	In Service	R
A22	Ambulance	Fore F-350	1992		In Service	AD
TR	Technical Rescue	Ford F-250	2006		In Service	K/R
	Haz Mat Trailer	Wells Cargo	2005		In Service	*

R = Rural District

AD = Ambulance District

\* = Multiple owners: City, District, Hailey, Wood River

The following apparatus is housed in Station #3, the building owned by the Rural District located at 13100 Highway 75:

**Table 40: Ketchum Apparatus Station #3**

ID#	Type	Make	Year	Pump GPM/Tank	Status	Owner
E3	Engine	International	1996	1000/750	In Service	R
T3	Tanker	Kenworth	1995	750/3000	In Service	R
SSU	AC Car	Chevy 4WD	2001		In Service	*
	Pub Ed Trailer	Wells Cargo	2005		In Service	**

\* = Multiple owners: Ketchum, Rural, Ambulance District

\*\* = Multiple owners: Ketchum, Rural, BLM, USFS, Hailey, Wood River

## **Ketchum Apparatus Replacement Schedule**

The consultants will recommend that the following schedule be utilized in determining the life expectancy of apparatus for the Ketchum Fire Department:

**Table 41: Apparatus Life Expectancy**

<b>Apparatus Type</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
Engines	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Aerials	23 years front line
Ambulances	7 years front line + 2 years reserve
Squads (not ambulance)	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Tankers	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Utility Vehicles	10 years front line + 3 to 5 years reserve
Vehicles (Car)*	6 to 7 years - no reserve

\* Dependent on mileage and condition

The table below indicates the replacement schedule currently used by the Ketchum Fire Department compared to the consultant's recommendation on apparatus replacement.

**Table 42: Ketchum / Consultants Replacement Schedule**

ID#	Type	Year	Ketchum Replacement Schedule	Consultants Replacement Schedule	Years Over	Owner
E1	Engine	2004	2024	2027		K
E10	Engine	1984	2009	2007	Now	K
SQ1	Squad	2001	Not indicated	2024		K
C1	Chiefs Car	2002	2012	2009		K
SSU	AC Car	2001	2011	2008		*
AT	Aerial	1987	2012	2010		K/SV
E2	Engine	2003	2020	2026		R
E20	Rescue	1990	2012	2013		R
T2	Tanker	1990	2008	2013		R
E3	Engine	1996	2012	2019		R
T3	Tanker	1995	2016	2018		R
A21	Ambulance	2001	2020**	2010		R
A22	Ambulance	1992	2010**	2001	5	R
A23	Ambulance	1997	2015**	2006	Now	R
S17	Tech Rescue	2006	2016	2021		*

\* Multiple owners: Ketchum, Rural, Ambulance District

\*\* These are recommended replacement dates suggested by Ketchum. The Ambulance District anticipates that an ambulance will have a life expectancy of 18 to 19 years.

The apparatus replacement schedule utilized by the department and that recommended by the consultants is very similar and with the exception of ambulances. Inasmuch as the Ambulance District owns and replaces the ambulances they are only placed on the above table for consideration by that group. The City has no authority or responsibility to replace the ambulances.

The Ketchum Fire Department does not list any reserve apparatus. If the City chooses not to consolidate and remains as an independent Fire Department but retains its agreement with the Rural District, they would not need to add any additional apparatus.

## **Maintenance – Apparatus and Equipment**

The Ketchum Fire Department has excellent maintenance records on all of the apparatus they utilize, including the apparatus jointly owned with Sun Valley or the Rural District. The maintenance records are perhaps some of the best this consulting firm has audited. A Captain with the Fire Department is the in-house certified mechanic. Daily and weekly apparatus checks are performed by the duty-shift personnel from a checklist. Repairs that exceed the capability or time availability of the in-house mechanic are contracted out to a firm in Jerome, Idaho. From review of the maintenance records the consultants are impressed with the repairs done in-house, which result in considerable cost savings for the City and joint ownership apparatus and equipment.

Fuel for the apparatus is obtained from a facility which is open 24/7 with an account for the Fire Department.

## **Apparatus Replacement Funding**

The City of Ketchum does not have a funded apparatus replacement program. The Fire Chief places major apparatus requests in the Capital budget and when the City approves the request the apparatus is ordered. The City pays for the apparatus from the general funds but does not have an amortized apparatus replacement fund.

The Ketchum Rural Fire District does have a funded apparatus replacement program that is an amortized program over the life expectancy of the apparatus.

The Blaine County Ambulance District does not have a funded replacement program and the consultant is aware that this is a point of concern on the part of many interviewed. The consultants would echo this concern especially inasmuch as the life expectancy listed on the ambulance far exceeds those recommended by the consultants. The life expectancy as listed by the Ambulance District ranges from 18 to 19 years for each ambulance, compared to nine by the consultants.

### **Recommendation – Apparatus**

The Ketchum Fire Department does not need any additional apparatus. If the City chooses not to consolidate then replacement of Engine 10 should occur. If the City chooses to consolidate with Sun Valley both departments could share in the cost of this apparatus and share it much as they do the aerial and command vehicles.

Although NFPA is not a mandatory standard it is prudent for the City to consider its recommendations. Therefore, the aerial apparatus owned by both Cities should be replaced in 2010. The cost of such a unit most likely will range from \$750,000 to \$1,000,000, so planning on how the unit will be funded is appropriate at this time. The consultants recommend that the aerial apparatus be a 100 foot aerial platform with a minimum of a 1250 pump and 750 gallon water tank.

## **Ketchum Training**

“How you train is how you will perform on the emergency scene during an emergency.”

The foundation of any successful emergency operation is directly linked to the training of its members who provide fire/EMS services. Training is essential for safe operations to both the emergency provider and those receiving the service. Training is never-ending, and the recording of that training is as essential as the training itself. The fire service must rely on training to ensure coordination, consistency, and timely communications for the safety of the citizens and firefighter/paramedics, as well as the ability to capably accomplish the emergency tasks that are encountered. Fire departments that provide quality training opportunities for their personnel are better prepared to handle emergencies within their communities. A strong training program is also beneficial in the recruitment and retention of members, both career and paid-on-call.

The State of Idaho training curriculums are based in part on curriculums developed by Oklahoma State University, which are titled: International Fire Service Training Association’s (IFSTA) manuals – also referred to as the “Red Book.” The Idaho Firefighter Certification program is developed and administered by the Idaho College and University system through the Vocational or Occupational training programs. This program is specifically referred to as the “Emergency Services Training program”

The curriculum developed at Oklahoma State is currently being adopted in many parts of the Country and outlines basic and advanced firefighting skills. This program outlines a number of ways to perform emergency scene evolutions necessary for modern public fire protection. The benefit of listing multiple ways to perform on-scene operations is that it allows the individual fire department training officer the autonomy to match the best procedures to the challenges of the community and the abilities of the organization. However, the department must adopt the “one best way” to ensure safe and efficient emergency scene operations. With this understanding, it is essential that each department have a training manual that is available and used that identifies the one accepted and

adopted evolution from the options outlined by IFSTA. Additionally, the evolution curriculum must document a step-by-step training (evolution) procedure, along with a method to document acceptable performance.

Presently, the Ketchum Fire Department does not have a training manual in which all the curriculums are kept. Rather, members of the department teach certain evolutions (i.e. ground ladders) and they develop their own lesson plans based on IFSTA and other material they have received. These individuals keep their own lesson plans and modify them as they deem appropriate. There were exceptions inasmuch as the department did have on file several of the larger topics (i.e. engineer and aerial tower curriculums which included proficiency tests). The new Training Director expressed a desire to develop a series of operational guidelines which sounded very similar to lesson plans and have them filed in the department. The consultants highly support this desire.

The department would benefit from standardizing these documents into a training manual that allows an overview of the entire training program. Adapting the individual lesson plans into a training manual will increase the likelihood of consistency both in presentation and in members' performance. Consistent training and performance on the emergency scene is the foundation of safety. The curriculums, if challenged, need to be validated; such as the material presented in the IFSTA manuals. Therefore, although each individual might be qualified to teach a topic or the department has "always done it that way," this does not ensure that the method will withstand scrutiny.

Therefore, it was unclear to the consultants exactly what the department utilized as the training source. Although a certain individual might be good at teaching a topic from his/her notes, it doesn't allow the department to have on file a curriculum that is consistent if that individual for whatever reason was unable to continue teaching the topic. Years ago firefighter "A" learned from firefighter "B," and then at some point, "B" was to teach firefighter "C" the evolution. This was a common method of training many years ago but has long been abandoned by progressive departments who have recognized

the need for a “validated” training program; have curriculums on file that are reviewed annually; and contain a means for proficiency testing.

What is inconsistent with the current Ketchum’s training program is the emphasis the department places on training. Although there were limited lesson plans, the department prides itself on the thoroughness of its training. As the consultants conducted interviews, it was not uncommon to hear how important training was to the department.

Unfortunately, the documentation as to exactly what was being taught was absent. During the interview with employees it became clear that the department has developed the “one best way” to conduct an evolution, and members know what is expected. However, again actual lesson plans were very scarce.

This lack of documentation places the department in a less than desirable position in the case of serious injury or death to a firefighter or civilian at the emergency scene.

Municipalities have considerable less tort immunity than in the past and lack of the documentation described above places the City and department in a very undesirable environment.

It is hoped that Ketchum never experiences a firefighter’s line of duty death. However, in the event of this occurrence or serious line of duty injury, a large number of state and federal agencies would conduct independent investigations. The department would need to provide, at minimum, the investigators with the following:

- Comprehensive curriculum of the training topic
- Record of the instructor and his/her qualifications to teach the topic
- Attendance sheet with the individual’s signature that they attended – not a check-off box of member’s names
- Competency document showing how the department measured the ability of the individual to safely perform at the event in which they were injured
- Historical record showing how frequently this topic was instructed and what other topics supported a safe environment

Lack of such documentation could result in fines from both state and/or federal agencies as well as open the department and City to civil litigation.

The Ketchum Fire Department trains one evening per week, with additional training occasionally on a weekend. Two evenings per month are dedicated to fire training, one to special teams, and one to EMS. The department had a very extensive training schedule showing all training activities for one year in advance, broken into three-month increments. The training schedule included outside scheduled classes, weekly training activity, the name of the instructor, and the date scheduled. Of course the department finds a need to alter the schedule to accommodate unforeseen events or weather.

Ketchum Fire and Sun Valley fire began to train together on a frequent basis; unfortunately, this arrangement was cancelled just prior to the consultant beginning this study. The reasons for canceling the regular joint training schedule differed depending on with which department one spoke.

The department provided the following training records for 2006 (the numbers do not align in an alphabetical order of names).

**Table 43: Ketchum Training Hours 2006**

	<b>EMS</b>	<b>Fire</b>	<b>Rescue</b>	<b>Haz Mat</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	68.0	82.5	28.5	2.0	181.0
2	83.5	43.0	14.0	2.0	142.5
3	81.5	138.5	48.5	2.0	270.5
4	4.0	86.0	37.5	2.0	129.5
5	45.5	59.0	25.0	2.0	131.5
6	0.0	89.5	2.5	0.0	92.0
7	50.0	55.0	21.5	2.0	128.5
8	19.5	63.5	26.5	2.0	111.5
9	14.0	52.0	12.0	0.0	78.0
10	83.0	53.5	15.0	0.0	151.5
11	34.5	135.5	14.5	2.0	186.5
12	15.0	19.0	7.0	2.0	43.0
13	38.0	45.0	22.5	0.0	105.5
14	27.0	91.5	21.0	2.0	141.5
15	22.0	81.0	20.0	0.0	123.0
16	25.5	74.0	12.5	0.0	112.0
17	2.0	61.5	36.5	2.0	102.0
18	11.0	31.5	8.0	2.0	52.5
19	46.0	53.0	33.5	2.0	134.5
20	33.0	8.0	6.5	2.0	49.5
21	62.5	91.5	29.0	2.0	185.0
22	88.8	80.0	22.5	2.0	193.3

	<b>EMS</b>	<b>Fire</b>	<b>Rescue</b>	<b>Haz Mat</b>	<b>Total</b>
23	96.8	89.5	24.0	2.0	212.3
24	31.5	24.0	2.0	0.0	57.5
25	107.0	44.0	22.5	2.0	175.5
26	2.0	33.0	11.5	2.0	48.5
27	0.0	94.5	4.5	2.0	101.0
28	0.0	26.0	8.5	2.0	36.5
29	0.0	84.5	9.5	0.0	94.0
30	43.5	89.5	29.0	2.0	164.0
31	61.5	45.0	7.5	0.0	114.0
32	0.0	34.5	9.0	0.0	43.5
33	31.5	22.0	16.5	0.0	70.0
34	4.0	76.5	14.0	2.0	96.5
35	20.0	138.0	9.0	2.0	169.0
36	0.0	84.0	0.0	0.0	84.0
37	52.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	54.5
38	14.0	5.0	4.5	2.0	25.5
39	19.5	56.5	22.5	2.0	100.5
40	2.0	10.5	24.5	0.0	37.0
41	2.0	136.5	36.0	0.0	174.5
42	0.0	30.0	11.0	2.0	43.0
43	31.5	79.0	16.5	0.0	127.0
44	0.0	81.0	47.5	2.0	130.5
45	0.0	89.5	0.0	0.0	89.5
46	0.0	89.5	9.5	0.0	99.0
47	60.5	42.5	20.0	39.0	162.0
48	0.0	34.5	5.0	0.0	39.5

The mean (average) number of training hours for a Ketchum firefighter was 112.4 hours. The consultants divided the career from the paid-on-call training hours: career mean was 167.5 hours and the paid-on-call was 94 hours. Career training hours are 78.2% higher than the paid-on-call. The career members of the department most often train with the paid-on-call, and as a number of career employees indicated, there is not a lot of additional daily training occurring. Ironically, during the interviews with the career members the consultants repeatedly were told that Ketchum places a great amount of emphasis on training and that the career would like to dedicate more of the daily activities to training but “their plates were too full” to train during the day. Each member of the department does have responsibilities but training is the foundation of safe and effective emergency scene performance.

ISO requires 20 hours per month – 240 hours per year – of fire training in order to receive full credit during an evaluation. This requirement does not discriminate between career, paid-on-call, or volunteer members. The total hours in the figure above include fire, EMS, rescue, and hazardous material training. Using just fire training (ISO's only concern) the mean hours of the career members was 80.5 hours a year or 33.5% of what ISO requires (240 hours/per year) for maximum credit. Inasmuch as EMS activities account for 66.9% of all the department emergency activities, considerable emphasis needs to be placed on training in this area also. Therefore, although the Ketchum training program is good, there is a need to increase the number of daily training hours for the career members.

The Fire Chief's training hours are included in these totals. Consideration to removing him from the general training list is appropriate inasmuch as his administrative responsibilities as the Fire Chief will make it increasingly difficult for him to accumulate hours. Ironically, in 2006 he was still higher in training hours than five other career members.

There were 12 paid-on-call who had less than 61.25 hours of training in 2006. The consultants were told that some of the older members are somewhat lax in keeping up their hours, and because of their tenure with the department they are sometimes given special consideration. The data provided to the consultants indicated that the average training session lasts two and one-half hours and that there were 35 weekly drills in 2006. In addition, the SOG's require 70% drill attendance, which means that anyone with less than 61.25 hours would be ineligible to maintain membership. There were 12 members or exactly 25% (1/4 of the department) who do not meet the minimum requirements. Of the 12 members, none are career members. However, the lowest career member had only 100.5 hours of training in 2006. Regardless of employment status, training is essential for the safety of all on the emergency scene. It is not understood why 16 paid-on-call members would have more training hours than a career employee in 2006.

The members that conduct training have established a mentoring system to assist any member who is having difficulty. This mentoring program is actually a form of a performance competency testing of members. Once a year proficiency testing occurs on scenario-based tasks. Several members are assigned the responsibility of observation during the proficiency testing and note any difficulties a member is having. This individual is then required to meet with a mentor until such time as the task is performed correctly and safely.

Adequate record keeping is essential and Ketchum does an excellent job. Review of the training documents and participant's signoff were observed by the consultants and would meet most legal inquiries. In the event of a firefighter's serious line of duty injury or death a number of state and federal agencies would conduct independent investigations. The department would need to provide, at minimum, the investigators with the following:

- Comprehensive curriculum of the training topic
- Record of the instructor and his/her qualifications to teach the topic
- Attendance sheet with the individual's signature that they attended – not a check-off box of member's names
- Competency document showing how the department measured the ability of the individual to safely perform at the event in which they were injured

Lack of such documentation could result in fines from both state and/or federal agencies as well as open the department and City to civil litigation.

Currently there are two classes per year that involve 16 to 20 hours each for department officers, one a leadership class and the other a tactics and command class. There are also plans for company officers' classes to be given periodically. The administration also supports outside training and encourages members to bring new ideas into the department.

**Pulmonary Function Test** – NFPA 1582 and OSHA requires that any individual who uses a self-contained breathing apparatus (mask) have an annual pulmonary function test (NFPA) and a fit test (OSHA) to ensure safety. The test must be administered by a licensed physician who is familiar with the fire suppression tasks and working

environment. The physician will provide the department with a certificate of compliance with the OSHA regulation and keep the medical record in their position. Noncompliance with this OSHA regulation can result in fines of up to \$70,000. These records do not exist in the department.

This issue should be addressed immediately to come into compliance with the OSHA regulation for any member who might be required to wear self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

### Department Certifications

The Ketchum Fire Department has an extensive list of certifications held by their members. There were 48 individuals listed on the training spreadsheets, including the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief. Although the Fire Chief maintains certifications, his administrative duties preclude him from accumulating large numbers of training hours. The table below illustrates some of the certifications held by members of the department but is not an all-inclusive list. The consultants have listed only those certifications deemed most appropriate for the purpose of this study; and acknowledge that many individuals hold additional certifications.

**Table 44: Ketchum Fire Certifications**

Name	EMS	Aerial	Essential	Live Fire	Engineer	IC	NIMS 700
Ancona, Tom	AdvEMT		Aug-78	Jun-05	1, 2, 3	Jan-91	Nov-06
Bell, Dave	AdvEMT			Jun-05	1, 2, 3	Jan-91	Nov-06
Binnie, Ed	Medic		Dec-92	Jun-05	1, 2, 3	Jan-93	Nov-06
Butler, Chuck			Nov-05	Apr-06		Feb-07	Dec-06
Canfield, Miles	Medic		Dec-92	Jun-05	1, 2, 3	Jan-96	Nov-06
Corrock, Tyler			Nov-06			Feb-07	
Daigh, Eric	AdvEMT		Nov-97	Aug-04	1, 3	Jan-98	Nov-06
Davitt, Terence	Medic	YES-YES	Nov-89	Apr-06	1	Jan-91	Nov-06
Demment, Eric		YES-YES	Nov-05	Apr-06			Nov-06
Elle, Mike	Medic		Aug-84	Aug-04	1, 2, 3	Jan-91	Nov-06
Englehart, Robbie	AdvEMT		Oct-77	Apr-06	1, 2, 3	Jan-91	Nov-06
Feldman, Richard	EMT		Nov-94	Mar-03	3	Jan-95	Dec-06
Filoon, Mat	Medic	YES-NO	Nov-01	Aug-04	1	Jan-03	Dec-06
Frank, Tory	Medic		Nov-95	Jun-05	1, 2, 3	Jan-96	Dec-06
Hovey, Will	EMT		Nov-03	Apr-06	1	Aug-05	Nov-06
Irwin, Barry			Nov-05			Feb-07	Nov-06
Lawler, Evan			Nov-05			Feb-07	Nov-06

Name	EMS	Aerial	Essential	Live Fire	Engineer	IC	NIMS 700
Leightner, Scott	EMT		Nov-96			Jan-96	Nov-06
Lizano, Fabrizio	EMT		Nov-02	Jun-05	1, 2	Jan-03	Nov-06
Maratea, Karly	AdvEMT		Nov-02	Jun-05		Jan-03	Dec-06
Martin, Seth	Medic		Nov-00	Apr-06	1, 3	Jan-01	Nov-06
Babalis, Lara	Medic		Nov-99	Jun-05	1, 2, 3	Jan-01	Nov-06
McLean, Tom	Medic		Oct-95	Jun-05	1, 2, 3	Jan-96	Nov-06
Mollet-Binnie, Melissa	AdvEMT	YES-YES	Nov '02	Apr-06	3	Jan-95	Nov-06
Moreault, Aimee			Nov-05				Nov-06
Nurge, Don			Nov-04	Jun-05	2, 3	Jan-05	Nov-06
Ottley, Gray			Nov-06			Feb-07	
Poster, Brian			Nov-94			Jan-05	Nov-06
Potter, Keith	Medic	YES-YES	Nov-00	Jun-05	1, 2, 3	Jan-01	Nov-06
Rathfon, John	Medic		Nov-91	Jun-05	1,2, 3	Jan-92	Nov-06
Robertson, Rick	AdvEMT	YES-YES	Oct-77	Aug-04	1	Jan-91	Nov-06
Robrahn, Gary			Nov-93	Jun-05	3	Jan-94	Nov-06
Rusch, Rebecca			Nov-05			Feb-07	Nov-06
Schwartz, Pete	EMT	YES-YES	Nov-01	Aug-04	1, 2, 3	Jan-02	Nov-06
Sinkinger, Josh			Nov-06				Nov-06
Stephens, Chris	Medic		Feb-91			Jan-92	Nov-06
Stitzinger, Gary	EMT		Nov-91	Mar-03		Jan-91	Nov-06
Stout, Anne	AdvEMT		Nov-02	Jun-05	2,3	Jan-04	Nov-06
Theobld, Chris			Nov-03	Aug-04		Jan-03	Nov-06
Ward, Chris			Nov-04	Apr-06	2	Jan-05	Nov-06
Webster, Galen			Nov-03	Jun-05	2	Jan-04	Nov-06
Wheeler, Rachel	AdvEMT	YES-NO	Nov-02	Aug-04	3	Jan-03	Nov-06
Williams, Brett			Nov-06			Feb-07	
Williams, Richard			Nov-06			Feb-07	
Windham, Dave	AdvEMT		Nov-04	Jun-05		Jan-05	Nov-06
Witthar, Mike			Nov-05			Feb-07	Nov-06
Wood, Mitch			Nov-05			Feb-07	Nov-06

Name	Officer Training	Basic Wildland	Adv Wildland	Amb Driver	Instructor Cert.	Haz Mat	Extrication
Ancona, Tom	Apr-07	Jun-03	S-200, 215	X		Tech	Ops
Bell, Dave	Oct-06			X		Ops	
Binnie, Ed	Apr-07			X		Tech	Aware
Butler, Chuck		May-06		X			Aware
Canfield, Miles	Jan-05	Jun-03	S-215	X	X	Tech	
Corroock, Tyler						Aware	Aware
Daigh, Eric	Nov-03	Jun-03	S-215	X		Ops	Aware
Davitt, Terence	Oct-06			X	X	Tech	Aware
Demment, Eric				X			Aware
Elle, Mike	Feb-07	Jun-03		X	X	Ops	
Englehart, Robbie	Apr-07	200, 215	231, 270	X		Ops	Aware
Feldman, Richard				X		Ops	Ops
Filoon, Mat	Jan-06			X		Ops	Aware
Frank, Tory	Oct-06		S-215	X	X	Tech	Aware
Hovey, Will		Jun-04		X		Ops	
Irwin, Barry		May-06		X			Ops
Lawler, Evan				X			Aware
Leightner, Scott				X		Ops	Ops
Lizano, Fabrizio				X		Ops	Aware

Name	Officer Training	Basic Wildland	Adv Wildland	Amb Driver	Instructor Cert.	Haz Mat	Extrication
Maratea, Karly				X		Ops	
Martin, Seth	Nov-03		S-215	X		Tech	Ops
Babalis, Lara	Oct-06		S-215	X	X	Tech	Ops
McLean, Tom	Oct-06		S-215	X	X	Tech	Ops
Mollet-Binnie, Melissa	Feb-05			X		Ops	Ops
Moreault, Aimee				X			
Nurge, Don	Apr-07			X			Ops
Ottley, Gray							Ops
Poster, Brian	Oct-06			X			Ops
Potter, Keith	Jan-06	S-190	S-205	X			Ops
Rathfon, John	Jan-06			X			Ops
Robertson, Rick		Jun-03	S-205	X	X	Ops	Ops
Robrahn, Gary	Nov-03	Jun-03		X		Ops	Ops
Rusch, Rebecca		May-06		X		Ops	
Schwartz, Pete	Oct-06	Apr-05	S-200,215	X			Ops
Sinking, Josh						Ops	
Stephens, Chris	Dec-05			X		Ops	Tech
Stitzinger, Gary				X		Ops	Ops
Stout, Anne	Jan-06			X		Ops	Ops
Theobld, Chris			S-215	X			Ops
Ward, Chris	Jan-06	Apr-05	S-215	X		Ops	Ops
Webster, Galen		Apr-05		X		Ops	Ops
Wheeler, Rachel	Oct-06			X		Ops	Ops
Williams, Brett				X		Aware	Aware
Williams, Richard						Aware	Aware
Windham, Dave				X			Tech
Witthar, Mike		May-06		X		Tech	Aware
Wood, Mitch		May-06					

Name	Swiftwater Rescue	Coldwater Rescue	Rope Rescue	Lift Evac	Avalanche Awareness
Ancona, Tom	Jun-06	Mar-06		Jun-04	Jan-06
Bell, Dave	May-05		Team-Tech I/II	Jun-06	Jan-05
Binnie, Ed	Jun-06	Mar-06	Team-Tech III		Jan-07
Butler, Chuck	Jun-06	Mar-06		Jun-06	Jan-06
Canfield, Miles	May-05	Mar-07	Team-Tech III	Dec-03	Jan-07
Corrock, Tyler					Jan-07
Daigh, Eric	Jun-06			Jun-06	Jan-06
Davitt, Terence	Jun-06	Mar-07	Team-Tech III		Jan-07
Demment, Eric		Mar-06		Jun-06	Jan-07
Elle, Mike	Jun-06		Team-Tech I/II		Jan-07
Englehart, Robbie	Jun-06	Mar-04		Jun-05	Jan-06
Feldman, Richard	May-04				Jan-07
Filoon, Mat	Jun-06	Mar-06			Jan-07
Frank, Tory	Tech II	Mar-06	Team-Tech III		Jan-07
Hovey, Will	Jun-06	Mar-06		Jun-05	Jan-07
Irwin, Barry	Jun-06	Mar-06		Jun-06	Jan-06
Lawler, Evan	Jun-06	Mar-06		Jun-06	Jan-07
Leightner, Scott	Jun-06			Jun-06	Jan-06
Lizano, Fabrizio	Jun-06	Mar-07	Tech I/II	Jun-03	Jan-07
Maratea, Karly	Jun-06	Mar-06		Jun-03	Jan-06

Name	Swiftwater Rescue	Coldwater Rescue	Rope Rescue	Lift Evac	Avalanche Awareness
Martin, Seth	Jun-06	Mar-07	Team-Tech III		Jan-07
Babalis, Lara	Jun-06	Mar-06	Team-Tech III		Jan-06
McLean, Tom	Tech II	Mar-06	Team-Tech III		Jan-04
Mollet-Binnie, Melissa	Tech I	Mar-04	Team-Tech III		Jan-07
Moreault, Aimee	Jun-06	Mar-06			Jan-06
Nurge, Don	Jun-06	Mar-07		Jun-05	Jan-06
Ottley, Gray		Mar-07			Jan-07
Poster, Brian	May-03			Jun-06	Jan-07
Potter, Keith	Jun-06	Mar-07	Team-Tech I/II		Jan-07
Rathfon, John	May-05	Mar-04		Jun-05	Jan-05
Robertson, Rick	Jun-06			Jun-05	Jan-07
Robrahn, Gary	Jun-06	Mar-04	Team-Tech III		Jan-06
Rusch, Rebecca	Jun-06	Mar-06			Jan-07
Schwartz, Pete	May-04	Mar-05			Jan-06
Sinkinger, Josh	Jun-06	Mar-07			
Stephens, Chris	May-04				
Stitzinger, Gary	May-04			Dec-05	Jan-05
Stout, Anne	Jun-06	Mar-06	Tech I/II	Jun-04	Jan-07
Theobld, Chris	May-04				Jan-07
Ward, Chris	May-05	Mar-07		Jun-06	Jan-07
Webster, Galen	Jun-06	Mar-06		Jun-04	Jan-06
Wheeler, Rachel	Jun-06	Mar-07	Tech I/II	Jun-04	Jan-06
Williams, Brett					Jan-07
Williams, Richard		Mar-07			Jan-07
Windham, Dave	May-05	Mar-06		Jun-05	Jan-07
Witthar, Mike	Jun-06	Mar-07		Jun-06	Jan-07
Wood, Mitch		Mar-07			Jan-07

## Recommendation – Training

What impressed the consultants was that the career referred to themselves as there to assist the paid-on-call. It was obvious to the consultants that the department placed a high degree of emphasis on training all members. Safety was the underlying theme as to why training was considered so important.

The department should standardize a lesson plan format and keep these lesson plans on file. All lesson plans should be reviewed annually by the department training coordinator and/or training committee. From the lesson plans, a training manual should be developed and made available to all members of the department. Emphasis should be placed on the qualifications of the instructor and the course should have some means of determining proficiency.

Without question, the career members are busy while on duty. However, greater emphasis needs to be placed on daily training. A minimum of two hours a day should be accomplished by all career members while on duty. The paid-on-call average training of 94 hours is fair. However, the department's SOG requires a minimum of attendance at 70% of the drills or 61.25 hours per year for all members. Therefore, this rule should be enforced and there needs to be consequences for noncompliance. This does not mean dismissal from the department (only as a last choice), but rather that these individuals should be mentored. Currently, 25% of the department does not meet the training mandate. This is unacceptable and needs immediate attention.

Joint training with the Sun Valley Fire Department should be scheduled a minimum of twice monthly and preferably once a week. This training needs to occur in the evening or on weekends and should last no more than three hours per session. Emphasis should be placed on each department utilizing the same procedures to ensure that emergency scene activities are the same.

Although the department conducts proficiency testing on an annual basis, the department would benefit from increasing the frequency to quarterly. Unsafe performance needs to be discovered and corrected immediately and the current system could allow someone's deficiency to remain undiscovered for a considerable time. The consultants applaud the department's mentoring program. Officer training should continue on a regular basis.

Immediate testing of all members should occur for pulmonary functions. Anyone who would wear any type of breathing apparatus (mask) needs to be tested annually by a licensed physician. Inability to pass this test should be dealt with as a medical situation and corrective actions implemented.

## Ketchum Fire Prevention

The current Fire Chief was the primary individual handling fire prevention issues in the City of Ketchum. Since taking the position of Fire Chief, he stated that no one within the department has shown an interest in performing these duties and therefore he continues to perform fire prevention as well as administrative activities. The Fire Chief has a good working relationship with the City's Building Department and either the Chief or his designee review and must sign-off on occupancy permits for code compliance prior to issuances.

The City has adopted the 2003 International Fire and Building codes and is presently upgrading to the 2006 codes both in fire prevention and building which reference the NFPA Life Safety code (NFPA 101). This code addresses a multitude of items including sprinkler and standpipe systems, and fire alarms.

The department provided data indicating that there are between 200 to 250 inspectable occupancies that require annual inspections. Some commercial buildings have multiple occupancies and there are 140 commercial building with sprinkler systems. Each full-time member is assigned a commercial building that is sprinklered for annual inspection. In 2006, only 33% of these systems were inspected. Data pertaining to assignments of full-time personnel to annual sprinkler inspections, rural water, and cistern testing are computerized and those assignments were provided to the consulting team.

Routine fire inspections are conducted by on-duty personnel, who also check the occupancy pre-plan while conducting the inspections. The department was unable to provide the consultants with the actual number of inspections completed in 2006, but did indicate that only about 25% were completed. This number had not greatly changed from previous years. Although the department members are busy, a total of 200 to 250 inspectable occupancies – some of which are in the same complex should be achievable, minimally on an annual basis. An on-duty career shift of three people would need to

conduct two inspections per shift in order to complete all occupancies within a year. Obviously, greater emphasis needs to be placed on fire prevention inspections.

## **Pre-Plans**

The Fire Department requires each new occupancy to provide a floor plan of their building on a 8½ x 11 piece of paper which indicates location of room and their purpose, utilities, special hazards, alarm and suppression system locations, etc. The department does not computerize this information, nor is there a standard format for the pre-plans. Therefore, department members must seek this information from the file. As previously noted, pre-plans are reviewed by the full-time shift during fire inspections.

The department also conducts rural water supply annual inspections consisting of drafting cisterns (taking water from a pool of water – non-hydrant source) and dry hydrants (fire hydrant connected to a pond or body of water without pressure and water needs to be obtained by having the fire engine pull the water from the source). In 2005 about half were completed and in 2006 the number decreased to about one-third.

Annual hydrant maintenance is also performed by the full-time staff and in 2004, 2005, and 2006 all 330 hydrants' annual inspections occurred. In addition, about one-third of the hydrants are painted each year.

ISO requires that in order to receive full credit for pre-plans, all inspectable occupancies must be checked and updated twice annually. The revised pre-plan must then be included in the training curriculum and provided to all mutual aid departments.

## **Public Safety Education**

The department provided the consultants with computerized data indicating the public safety programs performed and the number of staff hours dedicated to each event. The events listed included:

- Fire Prevention Training – 80 staff/hours annually. Includes all activities during fire prevention week, visits to day care and elementary schools. Topics are age specific.
- Fire Fighter Appreciation Day – 120 staff/hours annually. A single day community event and includes many fire and EMS agencies including Saint Lukes Wood River Medical Center. There are static displays and hourly demonstrations.
- Helmet Safety – 6 staff/hours annually. Another single day event presented to elementary schools during the spring.
- Supper Sitter Classes – 3 staff/hours annually. A joint program between the Fire Department and Saint Lukes Wood River Medical Center instructing individuals who baby sit about fire and EMS safety in the home while baby sitting.
- Extinguisher Training – 5 staff/hours annually. The Fire Department provides annual fire extinguisher training to the Saint Lukes Wood River Medical Center.
- Boy Scout Training – 4 staff/hours as needed. The Fire Department assists individuals in obtaining their merit badge.

## **Recommendation – Fire Prevention**

The consultants will not argue that the full-time staff is busy. However, greater emphasis needs to be placed on several issues, especially annual inspections. Assuming that there are 250 inspectable occupancies and a shift works 121 or 122 days a year, if only one shift performed inspections it would require inspecting two occupancies per shift.

The goal of a fire department is to prevent fires rather than attempt to mitigate them once they occur. There is little reason why each of the inspectable occupancies could not be completed within a year. For example, many departments split the duty crew up and each member inspects an occupancy rather than all walking through together. There is an advantage to having everyone see the same conditions. However, if the choice is one-third of the building getting inspected verses all of them the choice should be obvious.

Is having fire personnel paint fire hydrants the best utilization of their time? Inasmuch as the consultants have already identified the need for increasing training hours for all career members and increasing inspection, it would be prudent for the City to hire a part-time summer student(s) to paint the hydrants.

Pre-plans should be placed on a standard format and computerized so that all members have access to them, especially at emergency incidents. Conducting fire inspections and pre-plans simultaneously is good utilization of time and available resources.

Although the public safety programs are good, the department might consider adopting in conjunction with the City Police Department the Risk Watch Program – an injury prevention program developed by the NFPA in conjunction with Lowe’s Home Safety Council, and which targets children ages 14 and under in schools. The classroom instructor teaches the program and would be assisted by the Ketchum Fire and Police Departments in the form of guest speakers, tours, demonstrations, etc.

Curriculum in the Risk Watch Program consists of the following:

- Poison Prevention
- Choking/Suffocation/Strangulation Prevention
- Motor Vehicle Safety
- Fall Prevention
- Firearms Injury Prevention
- Bike and Pedestrian Safety
- Water Safety

# Ketchum Fiscal

## Budget Development

The City of Ketchum Fire Department operates a municipal Fire Department and obtains its funding primarily from the taxpayers of the City of Ketchum. The Fire Department operates on an October 1st to September 30th fiscal year. The process for developing the budget starts in May of each year and progresses from that point, resulting in final approval by the City of Ketchum City Council prior to October 1.

## Budget Funding

The primary funding for the City of Ketchum Fire Department in 2006 was generated mainly by General Fund taxes (52.4%), with additional funding provided by the Blaine County Ambulance District (36.6%) and the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District (11%) in 2006. Additionally, the City collects funds generated by a Local Option Sales Tax for liquor, lodging and retail (3% each for a total of 9%), and funding provided through fire prevention inspection fees. Ketchum has an Equalized Assessed Valuation of \$3,400,000,000.

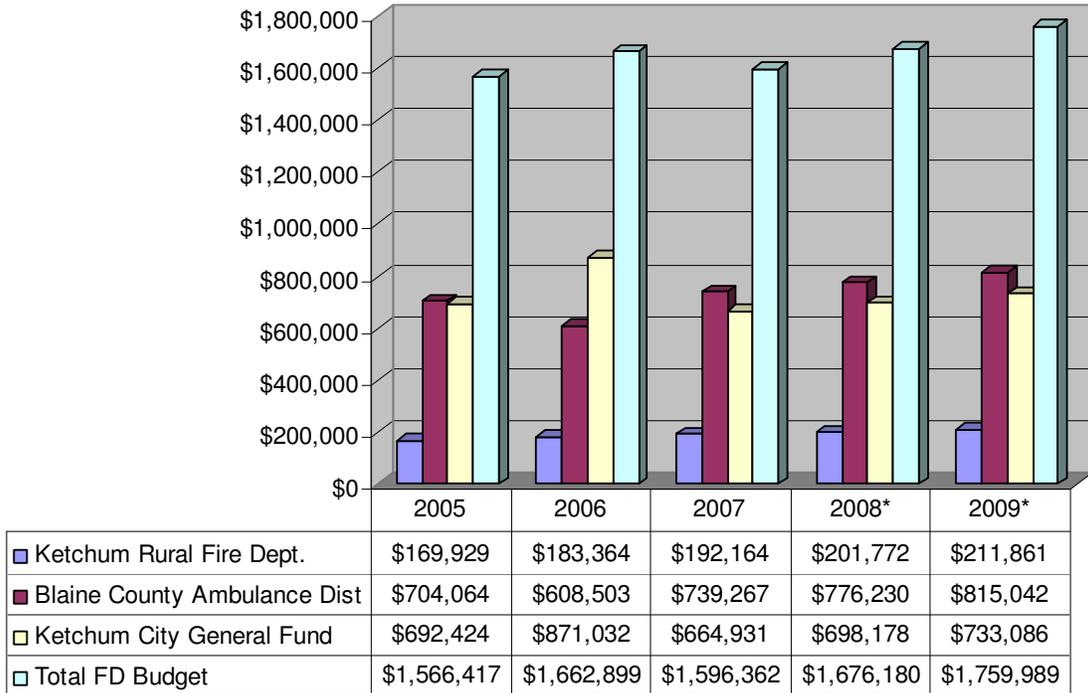
The table below indicates the percentage of the total budget paid by each entity for 2005 through 2009.

**Table 45: Percentage for Each Entity in the Ketchum Budget**

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008*	2009*
<b>Revenues</b>					
Ketchum Rural Fire Dept.	10.8%	11.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%
Blaine County Ambulance Dist	44.9%	36.6%	46.3%	46.3%	46.3%
Ketchum City General Fund	44.2%	52.4%	41.7%	41.7%	41.7%
<b>Total FD Budget</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

\* Projected figures based on a 5% annual increase.

**Figure 20: Funding Sources for Ketchum Fire Department**



\* Projected figures at 5% increase

## Fire Department Fees

The City of Ketchum Fire Department does collect various fees which contribute to the General Fund for the City. Although the annual revenue generated from these fees is a small portion of the overall Fire Department budget, it is prudent to collect for these services. The current fee structure is illustrated in the table below:

**Table 46: Fire Department Fee Structure**

Permit Fees	Fee	Additional Information
Automatic Fire Alarm System	\$25	per hour fee
Automatic Sprinkler System	\$50	\$0.50 per sprinkler head
Carnivals and Fairs	\$50	
Compressed Gases	\$50	
Cryogenes	\$50	
Dist-producing Operations	\$50	
Explosives and Blasting Agents	\$100	
Fire Clearance Certificates	\$20	
Fireworks	\$25	\$25 Inspection fee
Flammable or Combustible Liquids	\$100	

<b>Permit Fees</b>	<b>Fee</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
Hazardous Materials	\$100	
Hood and Duct	\$50	
Liquefied Petroleum Gases	\$25	\$100 for large capacity tank
Open Burning	\$25	
Oven, Industrial Baking or Drying	\$50	
Pyrotechnical Special Effects Material	\$100	
Spraying or Dipping	\$50	
Standpipe Systems	\$50	
Use of Apparatus	\$75	per hour fee
Use of Personnel with Apparatus	\$20	per hour fee
Plan Check Fees		70% Building Dept Plan Fee

The department planned to adopt a new fee schedule in July of 2007.

### **Partnership with Ketchum Rural Fire District**

The City of Ketchum and the Ketchum Rural Fire District have a long and interconnected history. While both the City and the District are taxing entities and operate separate Fire Departments, both agencies depend on each other for the delivery of fire services. The District, through a contract with the City, provides personnel and supervision for fire operations in the District. The Rural Fire District provides revenue to the City of Ketchum representing 11% of the total Fire Department budget in 2006.

The Rural District operates two fire stations, one south of Ketchum (Greenhorn Station) and one north of Ketchum (Griffin Butte Station). The Rural District provides housing units at both facilities for the Ketchum firefighters (paid-on-call). This mutual relationship provided a cost effective solution to both agencies. The City of Ketchum Chief is also the Chief for the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District. While the District has no employees due to the contractual nature of the agreement, employees of the City of Ketchum provide equal service to both the City and District. Although both agencies are legally independent, they function as a single Fire Department. This type of arrangement is known as an operational consolidation.

The Rural Fire District contract with the City also includes the administration of the Fire Department. In 2005 the amount received by the City of Ketchum from the District was \$169,929. In 2006 this amount increased to \$183,364. In 2007 the amount received by Ketchum from the District was \$192,164. While this is a significant contract in terms of partnership and funding, there are several additional benefits realized by the City of Ketchum. Such benefits include: housing for firefighting personnel at each of the two District stations, purchasing of apparatus by the District which is shared with the City (and visa-versa), and shared equipment. This relationship obviously reduces the amount of redundancy that would occur if each operated independently of the other. Perhaps the most beneficial component of the City/Rural District relationship is the lack of competition for firefighters which would negatively impact both organizations.

### **Partnership with Blaine County Ambulance District.**

In addition to the partnership the City of Ketchum enjoys with the Ketchum Rural Fire District, there is also a partnership between the City and the Blaine County Ambulance District. Through a referendum, an ambulance district was created in the late 1980's. The ambulance district collects taxes from the residents and businesses located in Blaine County and then distributes the revenues to the providers of the emergency medical services. The City of Ketchum is the provider of emergency medical services to North Blaine County.

Through this contract, the City of Ketchum receives fees for the provision of paramedic ambulance service to the City of Ketchum, the City of Sun Valley, the residents of the Ketchum Rural Fire District, and the remainder of the north part of the County equaling about 1,000 square miles.

Funding from the Blaine County Ambulance District is significant: \$704,064 was received in 2005; \$608,503 in 2006; and \$739,267 in 2007. The advantage is that in 2006 36.6% of the entire Fire Department budget was revenue collected from the contract with

the Ambulance District. The disadvantage to the City is that on-duty staff often responds out of the City to provide ambulance service to the Ambulance District area, thereby removing available on-duty personnel to cover emergencies within the City limits. Most often the Fire Department calls back off-duty career fire/medics at overtime to cover these situations.

The Blaine County Ambulance District assesses charges to persons that are transported by the various ambulances that are part of the Ambulance District operation. Citizens are assessed a fee of \$595 for service as well as a mileage charge of \$9 per 'loaded' mile (patient on-board). All patient billing and collection of ambulance bills are the responsibility of the Ambulance District. The revenue collected offsets the cost of operation, although it didn't appear that an apparatus replacement program was funded.

As part of the agreement with the Blaine County Ambulance District, District ambulances transport beyond the boundaries of Blaine County very infrequently. Such patient transports involve travels to Boise, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, and Salt Lake City. This results in Ketchum personnel and ambulance being out-of-service for long periods of time in order to accomplish these transports (up to 13 hours should the patient be transported to Salt Lake and seven hours should the patient be transported to Boise). Prior to 2006, the Wood River Fire Department performed all patient transfer (inter-hospital) in the County. Beginning in 2006, transfers are now split between the two departments.

In addition, it is important to note that Ketchum ambulances are often called for "Rendezvous." This requires response of Ketchum personnel to assist or in some cases complete the transport. Hospital transfers and Rendezvous are discussed in the Ketchum data section of this report.

## Personnel Costs

As in most fire departments, the greatest annual budget expense is personnel costs. The table below illustrates the various categories and the percentage of personnel costs to the total Fire Department budget:

**Table 47: Ketchum Personnel Costs**

<b>Ketchum Personnel Costs</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008*</b>	<b>2009*</b>
Salaries-Career Personnel	\$693,496	\$822,443	\$694,122	\$728,828	\$765,270
Salaries-Paid-On-Call Personnel	\$94,008	\$95,918	\$120,000	\$126,000	\$132,300
Housing Subsidy	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Pay Differential-Paramedic	\$23,400	\$27,135	\$36,000	\$37,800	\$39,690
Overtime	\$17,927	\$33,308	\$36,000	\$37,800	\$39,690
FICA	\$62,294	\$69,440	\$67,788	\$71,177	\$74,736
State Retirement-City	\$2,941	\$2,793	\$1,558	\$1,636	\$1,718
Firemen's Retirement-City	\$199,925	\$209,870	\$211,298	\$221,863	\$232,956
Deferred Compensation paid-on-call	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,500	\$11,025
Worker's Compensation-City	\$20,201	\$22,956	\$22,102	\$23,207	\$24,367
Health Insurance	\$88,923	\$102,486	\$106,972	\$112,321	\$117,937
Dental Insurance	\$3,481	\$4,253	\$4,828	\$5,069	\$5,323
Worker's Compensation Coverage	\$4,288	\$2,300	\$5,000	\$5,250	\$5,513
Employee Medical Services	\$2,191	\$3,963	\$5,600	\$5,880	\$6,174
Long Term Disability	\$2,811	\$2,976	\$4,740	\$4,977	\$5,226
Vision HRA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Performance Awards	\$2,781	\$2,755	\$4,000	\$4,200	\$4,410
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>\$1,218,667</b>	<b>\$1,412,596</b>	<b>\$1,330,008</b>	<b>\$1,396,508</b>	<b>\$1,466,334</b>
<b>% of Total FD Budget</b>	<b>77.8%</b>	<b>84.9%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>

\*Projected figure at 5% increase annually

The 2007 figures are actual budget figures and the increase in paid-on-call category represents an increase in the hourly rate, additional pay for emergency response, and an incentive towards retention of the existing paid-on-call members. The 2006 spike in career personnel salaries is the result of a severance payment made to the former Fire Chief by the City. The average percentage of increase for the five years (includes projections) is 82.5% of the total Fire Department budget, which is within normal percentages in most departments.

The current full-time employees include the Fire Chief, an Assistant Fire Chief, 10 career, 24/48 hour shift firefighters, and 1 half-time administrative person. The Chief and Assistant Chief positions are salaried and are not eligible for overtime compensation.

The full-time career staff is comprised of 3 captains, 2 senior lieutenants, 3 lieutenants, 2 engineers, and one firefighter. For budget purposes, salaries are divided between Fire and Ambulance categories.

The on-call staff of the Ketchum Fire Department is authorized at 38 positions with 33 positions currently filled. The on-call personnel respond to emergencies on an "as needed" basis and at times provide personnel to meet or augment regular staffing. The City of Ketchum has taken a commendable approach to retaining the on-call staff by providing incentives to the on-call staff. Up to \$10,000 is available for a deferred compensation program that is divided between the on-call staff on an annual basis. Salary ranges for the on-call members are as follows:

**Table 48: Paid-on-call Salary Schedule**

<b>Hourly Pay Rates</b>	<b>Drill</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Standby</b>
Probation (6)	\$8.00	\$12.00	\$20.00
Firefighter (8)	\$9.00	\$13.50	\$20.00
Senior FF (2)	\$11.00	\$16.50	\$20.00
Rate 4 (6)	\$12.00	\$18.00	\$20.00
Rate 5 (2)	\$13.00	\$19.50	\$20.00
Rate 6 (3)	\$14.00	\$21.00	\$20.00
Rate 7 (1)	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$20.00
Rate 8 (1)	\$16.00	\$24.00	\$20.00
Rate 9 (2)	\$17.00	\$25.50	\$20.00
Rate 10 (1)	\$18.00	\$27.00	\$20.00
Rate 11 (1)	\$19.00	\$28.50	\$20.00
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$13.82</b>	<b>\$20.73</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>

A review of the period of December 5, 2006 through March 11, 2007 (paid-on-call are paid on a quarterly time) reveals that actual salaries for the on-call members were:

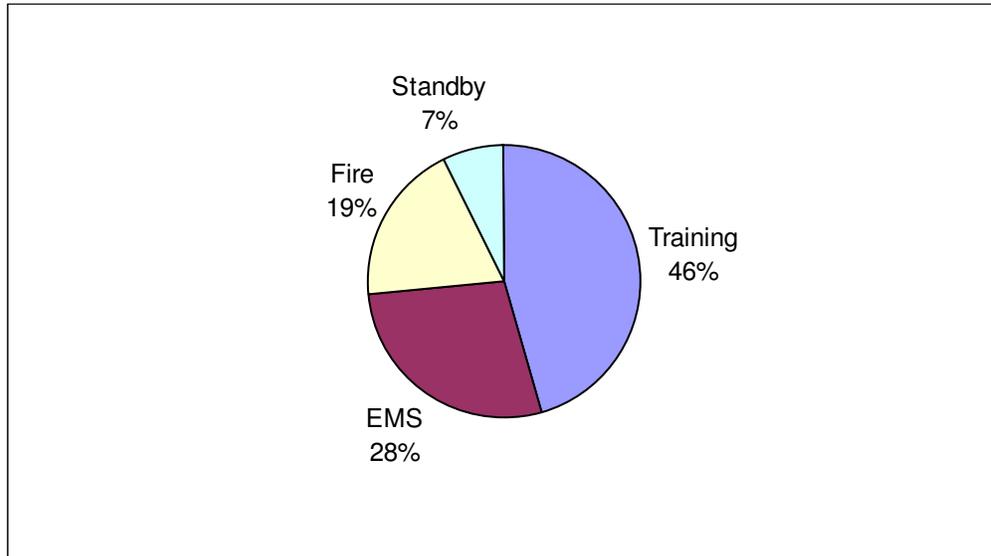
**Table 49: Ketchum Paid-on-call Actual Salaries - 12/5 - 3/11**

<b>Employee</b>	<b>Drill</b>	<b>EMS</b>	<b>Fire</b>	<b>Standby</b>	<b>Total</b>
Butler	\$373.50	\$87.75	\$67.50	\$20.00	\$548.75
Corrock	\$428.00	\$36.00	\$114.00		\$578.00
Daigh	\$280.00	\$178.50	\$52.50	\$20.00	\$531.00
Davitt	\$782.00	\$382.50	\$344.25		\$1,508.75
Demment	\$148.50	\$270.00	\$128.25	\$20.00	\$566.75
Feldman	\$96.00		\$72.00		\$168.00
Filoon	\$187.00	\$650.25	\$25.50		\$862.75
Hovey	\$534.00	\$207.00	\$117.00		\$858.00
Irwin	\$324.00	\$256.50	\$87.75	\$220.00	\$888.25
Lawler	\$387.00	\$121.50		\$40.00	\$548.50
Leightner	\$150.00		\$18.00		\$168.00
Lizano	\$507.00	\$750.75	\$487.50	\$500.60	\$2,245.85
Maratea	\$414.00	\$99.00	\$18.00	\$60.00	\$591.00
Moreault	\$58.50	\$162.00	\$87.75	\$140.00	\$448.25
Nurge	\$270.00	\$315.00	\$423.00	\$200.00	\$1,208.00
Ottley	\$424.00	\$294.00	\$108.00	\$240.00	\$1,066.00
Poster	\$110.50	\$214.50	\$243.75		\$568.75
Potter	\$598.50	\$370.50	\$527.25		\$1,496.25
Robertson	\$272.00	\$156.00	\$48.00	\$20.00	\$496.00
Robrahn	\$504.00	\$21.00	\$157.50		\$682.50
Rusch	\$513.00	\$391.50	\$256.50	\$220.00	\$1,381.00
Schwartz	\$720.00	\$78.75	\$146.25		\$945.00
Sickinger	\$96.00		\$54.00		\$150.00
Stephens	\$288.00	\$405.00			\$693.00
Stout	\$161.00	\$262.50	\$63.00		\$486.50
Theobald	\$81.00		\$54.00		\$135.00
Ward	\$170.50	\$313.50	\$272.25		\$756.25
Webster	\$88.00		\$16.50		\$104.50
Williams, B	\$340.00	\$12.00	\$36.00		\$388.00
Williams, R	\$504.00	\$150.00	\$174.00		\$828.00
Windham	\$912.00	\$774.00	\$342.00	\$100.00	\$2,128.00
Witthar	\$558.00	\$94.50	\$330.75	\$40.00	\$1,023.25
Wood	\$244.00	\$24.00	\$12.00	\$20.00	\$300.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,524.00</b>	<b>\$7,078.50</b>	<b>\$4,884.75</b>	<b>\$1,860.60</b>	<b>\$25,347.85</b>

It is significant to note that of the Fire Department's 33 paid-on-call positions, all members were active during this time frame. This is significant, as many fire departments have rosters which contain personnel that rarely or never respond to assist. Salaries for the on-call positions ranged from a high of \$2,245.00 to a low of \$168.00. The mean paid-on-call salary for the above quarter was \$768.12.

By charting where the paid-on-call funds are allocated, it becomes apparent that the largest amount is spent in training of personnel (\$11,524). EMS is the next highest item in on-call payroll at \$7,078.50, followed by Fire (\$4,884.75) and Standby (\$1,860.60).

**Figure 21: Ketchum Paid-on-call Quarter Payroll**



The department still is attempting to fill the five vacant paid-on-call positions to bring the number to the allocated 38.

### **Worker's Compensation Insurance**

Worker's Compensation Insurance is an expense in the annual budget under Personnel Costs. There are two Worker's Compensation categories included in the account: 1) Worker's Compensation-City and 2) Workers Compensation Coverage. During the 2007 fiscal year, the cost of this insurance was \$22,102. The consultants noted a sharp increase in the cost of the Worker's Compensation Coverage portion of the insurance when compared to previous years. Between 2006 and 2007, the increase in the Worker's Compensation Coverage raised from \$2,300 to \$5,000 (budgeted), an increase of 117.4%. It was reported that the annual number of such claims charged to the fire department averages one to two per year. While the number of claims per year may be minimal, considering the number of employees and the scope of work, one focus should be on

reducing this number through collaborative efforts with the insurance carrier and additional training. Additionally, the department and City should investigate the reasons and causes for worker's compensation claims. Reasons for an increase in worker's compensation could be due to insufficient personnel, which would result in increased work activity, or poor safety conditions. The consultants do not have sufficient data to understand the worker's compensation issue, but the department and City must address this issue not only to decrease its financial liability, but also ensure the safety of personnel.

### **Supplemental Insurance**

The City of Ketchum provides long-term disability insurance to the employees of the Fire Department. The cost of such insurance is minimal, averaging \$3,509 for the years 2005, 2006, and 2007. The 2007 budgeted amount reflects an increase over the two previous years. It is expected that 2008 and 2009 will increase at a rate of 5% per year.

### **Housing Allowance**

At this time the City of Ketchum does not provide a cash allowance for housing. Due to the high housing cost in the area, most employees actually live outside the City. The City does, however, provide housing units for some employees. At the current time, housing for employees is only available through the KART Bus Facility. There are a total of five units available but currently all units are occupied by KART employees. It is envisioned that a portion of this housing will be available for Fire Department employees in the future.

The Ketchum Rural Fire District has constructed housing for Fire Department employees at both of their outlying stations. This housing consists of four one-bedroom units and two two-bedroom units. Housing at the north station is restricted to employees-only by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), while housing at the south station is available for families. Costs for the north and south station housing are provided by the Ketchum Rural Fire District. Due to the close relationship between the City of Ketchum and the

Ketchum Rural Fire district, employees of Ketchum City Fire Department provide personnel for the Ketchum Rural Fire District through a contractual arrangement. This provides that Ketchum City Fire Personnel are the occupants at both rural stations.

## **Ketchum General Information**

The City of Ketchum has an Equalized Assessed Value of approximately \$3,400,000,000. Recent census data reveals that approximately 3,150 people reside full-time in Ketchum. Officials report that during seasonal festivals and holidays, peak population may increase by as many as 20,000 additional persons.

The history of Ketchum indicates that property values have greatly increased since the mid 1970's. Entry-level housing costs in Ketchum begin at \$750,000, with the average entry-level home being in the vicinity of \$900,000. The demographics of Ketchum indicate that traditionally-paid public servants would be unable to afford to live in the City. The consultants feel that it will become increasingly difficult to attract and retain on-call personnel without significant housing assistance.

## **Services**

The annual budget for services and supplies (primarily the cost for utilities, service contracts, and personnel training) totaled \$106,924 in 2006. This amount increased in 2007 to \$200,745 (87.7%). The significant portion of this increase was due to an increase in personnel training (\$9,052), fuel costs (\$4,213) and additional costs for operating supplies (\$22,083). It is estimated that the annual cost for services will continue to increase by 5% per year, largely due to fuel costs.

**Table 50: Ketchum Service Budget**

<b>Ketchum 'Services' Costs</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008*</b>	<b>2009*</b>
Operating Supplies	\$34,600	\$40,772	\$47,982	\$51,946	\$74,030	\$77,732	\$81,618
Motor Fuels and Lubricants	\$6,123	\$7,650	\$9,523	\$11,787	\$16,000	\$16,800	\$17,640
Computer Software	\$0	\$0	\$180	\$25	\$1,100	\$1,155	\$1,213
Professional Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$32,000	\$33,600	\$35,280
Personnel	\$17,515	\$15,605	\$13,560	\$13,948	\$23,000	\$24,150	\$25,358

<b>Ketchum 'Services' Costs</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008*</b>	<b>2009*</b>
Training/Travel/Meetings							
Fire Chief's Training	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,200	\$3,360	\$3,528
Training-Avalanche	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,150	\$3,308
Tuition Reimbursement	\$5,000	\$4,863	\$5,000	\$3,253	\$5,000	\$5,250	\$5,513
Telephone & Communications	\$1,016	\$6,282	\$4,300	\$5,299	\$13,315	\$13,981	\$14,680
Repair & Maint - Automotive	\$17,184	\$12,475	\$11,339	\$9,396	\$14,600	\$15,330	\$16,097
Repair & Maint - Machinery	\$9,910	\$4,894	\$7,278	\$4,929	\$10,500	\$11,025	\$11,576
Other Purchased Services	\$2,431	\$2,305	\$738	\$1,340	\$5,000	\$5,250	\$5,513
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$93,779</b>	<b>\$94,846</b>	<b>\$99,900</b>	<b>\$106,923</b>	<b>\$200,745</b>	<b>\$210,782</b>	<b>\$221,321</b>

\*Projected figures at 5% annually

## **Lease Expense**

The City of Ketchum currently has a lease agreement in place from the acquisition of a fire engine in 2004. The annual cost is \$55,860. This is a seven-year lease with final payment to be made in October of 2010.

## **Other**

The "other" category includes costs related to the purchase of items through a grant process. The Federal government currently has the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) process in place for the purchase/replacement of needed capital items. While there are no guarantees on the award of these grant funds, Ketchum has been fortunate in the past to receive funding (\$94,500 in 2003) for the replacement of self-contained breathing apparatus. This funding would be in the form of a cash transfer to the City and would then be an additional item to be added to the budget. The consultants encourage the City to apply for these grants as they provide equipment/technology that will greatly benefit the agency.

Also to be considered is reimbursement costs when assisting the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There is a contract currently in place that provides reimbursement for assistance to the BLM. The reimbursement is a per hour rate for personnel and equipment. While this is an infrequent occurrence and the cost is included in normal operations, reimbursement is received to offset the cost to the City. Rates for firefighting equipment varies from \$60 per day for command vehicles, to \$171 per hour for a Type 1

engine, to \$181 per hour for a Type 1 with compressed air foam, \$117 per hour for a Type 4 wildland engine, to \$98 per hour for a tender. All listed figures include personnel costs as part of the hourly or daily rate.

## Capital Improvement Program

Capital projections currently include several Fire Department-related projects. The projects are identified in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as:

Year	Capital Item	Cost
2007		
	Office Furniture for Assistant Chief	\$3,000
	Fire Hydrant Diffuser	\$900
	Hazardous Gas Meter	\$2,850
	Color Printer (share with Planning)	\$1,000
	Motorola Pagers (4)	\$2,000
2008		
	No Projects Identified	
2009		
	Replacement Ambulance	\$27,500
2010		
	Replacement Aerial Ladder (share with Sun Valley)	\$990,000
2011		
	No Projects Identified	
2012		
	Replace Greenhorn Station Engine*	\$81,250
	Greenhorn Interface Engine*	\$62,500
	Reserve Engine	\$27,500
	Technical Rescue Vehicle**	\$40,000
	Fire Station Improvements Greenhorn Gulch*	\$210,000
	Fire Station Improvements Griffin Butte*	\$420,000
	Ohio Gulch Training Center**	\$37,000
	35 foot Training Tower**	\$100,000

\* Not funded by the City of Ketchum, anticipate other taxing body to fund.

\*\* Multi-jurisdictional project, partially funded by City of Ketchum.

## Dispatch/Communications Services

The City of Ketchum operates a 24-hour per day emergency dispatch center. The dispatch center is located in the Ketchum City Hall complex. The Communication

Center is funded by the City of Ketchum. Total costs for personnel, equipment, supplies, and utilities attributed to the Communication Center are as follows:

**Table 51: Ketchum Communication Costs**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost</b>
2004	\$524,034
2005	\$576,257
2006	\$692,594
2007	\$630,642

The Dispatch Center receives emergency 9-1-1 telephone communications for the City of Ketchum, dispatches fire, EMS, and police personnel, monitors various radio frequencies to ensure handling of each call for service, and supports personnel assigned to the emergency. Also, some Sun Valley calls come to the Ketchum dispatch center versus the County communication center. These calls are then dispatched by the Ketchum communication center.

## **Fiscal Summary**

The City of Ketchum has a conservative budget. Funding for Fire Department operations comes from three main sources: the City of Ketchum, the Ketchum Rural Fire District, and the Blaine County Ambulance District. While the partnerships between the Ketchum Rural Fire District and the Blaine County Ambulance District provide a means of containing costs, these partnerships also cause the Ketchum Fire Department personnel to often respond to areas outside of the City of Ketchum, causing Ketchum to then rely on paid-on-call and off-duty personnel for response to emergencies. Should the City of Ketchum sever either of the relationships (Ketchum Rural Fire District or the Blaine County Ambulance District), a severe fiscal impact would be realized and service to all parties would be greatly negatively impacted.

The City of Ketchum also enjoys a close working relationship with the City of Sun Valley. This relationship has resulted in savings for both Ketchum and Sun Valley. An example of these savings would be the sharing of fire equipment such as the aerial ladder

truck and the communications truck. Additionally, Ketchum and Sun Valley provide immediate response to each other for actual fires. This close relationship appears to be a "functional consolidation" in the area of service provision. The current relationship with Sun Valley results in a fiscally responsible operation.

Ketchum Fire Department appears to have a strong working relationship between the firefighting staff (career and on-call personnel) that results, once again, in responsible use of limited tax dollars for the betterment of the citizens of Ketchum and the District.

### **Recommendation – Fiscal**

The City of Ketchum may wish to consider reviewing the various fees charged by the Fire Department. The current fees are very reasonable and there is a possibility of realizing additional funding for the department if the fee schedule were to be increased.

The City of Ketchum Fire Department should continue to apply for fire grants under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) as they become available. Experience has shown that Ketchum has been successful in obtaining AFG funding in the past. Future projects such as interoperable communications, additional equipment, and specialized (regional) team equipment should be investigated for inclusion in an AFG grant.

It appears that the City of Ketchum Fire Department does bill the responsible party for hazardous materials responses, but a City Ordinance should be implemented that supports this billing process.

One or two worker's compensation claims per year is of concern and the City and department would benefit from a risk management program aimed at reviewing safety procedures. All worker's compensation claims should be fully investigated and a joint partnership with the insurance carrier should address these incidents in an attempt to limit future occurrences.

The consultants have recommended an apparatus replacement program (apparatus section of this report) that should be adopted by the City. A funding mechanism should also be determined to allow for the purchase or replacement of apparatus and equipment.

The City of Ketchum as well as the Ketchum Rural Fire District both benefit from the excellent cooperative arrangement that is in place. The same holds true for the City of Ketchum and the City of Sun Valley working relationship. These relationships should be encouraged and expanded where/when possible.

The County has attempted to consolidate communication, with the sole remaining independent municipality being the City of Ketchum, which continues to maintain their own. The consultants understand that there are challenges when switching communication centers and/or frequencies. However, these problems can be overcome. Therefore, the City should join the consolidated dispatch center and serve as the secondary site for the County. This would maintain a communication capability within the City of Ketchum but standardize communication procedures throughout the County.

The City may wish to consider installing a municipal alarm monitoring system to generate future revenue. This would also require the City to pass legislation requiring fire alarm systems to transmit alarm signals to the Ketchum alarm monitoring/dispatch center.

The City of Ketchum currently is able to staff one (at times two) mobile intensive care units (ambulances). Current funding from the Blaine County Ambulance District supports much of the personnel and vehicle costs for this program. It would be desirable to provide staffing for two ambulances at all times, as emergency medical-related responses outside of Ketchum may result in the delay of services to the residents of Ketchum.

# Summary of Ketchum Recommendations

## Emergency Data

- All mutual aid and automatic aid agreement should be in writing and reviewed every two years.
- Although the department was able to provide a considerable amount of data, much of it had to be hand-tallied and in too many cases the data was contradictory with other data provided. The department needs to improve its data entry and retrieval process.
- The department should purchase a commercial incident management software program in conjunction with Sun Valley.
- Monthly reports highlighting department activities and statistics should be compared to the previous year.

## National Standards

- The consultants do not recommend that the department attempt to become accredited – rather they should use the CPSE standards as the benchmark of quality.
- The City should not adopt NFPA 1710.

## Response Times

- Response time data is important to the management of the department and all components outlined in the report should be obtainable by the leadership of the department.

## Staffing

- Minimum daily career staffing should be increased to three per shift. This will require that a fourth individual be hired for each shift.
- The officer to fire fighter/EMS rank and file is disproportionate and should be reduced by the elimination of the Senior Lieutenant or Lieutenant position.
- If additional supervision is needed, the department should create a paid-on-call Lieutenant position.
- After the hiring of three additional career employees, all future hires should be paid-on-premise employees.
- The department needs to review its callback policy to reduce the cost of overtime with the career members.

## Human Resource

- Immediately discontinue the use of the medical questionnaire. Work with a local physician or occupational clinic to establish a physical that evaluates the individual's ability to perform the functions of the position.
- Establish a drug testing program (post-offer, pre-employment), as well as obtain base-line pulmonary and hearing function information.
- Develop a standardized set of questions that assist the department in evaluating the qualifications and motivations of interested applicants.

- Establish a formal background and criminal background checking program. All information should be documented and placed with the application materials or in the personnel file.
- Establish a new employee orientation checklist that ensures that the department and the new hire go over all of the same material. The checklist should be signed by the trainer(s) and new employee and placed in his/her personnel file.
- Suggestions have been given for what should be in personnel files and record retention timeframes.
- Consider allowing the employee to complete the evaluation form prior to the meeting with the supervisor to get the employee's buy-in and input in the evaluation process.
- Establish a pay cycle for all paid-on-call personnel and track hours to ensure proper compensation under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Develop a paid-on-call salary schedule and review it annually to ensure that it remains competitive with the market.
- Establish a drill/training requirement for all paid-on-call members and take the appropriate actions for individuals who do not meet these requirements.
- The City should consider developing a salary schedule for the Fire Department that utilizes the same system, but accounts for issues of the rank structure and salary compression.
- Update all job descriptions to include not only operational qualifications, but supervisory qualifications. Incorporate into the performance evaluation a process for succession planning and growth of individuals in the department.
- Suggestions have been given for the City's employee handbook and the department's SOG manual.
- The department needs to analyze its exit data and develop strategies to retain its current personnel.
- The department has a relatively young (age) and less tenured department – this will cause challenges in keeping these individuals interested in the responsibilities of the department – thus mitigating turnover.

### **Fire Stations**

- Engine emission exhaust systems are very important and should be incorporated into any existing and new facility.
- The City of Ketchum fire station should be relocated. The current facility is inadequate for the needs of today's fire/EMS.
- If consolidation is implemented the Cities of Sun Valley and Ketchum could build a single facility.

### **Apparatus**

- The City does not need an additional apparatus.
- The consultants have developed a replacement schedule and recommend the City adopt and fund that schedule.
- If the City does not consolidate they should replace Engine 10 in the current fiscal budget.

- The aerial apparatus should be replaced in three years and be purchased in a joint agreement with the City of Sun Valley.
- The new aerial apparatus should be a 100 foot aerial platform with a 1250 GPM pump and 750 gallon water tank.

### **Training**

- The department should standardize its format for lesson plans and curriculums and develop a master training manual.
- Career members should accomplish a minimum of two hours per shift of training.
- Joint training with the Sun Valley Fire Department should be conducted a minimum of twice per month with each session limited to three hours.
- Proficiency training should be increased to quarterly verses annually.

### **Fire Prevention**

- Greater emphasis needs to be placed on all aspects of fire prevention and pre-planning. This is especially true with inspections.
- Implementation of the NFPA and Lowe's Home Safety Council program should be utilized in conjunction with the City's Police Department.

### **Fiscal**

- The City should review fees charged by the Fire Department on an annual basis.
- The department should continue to apply for Federal (AFG) grants.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on reducing the number of workers compensation claims. A joint safety program with the insurance carrier is beneficial.
- The partnership with the Rural District and Ambulance District is very beneficial to all parties and greater cooperative efforts should be encouraged.

## **Part 3: Consolidation – “What Is In the Best Interest of the People We Serve”**

The two previous sections of this report were comprehensive audits of the Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments. The purpose of those sections was to establish a base-line to identify service levels to ensure that any form of consolidation would not diminish services. Secondly, if either City chooses not to pursue additional consolidation they would have a master plan for future service delivery.

This section of the report will address the issue of consolidation of the Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments. The consultant will identify the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation and make a clear and concise recommendation to the governing officials. The consultants will identify perhaps the most important aspect of consolidation for Sun Valley and Ketchum, that being the service plan and a means to implement that plan.

Much has been written on the benefits and non-benefits of consolidation (centralization/decentralization) of emergency service providers. Research of consolidation, whether in political science, economics, or other social sciences, has as a common denominator – fiscal concerns. Most often the consideration towards consolidation of services is driven from a fiscal perspective rather than a desire for improved services. However, in the case of Sun Valley and Ketchum, both can be achieved through consolidation.

“Business as usual” is fast becoming an unacceptable option for many governing bodies. The uniqueness of firefighting among volunteer activities arises in large part from its monopoly over its mission and from its vital, indispensable character. Tradition in the fire service is a proud heritage. However, it can be devastating to organizations that resist social change. Both Sun Valley and Ketchum are experiencing growth, and with growth comes new challenges in providing cost-effective emergency services. Consolidation has been a proven success in many communities in meeting those challenges.

Many in the fire service sees themselves as exempt from examination of its cost effectiveness, and see themselves as the “only game in town.” The lack of competition or perceived competition has kept many fire departments from changing old traditional practices and policies until confronted by a potentially serious matter. Fortunately, the consultants did not detect this attitude in either department, and both have shown that they can work together and share resources. The opportunity now is to expand that relationship.

However, for some the term consolidation is frightening, meaning “my world might change” and somehow “I might lose something I feel very passionate about.” For the members of the Fire Departments and City elected officials it could be perceived loss of power, control, and/or prestige. Most consolidation efforts do not fail because of practical aspects – they fail because of people issues. However, opportunities most often come disguised as challenges, requiring one to step away from the status quo and risk that things can be different.

The author has overseen numerous consolidations but rarely has seen an opportunity so advantageous to both communities and those they serve as the consolidation of Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments. However, having said that, the consultants warn that the implementation process itself will not be easy. Change is difficult, and the fire service profession has struggled with change, greatly in part to its proud tradition.

In order to discuss consolidation, a primal goal must be established and used as the measuring device for all decisions. That measuring question is: **“What Is In the Best Interest of the People We Serve.”** This phrase was not initiated by this author; rather by Jack W. Snook and Jeffrey D. Johnson authors of the book Cooperative Service Through Consolidations, Mergers and Contracts: Making the Pieces Fit. It is this question that should be the main determining influence for all decisions made about consolidation.

It is very appropriate and prudent for governing officials to investigate consolidation. It is, in fact, their responsibility to do due diligence in spending the taxpayer's dollars. Without question both City and governing officials expressed appreciation and pleasure with their Fire Departments, especially those individuals serving – both career and paid-on-call – their community.

The consultants conducted their study without any interference or attempts to influence their recommendation by any City, department, or governing official. The only stipulation placed on the consulting team was that if consolidation was to be recommended, the plan had to ensure that no current employee of either Fire Department would lose their job. It is within this environment that the consultants have written this section.

## **Types of Consolidations**

There are many types of fire department consolidations. The six most common types are:

- **Administrative Consolidation** – Two or more fire departments maintain separate operations while some administrative/staff functions, such as clerical and personnel, are combined. An example would be a single Fire Chief overseeing both organizations.
- **Partial Consolidation** – Each department remains legally separate but a group is formed to perform special functions. This group would provide service to both communities but are employees of their respective organization. An example would be the sharing and staffing of a fire station.
- **Functional Consolidation** – Each fire department remains legally separate but performs special function(s) as if they were a one department. An example would be combined dispatch, apparatus maintenance, or a combined training program.
- **Operational Consolidation** – Each fire department remains legally separate but join together both administrative and operation functions, and deliver services as if they were one department.
- **Selected Geographical Consolidation** – Usually found in larger cities. Consolidation is utilized in lower incident areas where service demands are relatively low, while separate department operations are performed in higher service demand areas such as a downtown area.

- **Full Consolidation** – Two agencies completely merge into a single legal agency. All services demands in each community are looked at as a single function of the department and political boundaries become invisible.

The consultants recognize that the Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments have already accomplished a number of functional consolidations including the purchase and staffing of an aerial apparatus and use of a shared command vehicle. The opportunity for the two Cities to expand their current successes into either an operational consolidation or full consolidation is now.

## **Consolidate Incentives**

There are many incentives to consolidate and the consultants have attempted to identify the top three that would be most beneficial to Sun Valley and Ketchum:

- **Maximize Effective Use of Scarce Resources** – perhaps the scarcest resource are the paid-on-call members. There are two departments that respond to each others fires, both seeking additional membership from a very small pool of available individuals. Although each responds to the same emergencies, neither department allows existing members to serve in the other department. Consolidation greatly increases the size of the pool of paid-on-call.
- **Future Cost Avoidance** – a common misperception is that consolidations will initially save significant money. Some initial savings might occur but the greatest cost savings in consolidation is future cost avoidance. In the case of Sun Valley and Ketchum building one fire station that serves both communities rather than each building separate facilities only miles apart will have great cost savings. Each department needs a replacement engine but both communities could be better served by jointly buying and sharing one engine.
- **Eliminate Redundancy** – consolidation means one administrative staff, and eliminates duplication of equipment, apparatus, services, programs, and personnel.

Other benefits to both communities include but are not limited to:

- Method to provide more cost effective services
- Standardization of services, programs, and training resulting in cost savings, greater functionality, improved services, and employee safety

- Helps to balance the citizens' demands for increased services against the concurrent demand by these same citizens for reduced cost
- Forces program examination
- Depth of service
- Next logical step for two departments that already have functional consolidation in emergency responses
- Strategic planning becomes a necessity
- Method to improve service or unify service delivery
- Better utilization of department resources
- Decrease apparatus expenditures
- Standardization of services
- Increases service levels
- Allow for response of the closest unit regardless of department district lines
- Allow opportunities to expand into specialized services
- Allows for master planning
- Legitimate desire to become more efficient by the departments' leadership
- Elimination of duplication of services
- Less government is seen as advantageous by many individuals
- Improved ability to absorb financial crisis

## Consolidation Obstacles

As with the incentives, the consultants have identified the three obstacles to implementing consolidation that will most challenge the commitment of those that govern.

- Loss of local autonomy – community had a strong sense of identity and valued their role and “control” of the department. “Our culture is different and we have unique needs that only we can serve,” is a theme heard during the interviews.
- Governing Officials who had a part in the building or membership of the department and their pride of accomplishment and ownership might result in feeling of being threatened and a need to protect the department status quo.
- Department membership had strong influence and ability to apply political pressure; in extreme cases, department members threatening to quite if consolidation is implemented – most often seen in volunteer and paid-on-call departments. Although not a common theme during the interviews it was heard.

Other challenges to both communities include but are not limited to:

- Fear of loss of employment or duty
- Resistance to change

- Volunteer morale
- Politics
- Hidden agendas
- Fire department leadership resistance and fear of status loss
- Tradition
- Different department philosophical beliefs
- Differences in equipment, policies, standard operating guidelines, apparatus, and employee standards
- Inequitable sharing of costs
- Inequitable sharing of resources
- Larger organizations are more difficult to create change
- End product cost more without proper management

## **Existing Consolidation**

What is most exciting about the possible success of a full consolidation between Sun Valley and Ketchum is the existing forms of consolidation which already exists through the delivery of emergency medical services. There are two types of intergovernmental agreements currently in place in Ketchum with three different organizations:

### **Operational Consolidation with Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District**

By definition, the Ketchum Fire Department and the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District are legally separate but join together both administrative and operation functions. Service delivery is performed as if they were a single organization. The only difference between this arrangement and that of a full consolidation is the way in which they are governed. Operational consolidation has two governing boards with taxing authority, whereas a full consolidation has an independent governing board either through a joint power agreement or elected officials.

The Ketchum Rural FPD owns apparatus, equipment, stations, and fire personnel housing. All operational and administrative functions, including all personnel matters, are conducted by the Ketchum Fire Department. Paid-on-call employees are paid by the City of Ketchum and the City has a multi-year (October 1, 2001 through October 1, 2015) contract with the District which accounts for 11% of the revenue of the Fire Department budget in 2006.

### **Operational Consolidation with Blaine County Ambulance District**

Again, by definition, the arrangement with the County Ambulance District is a form of operational consolidation. In this case the County owns the ambulances and the equipment in those ambulances and houses them in either the City or Rural fire station. All personnel are provided by the City of Ketchum Fire Department, which in return

responds to an area of approximately 1,000 square miles including the entire northern half of Blaine County, the dividing line being the Greenhorn Bridge on State Highway 75. All ambulance transports in this section of the ambulance district are conducted by the Ketchum Fire Department.

The Ambulance District is responsible for patient billing and supplying the ambulances. The daily apparatus check and minor maintenance is conducted by the City Fire Department employees. The City of Ketchum has an annual contract with the Ambulance District that accounts for 36.6% of the revenue of the Fire Department budget in 2006.

## **Functional Consolidation with Sun Valley**

By definition the Ketchum and Sun Valley Fire Departments are legally separate fire departments but perform special functions as if they were one department. The two Cities have jointly purchased an aerial apparatus and share a command van owned by the Ketchum/Sun Valley Volunteers Association, Inc. Both of these units are utilized by both departments and are rotated between the two community fire stations.

During the interview with the leadership of both departments, it is apparent that the two Chiefs have discussed other functions which they believe could be achieved jointly. For example, they discussed with the consultants the desire to hire a single training officer as well as a single fire prevention individual to review codes and conduct inspections in both communities.

Unlike the operational consolidation with the Ketchum Rural FPD, the City of Ketchum does not receive any revenue from Sun Valley, nor Sun Valley from Ketchum, for the current arrangement. Rather, the mutual emergency response to fires is a form of mutual or automatic aid and all associated costs are incurred by the respective Cities.

## **Existing Consolidation Implications**

It is apparent that the City of Ketchum, as well as the Fire Department, has the capability of working in partnership with other service organizations. Likewise City and Fire Department of Sun Valley has demonstrated that they can work with the Ketchum Fire Department under the current functional consolidation arrangement. Remembering that the major difference between an operational and full consolidation is the formation of the governing body structure, the probability that the Cities and departments can consolidate is high, inasmuch as either type of consolidation could be successful.

The Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments already respond together on most fire and EMS calls. The consolidation would only enhance that relationship and provide standardization of services. This would be especially beneficial when it comes to EMS incidents. It is apparent to the consultants that a consolidation between the two Fire Departments would result in an organizational structure similar in many aspects to those already existing with both the Rural and Ambulance Districts.

## Formation of a Consolidated District

The consultants are recommending a full consolidation rather than an operational consolidation. In review, an operational consolidation would allow each department to remain legally separated but join together both administrative and operation functions, thereby delivering services as a single department. Funding for this type of consolidation would be a formula developed between the two Cities and supported by taxpayers of the two communities.

A full consolidation results in the two departments merging into a single legal agency. All service demands in each community are looked at as a single function of the department and political boundaries become invisible. Funding becomes an independent taxing authority separate from the existing Cities' tax base.

The consultants sought a legal opinion and were advised of the following: The state of Idaho allows creation of a fire district under statute [I.C. § 31-1401](#):

[I.C. § 31-1401](#) provides the following:

The protection of property against fire and the preservation of life, are hereby declared to be a public benefit, use and purpose. Any portion of a county not included in any other fire protection district may be organized into a fire protection district under the provisions of this chapter. All taxable property within any fire protection district created under the provisions of this chapter is and shall be benefited ratably in proportion to assessed valuation by the creation and maintenance of such district, and all taxable property within any such district shall be assessed equally in proportion to its assessed valuation for the purpose of and in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. This chapter shall be known as the "Fire Protection District Law," and whenever cited, enumerated, referred to or amended, may be designated as the "Fire Protection District Law," adding when necessary the code section number.

[I.C. § 31-1401](#) grants fire districts power for "The protection of property against fire and the preservation of life ..." Beyond this, no express powers are given.

Once the district is formed there are two means of governing the fire district. The first is by an election of an independent body which would govern the fire district. The second is a “Joint Power” agreement between the two cities which appoints a governing board.

The consultants recommend the “Joint Powers” model consisting of a five-person board comprised of:

- One current council member from Sun Valley
- One current council member from Ketchum
- City Administrator of Sun Valley
- City Administrator of Ketchum
- Fifth member would be appointed by this body by consensus agreement.

The governing board would appear and function as does the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection Board. At some point it would be prudent for these two fire district boards to consider consolidation but that is an opportunity for the future.

Although the consultants do not recommend the operational consolidation, it is appropriate to address the consolidated department structure under such an arrangement in the event the Cities choose that option. The consultants would speculate that both Cities would prefer a full consolidation to allow for the creation of a separate taxing body.

Under an operational consolidation, a funding formula would need to be developed between the Cities inasmuch as the Cities continue to be the taxing source. There are many components that can be entered into a funding formula. The table below illustrates the total Fire Department budgets for 2006 for each community. If the two budgets were simply added together the resulting percentage of fiscal responsibility would be as illustrated below:

**Table 52: Consolidated Existing FD Budgets**

<b>2006 Total FD Budget</b>		
Sun Valley	\$368,785	18.2%
Ketchum	\$1,662,899	81.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,031,684</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Most Cities would not base a funding formula exclusively on their most recent department budget. These figures alone do not portray an accurate description of the historical usage of the service, the valuation of the property being protected, or the number of citizens living in the community who might utilize the Fire Department services.

There are almost as many funding formulas for fire departments as there are departments themselves. However, the three components most commonly found in funding formulas throughout the United States include: historical usage, equalized valuation, and population. The table below illustrates these three components and the resulting percentage of fiscal responsibility in an operational consolidation.

**Table 53: Common Funding Formula**

	<b>Calls</b>	<b>% Calls</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>% Population</b>	<b>EAV</b>	<b>% EAV</b>	<b>% Average</b>
Sun Valley	161	16.0%	1,427**	31.2%	\$2,600,000,000	43.3%	<b>30.2%</b>
Ketchum	844*	84.0%	3,145	68.8%	\$3,400,000,000	56.7%	<b>69.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	1,005	100.0%	4,572	100%	\$6,000,000,000	100.0%	<b>100.0%</b>

\* 83 calls have been reduced inasmuch as both departments respond to Sun Valley

\*\* US Census Bureau figure

Under this type of agreement the total costs of operating the Fire Department would require the City of Sun Valley to pay 30.2% and the City of Ketchum to pay 69.8% of the total consolidated Fire Department budget.

### **Recommendation – Formation of a Consolidated District**

The consultants recommend that the Cities enter into a full consolidation and govern the newly formed district under a “Joint Powers” agreement. Citizens living within the newly formed district would be taxed equally and receive the same services from the Fire Department.

## **What's in a Name?**

When it comes to consolidations – sometimes everything. Consolidated efforts have failed because of disagreement on what the newly formed department should be called. Most fire departments are reluctant to change the name of their organization, noting that there is a proud tradition and somehow changing the name disrespects those that have served prior. For most outside the departments a name change is not significant; for those within the department it is very significant.

The consultants have found changing the departments' name has some value. It becomes a clear indicator to all that business as usual has changed and a new approach and cooperative effort is important to governing officials. Sun Valley and Ketchum are addressing other issues of consolidation, some on a County-wide basis, and those successes might very well be judged against their decision on fire consolidation.

Certainly in Blaine County, and somewhat within the State of Idaho, the newly formed department will be a model of government and department efficiency. The consolidation can become a model for other departments, such as those in the southern portion of the County, who are openly discussing this issue. Many eyes will be on Sun Valley and Ketchum pertaining to consolidation.

The consultants would suggest the name of the consolidated department be the North Valley Fire & Rescue Department. Other opportunities exist for the Cities to hold a contest on naming the new department and award the winner an honorary membership. The bottom line is that the name is important and each City should openly discuss their desires as to the name of the department.

## **Consolidated – Service Plan**

The consolidation service plan will have many components, the sum of which will result in a consolidated department service plan. The following items will have significant influence on that plan:

### **Emergency Response**

Under an operational or full consolidation, service delivery would appear much as it does today, with the exception that the two departments currently have different training programs, standard operating procedures, and apparatus, which could consolidate into a standardized service delivery protocol.

The Sun Valley Fire Department has 161 calls in 2006. Ketchum responded to Sun Valley with either mutual aid or as the EMS paramedic transport provider a total of 127 times. That left only 34 incidents, averaging 2.8 calls per month, in which the two departments did not function at the same incident in Sun Valley. Two very important facts can be derived from these statistics beyond the fact that they already are responding to the same emergency in Sun Valley 78.9% of the time.

First and foremost is safety improvement, especially to those providing the services as well as those who receive it. As noted, these departments often work together on an emergency scene in Sun Valley, where life-altering decisions are made in split seconds. Yet they don't train together on a regular basis, their standard operating procedures are different, and after the incidents they do not critique their actions together to capitalize on learning.

This is especially true on EMS incidents where Sun Valley provides 1<sup>st</sup> Responders and Ketchum provides paramedics and transport services. The Sun Valley Chief adamantly stated that the 1<sup>st</sup> Responder program is 18 months old but no guidelines have been established as to how the two departments should interface. By asking the “golden

question” **“What Is In the Best Interest of the People We Serve”** certainly the current arrangement is not.

Rather, what the consultants heard from both organizations during the interviews, was frustration on how the other party acted or didn’t act on the emergency scene.

Conventional wisdom would suggest that a standardized protocol be developed in the best interest of the patient.

Why wasn’t a standardized protocol developed? The consultants speculate from correspondence and interviews with both Chiefs each was very cautious not to appear to be imposing their authority in the other community. Therefore, the Ketchum Chief was not going to tell Sun Valley how to function on EMS calls in “his own” district. Conversely, the Sun Valley Chief was turning the call over to the authority having jurisdiction on EMS incidents (referring to Ketchum through the contractual arrangement with the Ambulance District). Therefore, the rank and file set their own expectations of each other, which explains why the consultants heard statements such as: “depending who the paramedic is I will be allowed to do certain things.” Consolidation not only resolves these types of situation but will result in better coordinated services to those in need.

One of the individuals interviewed who was less than excited about consolidation challenged the consultants to show him how service would be better if there was a consolidation. Without question, one organization providing EMS under a single protocol and standardized training will result in better service to the patient.

Unfortunately, the issue of who gets money for EMS and who doesn’t is alive and well. This should not be an “in field” service delivery issue! One does not refuse a standardized protocol on EMS calls because one party receives money and the other does not. This is just an excuse. Those that govern the City will decide what level of service is best for their constituents. This is not an issue which should be part of the attitude of the individual providing care to the patient who just dialed 9-1-1.

## **Sun Valley Customer Service Philosophy**

There will be a need to address the continuation of the “customer service philosophy” of Sun Valley. Although both departments believe in customer service, Sun Valley provides assistance uncommon and above that of most communities. These services are provided in most cases by the Fire Chief, and often his wife, and recorded as Fire Department activities in the category of “All Others.”

There were only 34 calls in Sun Valley in 2006 to which Ketchum did not respond. Twenty-eight (in 2006) of those calls are most likely in the Sun Valley category of “All Others.” These calls included animal assists, helping with frozen garage doors, flat tire assistance, etc. The consultants were not only impressed with this philosophy but with the commitment of the Fire Chief in providing them. It is for this reason that most interviewed associated help from the City with the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief took pride in helping those in need regardless of whether it was an emergency or not. He stated that “if the caller thinks it is an emergency I will respond to see if I can help regardless of the time of day.”

Sun Valley does not want to lose this type of assistance due to a consolidation. Therefore, the consultants recommend that the current Fire Chief of Sun Valley be given the title of: Chief of Community Services and continue to provide these community services but not record them in the Fire Department incident management program.

## **Response Implications**

A consolidation of the two departments will not adversely increase the number of emergency responses. Ketchum already responds to 78.9% of all calls in Sun Valley; conversely, Sun Valley responded to Ketchum only seven times in 2006.

## **Consolidated – Fire Station**

The two previous sections of this report identified the need for a new fire station for the City of Ketchum. There exists the ability to incorporate both fire, EMS, and police into a single public safety complex in that City. Whereas, the Sun Valley audit recommended the relocation of the City Hall station with major response consideration given to the Sun Valley Resort complex. Therefore, each community could be faced with building a fire station in the near future. Consolidation would encourage those needs be met by building a joint facility, inasmuch as emergency response will now be provided by a single agency under a standardized service plan.

The attitudes about building a station together were positive by a majority of governing officials and both Fire Chiefs of both Cities. The major challenge becomes not should we, but can we find property that is in the best interest of each? Discussion on this topic identified four potential sites. The consultants will identify those sites by the order of preference they deem will best serve the two Cities:

### **Consolidated Station Site #1 – Festival Park**

This is the first choice of the consultants they but acknowledge that it will perhaps be the most controversial. The site consists of approximately five acres of open land on the north side of Sun Valley Road. It is owned by the City of Sun Valley and sits on the border of Ketchum and Sun Valley. There is ample property not only to build a shared fire station but to serve as a joint City campus for both Cities including: City Hall, fire, EMS, police, and backup communication. In addition, firefighter housing could be added as either separate units or as a second floor of the building.

The consultants have been told that this piece of property generates strong public opinion as to remaining as open space. Many of the Sun Valley residents feel passionate about this topic and therefore weighing public safety needs against the open space issue will be challenging at best.

Appendix G utilizes GIS mapping to illustrate a four-minute (note Sun Valley had utilized a five-minute drive time in previous maps) drive time and the ISO 1.5 mile engine radius standard. The reason why the consultants have shown the consolidated station with a four-minute drive time is that Ketchum would fall under the NFPA 1710 four-minute drive time standard.

This site clearly illustrates that Sun Valley, including the entire Sun Valley Resort complex, is adequately covered within a four-minute drive time, a drive time reduction of one minute from previous maps for Sun Valley. There is a minimum negative impact on Ketchum's far western boundaries. However, one must remember that the maps were run with moderate traffic, and lighter traffic will allow a greater distance to be covered.

### **Consolidated Station Site #2 – 100 Saddle Road**

The second choice of the consultants is property already owned by the City of Ketchum on which considerable construction is currently occurring. The consultants were told that available land for a fire station would not be difficult to obtain and it appeared that the site had sufficient space to construct a fire station.

A fire station at this site should not create any objections from neighboring properties inasmuch as it is located within a light industrial park area. It would also eliminate any dissatisfaction about the use of the land at Festival Park. Egress is directly onto Saddle Road and in most emergency responses the unit would need to enter or cross State Highway 75. For safety purposes the City could install intersection pre-emption equipment (changes the traffic signals to green for the emergency vehicle) at the intersection.

Appendix H utilizes GIS mapping to illustrate a four-minute (note Sun Valley had utilized a five-minute drive time in previous maps) drive time and the ISO 1.5 mile engine radius standard.

This site actually improves the response of Ketchum to the western border while having no significant negative impact on current and future response to Sun Valley area to the east. Access to Sun Valley would most likely be by Saddle Road verses Sun Valley Road, which during peak seasons might also be advantageous. From discussion with both community leaders the consultants speculate that this would most likely be the consolidation station site agreeable to the largest majority of stakeholders. The only reason it is listed second is that there appears to be more land available at the Festival Park site.

### **Consolidated Station Site #3– 208 Spruce Avenue**

The third preference of the consultants is located very close to Festival Park and is a site within the City limits of Ketchum. The City indicated that they believed that the existing building on the site would be available to the City. The property size is considerably smaller but could support a consolidated fire station. Adjacent to this site is a law office, which would bring the property north to the corner of Spruce Avenue and Sun Valley Road. Both properties would need to be purchased from the current owner and cleared of existing structures.

Appendix I utilizes GIS mapping to illustrate a four-minute (note Sun Valley had utilized a five-minute drive time in previous maps) drive time and the ISO 1.5 mile engine radius standard.

The Spruce Avenue site response impact is very negligible and would still serve each community's needs adequately. If the property was purchased to include the intersection of Spruce Avenue and Sun Valley Road it would allow construction of drive-thru (apparatus can enter and/or exit both from the front and back of the apparatus bay) apparatus bays. Paid-on-call housing could still be constructed on an upper floor of the facility.

### **Consolidated Station Site #4– 215 Lewis Street**

Again, this property is in the City of Ketchum in the light industrial park area and currently owned by the City. It already has a structure on it but could easily be cleared, and like the Spruce Avenue site construction of a station is possible but tight. However, as in all four sites paid-on-call housing could be constructed on the upper floors.

Appendix J utilizes GIS mapping to illustrate a four-minute (note Sun Valley had utilized a five-minute drive time in previous maps) drive time and the ISO 1.5 mile engine radius standard.

Although there appears to be little difference from the 100 Saddle Road location, the consultants believe that the industrial traffic would be problematic. Therefore, due to the limited property size and the location within the industrial park (requiring several turns to exit to Saddle Road) the consultants would not recommend this site for the consolidated fire station.

### **Recommendation – Consolidation Fire Station**

The consultants highly encourage the Cities of Ketchum and Sun Valley build a joint fire/EMS facility in site #1, site #2, or site #3 (in preference order) as described above. The decision as to the exact location will need input from both Cities and cost of property and/or preparing the property will need to be considered. If the choice is the Saddle Road site the consultants highly recommend a traffic control intersection pre-emption system for safety crossing or entering State Highway 75.

All three of these sites should be able to support paid-on-call housing, but an architect will need to develop the site plot plan.

## Consolidate Facility Design

The consultants are not architects and therefore are not qualified to recommend the size or design of the facility. However, from experience, the consultants suggest consideration of the following facility features:

- Five bay drive-thru station.
- Each apparatus bay should be 20 feet wide and 80 feet long. This allows areas in front and rear of each apparatus for minor work or cleaning equipment.
- Drive-thru bay requires ample turning radius in the rear of the station and should be designed not to allow parking of private vehicles in this area. The design of this area should be based on the widest turning radius of current or known future apparatus.
- The apparatus floor should have trench drains adequate in length to handle excess water on the floor. A trench drain should be under all apparatus with a slight floor pitch towards the drain.
- One bay (rear) should be designated as a maintenance bay and the floor drain should be to the side near the exterior wall to allow a mechanic to work under the apparatus. The floor of this bay should have a slight pitch towards the drain.
- Minimum bay door size should be 14 feet wide by 14 feet high.
- There should be two service doors at each end of the apparatus floor.
- Exhaust emission removal system – no less than **100% effective capture**.
- Storage:
  - Records
  - General
  - Kitchen pantry storage
  - Hose, SCBA, EMS, etc.
  - EMS supplies must be kept in a clean dry locked area.
- Air compressor
- Five offices – one with a small conference room:
  - Fire Chief
  - Administrative Officer
  - Assistant Chief/Training
  - EMS Officer
  - Shared general office shift commanders
- Two restrooms proximal to offices, one male, one female.
- Personnel protective clothing storage should be raised off the apparatus floor for cleaning and allow airflow for drying purpose. Each storage area should be a minimum of seven square feet.
- General public reception area minimum 12 X 15 with a counter top and desk for office personnel to meet civilians entering the building.
- Public restrooms – one male, one female – both handicapped accessible directly off the public reception area.

- Secretary work area with ample filing cabinets.
- Personnel restrooms locker area – one male – one female:
  - Shower facility
  - Enough sinks and toilets projecting the number of fulltime staffing for 30 years in the future
  - Attaching locker room to the shower area for each sex with ample lockers for all career employees
- Exercise room with equipment.
- Study/library/quiet area room.
- Kitchen for up to ten assigned personnel.
- Kitchen should be equipped with commercial appliances (multi refrigerators).
- Eating area – adjacent to kitchen for ten personnel.
- Lounge/dayroom – includes television, chairs, phone, etc. for up to ten personnel.
- Sleeping/bunk area – minimum of ten bunks (future paid-on-premise program) – 5 foot dividing wall between bunks and front entrance – no door – each bunk area includes minimum storage for personal belongings.
- Officer’s (shift commander) bunk – room isolated from general bunk area with small desk and work area – includes minimum storage for personal belongings.
- Single large training room. Room design should have removable tables and chairs to accommodate a minimum of 50 individuals for regional training. The classroom should be equipped with a computer, LCD projector ceiling mount, chalk and white boards, smart board, and easels for flipchart paper.
- Hose and drill tower (no live burns).
- Alarm alerting system and intercom throughout the station.
- External emergency phone for citizens if personnel are out of the station.
- Entire building must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Station should have a set back from the street of a minimum of 45 feet so apparatus can be pulled out for maintenance and daily apparatus checks
- Public parking and assigned employee parking should not interfere with egress of emergency apparatus.
- Building material should be durable and easy to maintain.
- Station should have a complete fire suppression sprinkler and fire alarm system.
- Natural gas emergency generator that powers a minimum of 100% of the station. Automatic start and weekly check feature with a manual override feature.
- Keyless entry pads for station doors – self-locking all external doors.

A consolidated five bay drive-thru station would house a maximum of ten apparatus or combination of apparatus and support vehicles or special team trailers. At first glance the station might seem excessive in size. However, keeping in mind future apparatus needs,

and inasmuch as it is serving two communities and consolidating various support units, the consultants believe that the size is appropriate for today's and future needs.

1 bay – house the aerial

1 bay house two ambulances

1 bay house two engines

1 bay house utility vehicles, Chief's vehicles

½ bay house special team trailers, public education trailer, etc.

½ bay designed for apparatus maintenance

There would not be much unused space at the time of opening the station and future needs will surely utilize all the space.

The design of the facility will be dependent on the size of the property. The consultants favor a single story building but realize that it would take considerably more land than a two-story structure. Most fire station designs attempt to remove the fire pole (pole firefighter slide to the apparatus), which has been a common source of firefighter injuries. If paid-on-call housing is added it will require additional space including parking.

The consultants support the concept of a public safety complex, but caution that the police area needs to be segregated from the fire/EMS area. Access to the Police Department should be external to that of the fire/EMS entry. It isn't that the two agencies can't work together, but each needs its respective privacy without compromising sensitive information.

Often, the consultants conduct studies in which police and fire/EMS share multiple spaces within one facility such as a kitchen and/or lounge area. Most often we find considerable tension developing between the two agencies, inasmuch as their needs are different. Too much "familiarity breeds contempt" is a warranted phrase in these situations. Certainly such areas as the training and exercise room are appropriate but shared space should be kept to a minimum.

## **Sun Valley Elkhorn Station**

The Elkhorn station will still be an essential component of the fire and EMS service delivery plan under a consolidation. Paid-on-call housing at this site will allow apparatus response times to improve, especially in the evenings and nights. A paid-on-premise program could still be implemented but housing within the existing facility would continue to be prohibited without structural changes.

## Consolidated – Apparatus

Within the first two sections the consultants have outlined a recommended apparatus replacement schedule for both departments. Under a consolidated Fire Department an initial cost savings can be achieved by joint purchasing a single engine utilized by both departments until the consolidation is implemented.

Sun Valley requested to replace Engine 60 and Ketchum has requested to replace Engine 10 in the near future. The joint purchase not only saves money and reduces unneeded duplication but also standardizes apparatus, which is important and advantageous for those working at the emergency scene.

The recommended apparatus replacement schedule for the consolidated department is identical to those recommended for each of the existing departments as illustrated below:

**Table 54: Consolidated Apparatus Replacement Schedule**

<b>Apparatus Type</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
Engines	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Aerials	23 years front line
Ambulances	7 years front line + 2 years reserve
Squads (not ambulance)	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Tankers	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Utility Vehicles	10 years front line + 3 to 5 years reserve
Vehicles (Car)*	6 to 7 years - no reserve

\* Dependent on condition and mileage

Although there were no major differences in how the engines were laid out, all new apparatus will be designed the same, so regardless of whether it is assigned to the joint consolidated station or the Elkhorn station, the equipment will contain the same cabinet layout. In addition, future purchases from a single manufacture can be cost-effective, especially when it comes to maintenance and/or repairs.

Review of the apparatus utilized by both departments' accounts for the following:

**Table 55: Current Combined Apparatus**

<b>ID #</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Owner</b>
60	Engine	Sun Valley
62	Engine	Sun Valley
E1	Engine	Ketchum
E10	Engine	Ketchum
AT	Aerial Tower	Joint Ownership
63	Tanker	Sun Valley
64	Wildland Vehicle	Sun Valley
C2	Utility	Sun Valley
SQ1	Squad/Support	Ketchum
C1	Sun Valley Chief's Car	Sun Valley
C1	Ketchum Chief's Car	Ketchum
SSE	Command Motorhome	Association Ownership

In addition to the apparatus above, Sun Valley owns: air trailer, snowmobile & trailer, Gator, support trailer; whereas Ketchum owns: technical rescue vehicle (joint with Rural District) Assistant Chiefs car (Ketchum, Rural, and Ambulance District), public education trailer (multiple ownership), and a hazardous material trailer (multiple ownership).

### **Recommendation – Consolidated Apparatus**

Under a consolidated Fire Department the consultants would recommend the following apparatus:

- Three engines: one engine consolidated station, one engine Elkhorn station, and one reserve engine
- One aerial platform
- No tanker – assuming that the rural will continue to have two tankers that could be utilized. Sun Valley and Ketchum are completely served by hydrants
- Two utility vehicles – one consolidation station, one Elkhorn station
- One wildland vehicle
- Four administrative cars
- One station vehicle – consolidated station
- One command motor home

This will be the reduction of one engine and one tanker. These existing vehicles should be kept until such time as they need replacement and at that time taken out of service,

taking advantage of future cost avoidance. The additional apparatus including trailers, etc. can be assessed to reduce any redundancy.

## **Consolidated – Staffing**

The results of a consolidated department would be a unified staff providing a single standard of service to both Cities. Ketchum currently has 33 paid-on-call and Sun Valley lists approximately 25. The consolidated department would benefit from 58 paid-on-call.

The organizational chart for the new consolidated Fire Department will be a major discussion point. The consultants were told that no existing career employees should lose their job. However, the consolidation will require that some titles and job responsibilities change. The most significant issue will be who should be the Fire Chief of the newly formed consolidated department?

There are two options that would best serve the newly created consolidated department:

- Conduct a national search for an external Fire Chief
- One of the existing Chiefs would serve as Fire Chief of the consolidation

**External Fire Chief** – The advantage to bringing in an outside individual is the ability to find a Chief who has had experience in the transition and operation of a consolidated fire/EMS department. If the decision was to be made to bring in an outside individual the next question would be, for what time period? Would it be best to bring in someone who would be with the organization for a long period, or an individual with a short tenure (three to five years) and whose mission is to mentor the existing personnel?

The disadvantages to an outside Chief perhaps outweigh the advantages. First consulting firms that have experience in executive searches are very capable and competent in matching the skill and experience of the candidate to the job description. What isn't always as successful is the ability of the person to fit into the culture and his/her interpersonal skills. There are numerous testing procedures but the bottom line is the individual's ability to have the interpersonal skills to get two established organizations to

not only accept the consolidation and the changes it will present but to do so under a new leader who in the rank and file perspective is an unknown.

In addition, any initial cost savings will be lost, inasmuch as the consolidated department is adding an additional salary which will be the largest. Although Sun Valley and Ketchum are beautiful places to live they are different from many locations in the United States. Not everyone would seek to live in such a culture, excluding the cost of housing.

Both existing Fire Chiefs stated that the majority of the department members would be opposed to an outside Chief. The two Chiefs themselves were less than enthusiastic, while one noted they perceived their function as support of the new administration and the other questioned his tenure. In one organization's past experience there would be a major deterrent to the acceptance of an outside Chief.

**Choose One of the Existing Chiefs** – The advantage is that both Chiefs speak well of each other and currently are willing to function as a team. The majority of the individuals interviewed in Sun Valley favored the Sun Valley Chief, whereas the majority of those interviewed in Ketchum favored the Ketchum Chief. Each organization had at least one individual who wanted the opposite Chief of the organization to which they belonged.

When the Chiefs themselves were questioned they repeatedly pointed at each other but the consultants learned that this was not their true feelings. The reality is that both desire to be the Fire Chief of the consolidated department. This is positive, inasmuch as one would question whether they wanted a Chief who didn't express a desire to be the head of the new organization.

The consultants realize that in order for the consolidation to be a success, both current Fire Chiefs need to function as a team, and although there can only be one Fire Chief of the newly formed consolidated department, this does not diminish the importance of each member of the leadership team.

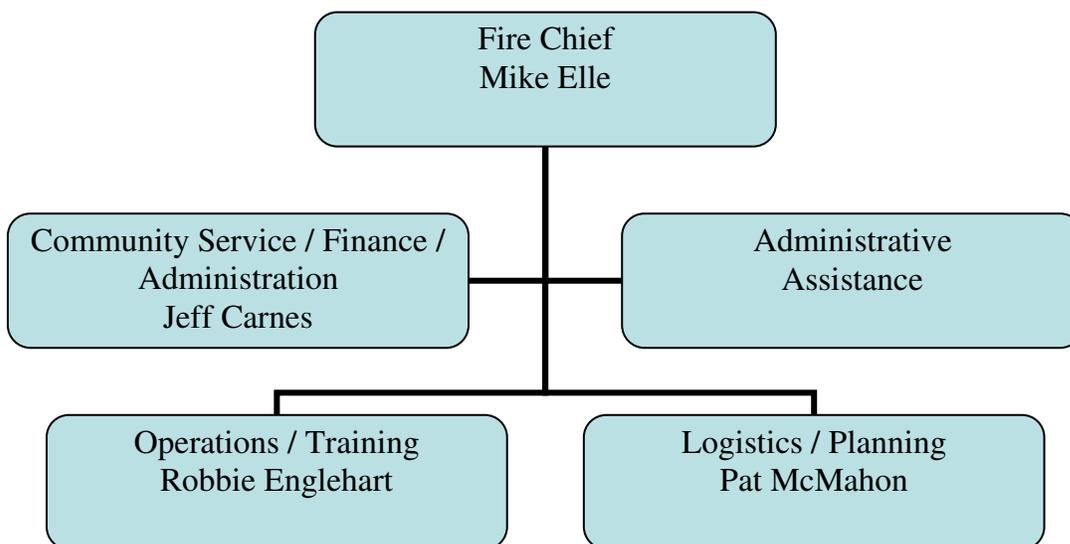
## Recommendation – Consolidated Department Fire Chief

The consultants believe that the best chance for a consolidated Fire Department success is to name one of the existing Chiefs as Fire Chief of the consolidated Fire Department. The consultants have limited their internal candidate at this point to just the two existing Fire Chiefs. This is not to say that others in the organization do not have talent, but rather that experience as a Chief Officer will be critical during the transition.

After considerable discussion among the consulting team that had contact with both individuals, the consultants would recommend that Chief Elle (Ketchum) be given the title of Fire Chief of the consolidated department. Chief Carnes (Sun Valley) would be given the title Chief of Community Services, which would include overseeing finance and administration, working directly with Chief Elle to develop a leadership team that utilizes both of their skills and attitudes. The consultants will base the consolidated Fire Department’s organization chart after a national model.

The organizational chart below illustrates the hierarchy of the consolidated Fire Department based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) adopted by the Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Agency.

**Figure 22: Consolidated Fire Department Organization Chart**



In February of 2003, President Bush issued a directive to the Department of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System to provide a consistent nationwide template to enable organizations to work together. Although initially the system was designed for emergency incidents (ICS), it is now an accepted standard of organization design for administration of emergency service providers.

A brief description of each title is as follows:

- **Fire Chief** – responsible for managing and directing the operations and administration of the department. Primary contact with governing officials. Acts as supervisor of all sworn, paid-on-call, and civilian employees. Other job titles include:
  - Management/Leadership
  - Budgets
  - Employee Development
  - Spokesperson
  - Research
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Develops Rules & Policies
  - Incident Command at Emergency Incidents
- **Chief of Community Service includes Finance & Administration** – Community Service: acts as the liaison for the department, serves as the public information officer, serves as the safety officer at all emergency incidents, event coordinator, coordinate emergency community planning, provides non-traditional assistance to citizens' requests. Finance: makes recommendation of resource needs including pricing and budget implications, acts as purchasing agent for the department, addresses worker's compensation claims. Administration: acts as a team member to the Fire Chief in addressing all administrative functions of the department. Assist the Fire Chief as needed.
- **Operations / Training** – Operations: responsible for distribution of resources and day-to-day operations of both emergency and non-emergency activities. Develops personnel scheduling and acts as incident command in the absence of the other

Chief Officers. Training: develop and oversee all aspects of training including but not limited to: curriculum development, instructor certifications, training manual, records, and certifications.

- **Logistics / Planning** – Logistics: responsible for the recommendation for procurement, maintenance, distribution of resources, and replacement of materials. Planning: makes recommendations on future department needs; develops and recommends a comprehensive all-hazard response plan including identifying planning deficiencies. Conducts traditional fire prevention bureau activities: inspections, pre-plans, public education.

The above duties are not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to serve as a general outline of job responsibilities. It will be the responsibility of the Fire Chief to alter job responsibilities during the transition and final organization model of the Fire Department. Although already stated it is worth reemphasizing that it is most beneficial to have the two existing Chiefs work together as a team in the administration and operations of the newly formed consolidated department. However, everyone should realize that there needs to be a single source of final decision making.

As previously noted, Sun Valley places significant emphasis on customer service and Chief Carnes has provided assistance to residents in ways not normally associated with a fire department. This is a service which Sun Valley does not want to be diminished by the consolidation. Therefore, the title of Chief of Community Services is very fitting to continue to offer this type of assistance. However, the consultants do not believe that these events should be recorded in the incident management software as activities of the Fire Department, but rather they should be recorded independently of the Fire Department data as community assists.

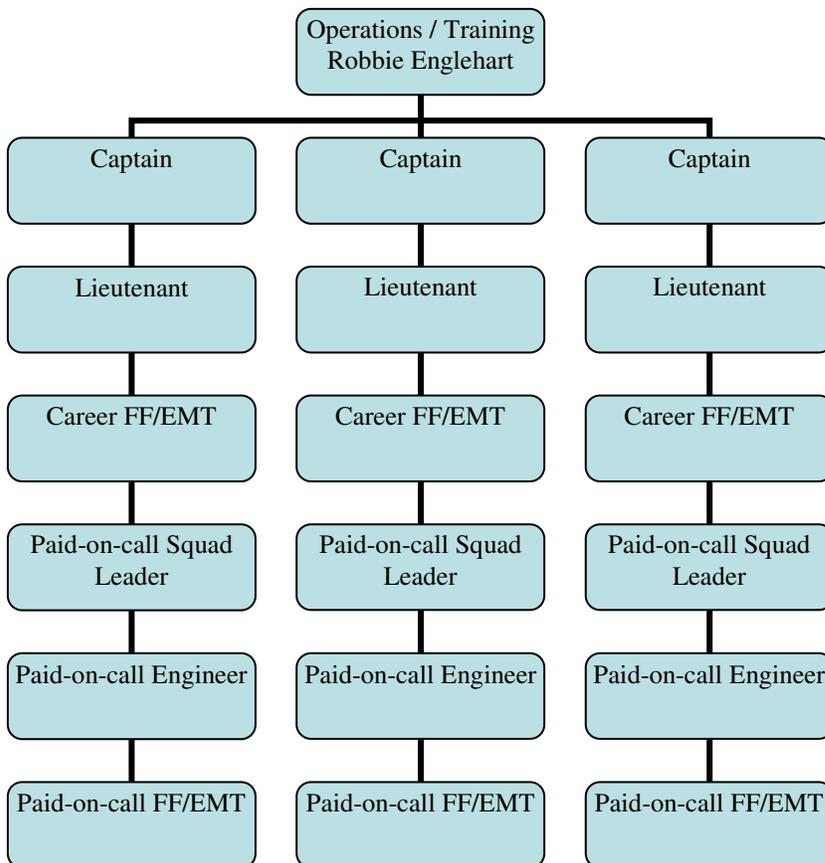
## **Reorganization of the Operational Division**

Under the consolidated Fire Department, existing paid-on-call of both departments are now able to be utilized in a manner that provides the best protection to the citizens and

visitors of the two Cities. Paid-on-call could be assigned to a certain station, and thereby those wishing to serve only one area would still be able to be a vital part of the department.

In order to lessen the supervisor to rank and file personnel the consultants have eliminated the Senior Lieutenant position in the operational division of the newly formed consolidated department. Individuals who currently hold that rank should not be demoted or have their pay reduced. Rather, as those positions become vacant they should be eliminated. The revised organization operational division chart under the Operation Assistant Chief is illustrated below:

**Figure 23: Operational Organization Chart**



Paid-on-call are best motivated by utilizing their skill, encouraging training, and recognizing their importance to the department. Therefore, the position of paid-on-call

squad leader should be associated with supervisory responsibilities of paid-on-call team members.

A consolidated department would have approximately 58 paid-on-call members. In order to increase the retention of these individuals, paid-on-call shifts could be developed that would allow greater free time for the members and reduce personnel costs.

## **Consolidated – Human Resource**

There will be a number of issues to address when it comes to a consolidated human resource system. The consolidated department will need to establish its recruitment and hiring practices, compensation, performance management, schedules, and policies and procedures. Many of these topics will be better established by joint committees and/or the District Board, but the consultants have some suggestions.

### **Recruitment**

As discussed in the Sun Valley and Ketchum portions of this report, the consolidated department will need to make a concerted effort in recruitment of paid-on-call personnel. The consultant gave some suggestions for recruitment methodologies in the Sun Valley portion and would refer the reader to that section rather than repeat them here. The consolidated department needs to establish the following:

- Job description for all positions that include skills and qualifications for the position (including supervisory skills)
- Application form – tailored to the skills and qualifications necessary for the Fire Department
- Recruitment information – brochure(s), pamphlets, webpage that markets the department, benefits of membership, application process
- Develop a standardized recruitment process – as suggested in Ketchum, the department may need to run the Essentials class two times a year in order to maintain the number of paid-on-call personnel, rather than once per year
- Establish a post-offer/pre-employment physical, agility testing, and baseline medical information to ensure all candidates are physically capable of performing the essential job functions.
- Reference checking process and coordination with the Ketchum Police Department to conduct background checks.

### **Employee Pay**

In a consolidated department, the task would be to develop a salary structure that attempts to incorporate elements from both communities. However, the current salary structures couldn't be more different. Thus, trying to combine them without anyone

losing wages is difficult at best. Without completing a market analysis of surrounding municipal or comparable ski resort towns, the consultants have attempted to construct a draft salary schedule for a combined department. The basis for the schedule is the City of Ketchum’s salary structure. However, for all paid-on-call personnel, the consultant is recommending a base compensation for all members that is enhanced by an individual’s initiative to achieve departmental approved certifications.

**Table 56: Draft Combined Career Salary Structure**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>FLSA Status</b>
Fire Chief	\$94,376	\$120,989	Exempt
Chief Community Services	\$89,882	\$115,228	Exempt
Assistant Chief	\$85,796	\$109,990	Exempt
Captain	\$77,294	\$99,090	Non-exempt
Lieutenant	\$69,634	\$84,174	Non-exempt
FF/Paramedic	\$44,476	\$64,174	Non-exempt
FF/EMT	\$41,406	\$60,166	Non-exempt
Administrative Assistant	\$32,900	\$42,187	Non-exempt

During the consolidation process, the Fire Chief and governing board would need to develop the compensation philosophy and determine the annual increase methodology – step increases (currently found in Ketchum), combination of cost-of-living and merit, etc. Further, it would be beneficial to conduct a market analysis of surrounding fire departments, EMS districts, resort departments, etc. and develop the salary range around a current market rate of comparable departments.

It becomes difficult to develop a paid-on-call salary schedule when you have the number of certification combinations available. Thus, the consultant recommends that the Fire District establish a base firefighter rate, as well as a rate for each viable certification. Thus, an individual with a lot of initiative can earn a higher compensation for all approved, earned certifications. In essence, the obtainment of the certification increases his or her value to the organization.

The following is a sample of how such a structure would be formed:

**Table 57: Paid-on-Call Salary Schedule**

Probationary Firefighter	\$17/hour
Firefighter	\$20/hour
First Responder	+\$0.50
Emergency Medical Technician-Basic	+\$1.00
Emergency Medical Technician – Advanced	+\$1.50
Paramedic	+\$3.00
Fire Apparatus Engineer	+\$1.00
Fire Service Vehicle Operator	+\$1.00
Rescue Specialist	+\$0.50
Structural Collapse	+\$0.50
Ice Rescue	+\$1.00

As one moves up the certification scale – EMT-B; EMT-A; Paramedic -- the stipend is not accumulative. Thus a FF with a paramedic certification would receive \$20.00 as a base plus \$3.00, or \$23.00 per hour. If that same individual was to also have the requirements for an Engineer and Rescue Specialist – his/her total hourly rate would be \$24.50 [\$20.00 + \$3.00 paramedic + \$1.00 engineer + \$.50 rescue].

The Fire District would need to determine those work responsibilities and/or certifications that are beneficial and needed within the Fire Department. Obviously fiscal constraints will need to be taken into account when establishing the base rate, as well as the list of additional certifications that are required versus preferred. Certifications that are “nice to have” but would not serve the department should not be compensated for.

## **Administration**

The consolidated department will need to determine if it is to be a stand-alone agency, or follow the current model and contract with the City of Ketchum to perform some of the

administrative functions such as billing, payroll, and benefit administration. It is recommended that the department start with a contracting relationship as it continues to establish itself, and not consider becoming independent until such time as operations are securely underway.

The department will need to check with the City of Ketchum's insurance carriers to see if it is legally possible to continue under the City of Ketchum, or whether, because it is legally a separate entity, it will have to purchase liability and employee insurances on its own. If the department does need to provide its own benefits, the management and administration of these duties should rest with one of the deputy Chiefs, along with the department's administrative assistant.

## **Policies & SOG's**

It will be imperative that the department develop a new set of employee policies, or an employee handbook, to ensure that there is an integration of both groups rather than just adopting one versus the other. The handbook needs to address all of the issues involved with paid-on-call, paid-on-premise and career, especially documenting the compensation cycle for all appropriate groups.

Both departments need some work on revising/updating their respective operational policy manuals. It is highly recommended that a joint group of paid-on-call, career, and officers be tasked with developing this manual. The more the two groups can work together to formulate department policies, the better the integration of personnel.

## **Consolidated – Fiscal**

There are some obvious initial cost savings in consolidation including the consolidated station and the need to only replace only one engine, not two.

### **Initial Consolidated Fire Station Cost**

The consultants have recommended that one five bay drive-thru station be built and placed in the most advantageous location to ensure good response times. As previously noted, the consultants are not qualified to design the building but have made recommendations as to features that should be included.

Depending on the site location, recommendation is given to the construction of a single-story structure. If paid-on-call housing was to be added it might be advantageous to construct a second floor for that purpose. However, the estimated cost of the fire station does not include paid-on-call housing or a public safety complex.

Fire stations vary greatly in design and square footage. However, the consultants believe that a five bay drive-thru station with the features suggested in the Facility Design section of this section would be approximately 24,000 square feet.

### **Furniture, Fixture, Equipment (FFE)**

The term FFE is used by architects to represent the cost of placing furniture, fixtures, and equipment (non-emergency equipment) in a new facility. Depending on the type of occupancy and geographic location in the United States, the industry uses a percentage ranging from 5% to 10% of the total building cost. It appeared that a FFE figure of 6.5% was appropriate for the estimate of the station.

The consultants requested an approximate square footage construction cost, and were given the price of \$150 per square foot. Using a figure of 6.5% for the FFE the recommended station would cost approximately:

Stations	=	\$3,600,000
FFE	=	\$234,000
Apparatus	=	\$ 0
Personnel	=	\$ <u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	=	<b>\$3,834,000</b>

In addition, there could be some costs in clearing the property for the station. One recommended station site was located in Sun Valley and owned by that City. If this site was utilized the City of Ketchum would have to share in the fair market value cost of that property. The other three sites were located in Ketchum and two of those were owned by the City of Ketchum. If these sites were utilized the City of Sun Valley would have to share in the fair market value cost of the property.

### **Consolidated Station Savings**

Assuming that each City would build a station independent of each other if they choose not to consolidate, the consultants estimated the size each City might consider. This does not take into account that even if both Ketchum and Sun Valley relocated their new stations they would still be within a four-minute drive time of each other.

Ketchum – 4 bay drive-thru station approximately 21,000 square feet:

Station	=	\$3,150,000
FFE	=	\$ <u>204,750</u>
<b>Total</b>	=	<b>\$3,354,750</b>

Sun Valley – 3 bay drive-thru station approximately 13,000 square feet:

Station	=	\$1,950,000
FFE	=	\$ <u>121,875</u>
<b>Total</b>	=	<b>\$2,071,875</b>

The two stations would cost taxpayers a total of \$5,426,625, whereas a consolidated station would cost taxpayers \$3,834,000. The difference to the taxpayers is **\$1,592,625**.

In addition, both Cities could capture some cost savings by eliminating the current Ketchum fire station and converting the Sun Valley City Hall fire station into more usable space.

## **Employee's Pay**

Under the proposed career salary structure no one would get a decrease in his/her salary. Just the opposite occurs with the current Sun Valley Fire Chief, whose Chief of Community Services pay range exceeds his current salary. The current Sun Valley Assistant Chief is currently a temporary employee but if kept at the same rank as he currently holds and the position becomes fulltime, his salary would increase significantly.

## **Initial Consolidated Apparatus Costs**

Each of the Cities either needs to replace an engine in the current budget or within a very short time frame. One engine, not two, is recommended to be replaced in the consolidated service plan. Assuming the cost of an engine is \$425,000 the consolidated model would eliminate the second engine for a **taxpayer savings of \$425,000**.

## **Future Apparatus/Equipment Cost Avoidance**

Under a full consolidation a separate taxing district will be formed. This district will not only need to develop an operating budget but in addition a capital budget addressing future apparatus needs. During the transition period the Cities might need to equally fund apparatus expenses in order to remain within the recommended apparatus replacement schedule.

Each department currently has other apparatus such as special team trailers and equipment, which can not only be consolidated but duplication can be eliminated in the consolidated department.

## **Other Consolidated Issues**

Each of the following topics are important to consider when evaluating the decision of consolidation.

### **Consolidated – Equality**

If the two Cities consolidate their Fire Departments there will not be an issue of equality as to service delivery, apparatus responses, training, fire prevention activities, etc., inasmuch as a single agency will standardize all aspects of the service plan. Funding in a full consolidation will not be an issue, inasmuch as the newly formed district is its own taxing body.

What concerns the consultants is the issue of equality if the two Cities choose not to consolidate. Clearly the issue of equality will be raised and endanger the existing partnership. Several influential individuals in Ketchum believed that Ketchum provides more services (personnel and apparatus) to Sun Valley than they receive in return. It is true that Ketchum responds more to Sun Valley than the reverse. However, the issue of EMS services being provided by Blaine County through the Ketchum Fire Department certainly exacerbates the perception. Removing EMS from the equation, one would believe it should not be too difficult to determine exactly how often and for what reason Ketchum responded to Sun Valley.

Unfortunately, it isn't that simple. Each department utilizes different incident management systems and record emergencies differently. In addition, until very recently, the Communication Center could not retrieve this type of data without utilizing hand tally. At best the consultants used data indicating that Ketchum responses to Sun Valley represented 13% of their total calls in 2006.

Therefore, 13% of 927 (total calls in 2006) equivalent to Ketchum responded to Sun Valley 120.5 or 121 times. Sun Valley indicates that they had 80 EMS incidents in 2006 to which Ketchum would respond automatically, by agreement with the Ambulance District, leaving 41 incidents in which Ketchum responded to Sun Valley in 2006 for non-EMS incidents. Sun Valley indicated that they responded to Ketchum 7 times in 2006.

**Table 58: Percentage of Mutual Response Between the Cities**

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Ketchum to Sun Valley	41	85.4%
Sun Valley to Ketchum	7	14.6%
<b>Total Mutual/Auto Aid</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Mutual/Automatic aid cannot be judged solely on who responds to whom more. Rather, it is based on a mutual benefit to each City through cooperative efforts to provide the best service to those in need within the scope of the limited resources. This is why consolidation makes so much sense. The resource that is most scarce is the number of area residents willing to become paid-on-call. Instead of the Cities pooling and maximizing these individuals, they are “by existing department rule” not allowed to be on both departments.

On the other hand, if mutual/auto aid is deemed not to be of equal value considering all aspects of the agreement then change usually occurs. The consultant fears that if consolidation is not adopted by the two Cities that the existing partnership between the departments is in jeopardy; one City might feel that the inequality of the current mutual and automatic aid program is significant enough to discontinue the current agreements. This would result in a 180-degree shift from where these two Cities need to move. Without consolidation both Cities will be duplicating resources and efforts and continue to compete for the limited number of volunteers.

## **Consolidated – National Standard**

The consolidated department would continue to fall under the NFPA 1710 standard for the City of Ketchum. The City of Sun Valley and the Rural Fire District would be better evaluated under the NFPA 1720 standard. The overall NFPA implications to the consolidated Fire Department would be identical to those in existence now.

Sun Valley has a current ISO classification of a class 4 whereas Ketchum has an ISO classification of a class 3. Under the consolidated department all initial calls in both Cities would receive immediate response from the consolidated station. Housing at the Elkhorn station would improve response times when those residents were available. Therefore, on some incidents, such as a car fire, when the Elkhorn station was able to respond immediately the consolidated station would not need to respond unless requested for assistance. The net effect would be improved response times, which could likely result in an improved ISO rating for Sun Valley to a class 3.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on EMS response in Sun Valley, as Ketchum already responds as the paramedic/transport provider. However, with housing at the Elkhorn station and certification of those individuals living there, the EMS response would improve in Sun Valley. Consideration to giving greater housing incentives for members with higher EMS certifications would be beneficial.

Although neither department was recommended to seek accreditation (CPSE) the evaluation criteria utilized by this group is a good benchmark for quality improvements. As a consolidated department, the consultants still do not recommend seeking accreditation but encourage the use of their evaluation criteria as the standard for improving services.

## **Consolidated – Training**

Under a consolidated department significant improvements would be made in the unified training of all members. The consultants have expressed their concern for safety when two organizations work routinely together but utilize different training standards.

The increased paid-on-call membership (combined members) would allow for training drills incorporating multiple functions (company evolutions) in which a larger number of individuals are needed. Cost savings would be realized by not duplicating curriculums, equipment, and supplies need to conduct the training sessions.

The consolidated department should identify a single training coordinator to oversee the training program, including the curriculums, instructors, lesson plans, and all training-related records. One training coordinator will ensure that unified training is occurring and that records are kept in the same manner. Weekly training would occur on the same evening each week and additional special training conducted on a needs basis.

## **Consolidated – Administration & Operational Costs**

At this time no current employee will lose their job. This also applies to the temporary assignment of the Assistant Fire Chief of Sun Valley. However, future cost savings could be realized when several of these positions become vacant. Conventional wisdom would suggest that a single department serving both Cities with ten career firefighter/EMTs and approximately 50 paid-on-call would not need four Chief Officers. Reassessment as to the number of Chief Officers needed should occur as individuals leave the department.

Operational costs would be reduced by eliminating two administrative offices into one. Everything from the cost of utilities, office supplies, furniture, to office equipment will not be duplicated.

One City could provide all the support aspects such as human resource, employee records, financial accounting, purchasing, and billing. These services have a value and could become a partnership agreement.

## **Consolidated – Dispatch/Communication**

Ketchum utilizes their own City communication center, while Sun Valley primarily utilizes the Blaine County Communication Center, although Ketchum Communication answers some of Sun Valley's calls. Consolidation would require that all communication be handled by a single agency.

Although switching communication centers is never without challenges, the consultants believe that greater cost savings would occur by consolidating into the County communication system. This will require some change in both hardware and software but will also allow the consolidated department to communicate through the same center as most other fire/EMS agencies.

## **Consolidated – Fire Prevention**

During the interview process the Fire Chiefs indicated that they would be interested in having an individual who would oversee a traditional fire prevention bureau. This would include fire inspections, fire pre-plans, plan review, investigations of false alarms, and public safety education. Currently, both departments perform these activities and in both cases many of them are performed by the Fire Chief. Any differences in the codes themselves or how they are enforced are issues that could be resolved. Standardization of code enforcement, inspections, and pre-plans would be beneficial and cost effective.

The consultants have already recommended that both departments add the NFPA and Lowe's Risk Watch program. This program is a comprehensive safety education program for children 14 years of age and younger. Both City Police Departments could partner

with the Fire Department, thereby bringing both safety messages to the audience under a single program.

## **Consolidated – Ambulance in Sun Valley**

The consultants do not support an ambulance stationed in Sun Valley unless it is staffed with paramedics. Currently Sun Valley has no paramedics and Ketchum has an insufficient number of paramedics to staff two ambulances simultaneously. However, with the paid-on-call housing considered at the Elkhorn station and the implementation of a paid-on-premise program by the consolidated department, it might, on occasion, be possible to have sufficient paramedics on duty to staff two ambulances.

When paramedic numbers allow staffing of two ambulances, the Fire Chief should review data as to the number of ambulance calls in which an ambulance in Sun Valley would result in paramedic service reaching the patient sooner. If that type of situation is occurring on a somewhat frequent basis, placing a paramedic unit in Sun Valley should be considered. Both Cities have a large influx of visitors during certain periods of the year and during these times it might be advantageous to staff a paramedic unit in Sun Valley to improve response times, especially during high traffic congestion.

## **Consolidated Housing**

The consultants have repeatedly addressed the opportunity to create additional paid-on-call housing, either at the existing Elkhorn station or at the new consolidated station. The Sun Valley Fire Chief receives housing assistance in the amount of \$6,000 annually. However, the Assistant Chief, who is currently classified as a temporary employee, does not receive assistance. Neither the Ketchum Chief nor Ketchum Assistant Chief receives any housing assistance from the City.

## Housing Survey

The consultants were requested to survey other ski communities to inquire into the practice of housing assistance. The table below illustrates the result of the survey:

**Table 59: Housing Survey**

Department	State	Ski Resort Services	Career/POC	Housing Provided	Stipend Given	Actual Used	Comments
North Tahoe Fire Dept.	CA	EMS/Fire	30/17	No	Yes, not for housing	NA	The District pays for CSFA membership for all part-time employees. Through CSFA membership and Insurance Co., the District provides Life and AD&D benefits
South Tahoe Fire Dept.	CA	EMS/Fire	12/0	No	No	NA	
Aspen FPD	CO	EMS/Fire	10/45	2 units	No	2	Lottery system
Copper Mountain Fire Dept.	CO	EMS/Fire	15/12	No	\$70/month	NA	
Crested Butte FD	CO	EMS/Fire	5/35	No	EMT \$70 Per Shift	NA	Acquiring land to build housing.
Eagle River FPD (Beaver Creek Ski Resort)	CO	EMS/Fire	40/25	25 Student Resident Program	No	25	
Red, White, & Blue FD (Breckenridge)	CO	EMS/Fire	50/0	No	NA	NA	No residency requirement; 15% live in the district. Had a resident program, but disbanded it 4 years ago due to cost and administrative hassle.
Snowmass Wildcat FPD	CO	EMS/Fire	26/11	Yes	\$75/shift	11	Pitkin Co. POC pay \$75/month for housing but must work 1 24hour shift for free
Steamboat Springs FD	CO	EMS/Fire					No response
Telluride FPD	CO	EMS/Fire	3/didn't provide a number but have POC	3 units	No	3	Rent to FF to allow them to save for a down payment on a home.
Vail Fire Dept.	CO	EMS/Fire	15/16	16 Student Resident Program	No	16	The student resident program housing is only for those who are accepted into the

Department	State	Ski Resort Services	Career/POC	Housing Provided	Stipend Given	Actual Used	Comments
							academy, which takes 100% of student's time for first 2-3 months. Switch to 48 on/96 off to save travel expenses.
Big Sky FD	MT	EMS/Fire					No response
Park City FD	UT	EMS/Fire	57/28	No	POC \$3,000/Yr	28 fulltime	All city Police & Sewer workers also receive the same housing stipend if they live in area.
Teton County FD (Jackson Hole)	WY	EMS only	23/141	No	NA	NA	Provide ambulance only to ski resort
Teton Village Special Fire Dist. (Jackson Hole)	WY	EMS/Fire	2/15	Yes	\$250/month varies with certifications	6	6 studio apartments built with new fire station.

Most of those surveyed indicated similar problems with recruitment and retention of paid-on-call due to the high housing costs in the area. Only one department surveyed provides actual housing for career fire/EMS personnel. The majority that did provide actual housing did so for student resident programs in conjunction with the University program. In many aspects Sun Valley and Ketchum Rural are ahead of many surveyed in providing actual housing units.

### **Recommendation – Consolidated Housing**

The current housing programs in Sun Valley and Ketchum Rural should be expanded wherever possible. Sun Valley is considering building housing units at their Elkhorn station, and if sufficient property is available at the shared consolidated station housing should be included.

## Implementation Time

The timeline for consolidating two fire departments into a single agency is very fluid and will be dependent upon a group who are willing to become the champions of the project, and provide oversight and direction. Without such a group, there is a tendency to make the process more cumbersome through resistance to change, and holding onto the status quo. The consultants acknowledge that this consolidation will not be unique, inasmuch as there will be individuals or small groups who will resist this opportunity.

Although there is no set amount of time for the transition from two departments into one, the consultants believe that, in the case of Sun Valley and Ketchum, the process should take twelve to eighteen months. This is a shorter time frame than seen in some other consolidations due to the close working relationship already shared by the two Cities.

When challenges and obstacles arise everyone is encouraged to measure the issue against the question of: **“What is in the Best Interest of the People We Serve.”** It will be the professionalism of the two Fire Chiefs, who are passionate about serving and protecting their communities, which will demonstrate that through consolidation, those who require emergency services will benefit. Although the actual process varies, the following steps are most likely to occur.

### Step 1 – Determine Feasibility

The first step towards consolidation has already occurred. The Chiefs and elected officials have decided to study the question of consolidation feasibility through the hiring of an independent consultant. The quest is to improve the efficiency of service delivery and to save money. The greatest fiscal savings occur from the elimination of the redundancy of facilities, apparatus, and personnel. Future cost avoidance is where most cost savings will be found.

## **Step 2 – Endorsing the Plan**

Once the governing officials have read the study, they must decide if it will be endorsed and supported. Has the study provided evidence that consolidation is in the best interest of each community? If not, the study provided a complete audit of each organization and each City can invest its dollars into their respective Fire Department and move on. If, however, consolidation makes sense, then the success of the project will depend upon the support given by each community. A unanimous vote sends a clear message to employees and citizens of the intent to provide more effective community services. A split decision sends the message that those that oppose the consolidation have an ally and the process will probably take more time to implement.

## **Step 3 – Communication & Transition**

Once the final report is delivered it is essential that champions of the project open the lines of communication. This is especially important for internal customers – the members of the Fire Departments. It is also important to keep the elected officials abreast of the progress of the project. Expect and accept resistance, but not from the Fire Department leadership. However, members will go through similar steps of grief from loss:

1. Denial – this might be especially true in the case of this consolidation, inasmuch as the issue has been visited several times before, all internally, and consolidation has been rejected.
2. Anger – especially in volunteer/paid-on-call departments where members do not serve the community for financial gain. The members might very well feel unappreciated for all their time and efforts and realize that combining the departments could change their status or have personal implications. However, consolidation isn't about the individual, it is about service to the community and the golden question – What is in the Best Interest of our Community - is essential at this point.
3. Casualties – It is at this point the champion of the project might realize that consolidation sometimes has casualties. Not everyone will understand or realize the benefit to the community, but rather, will concentrate on their own personal needs. This just needs to be recognized and accepted.

4. Rumors – It is important to remember that devoid of information from the consolidation leaders, the lack of information will be filled by rumors and half-truths. This step is long and tedious, but essential. Communication must be constant and developing a communication plan is essential.
5. Consolidation Model – It is important to remember that this will be the biggest change that most department members will experience in their careers. It is also the largest opportunity to redesign each individual's career as well as the organization. It is an opportunity that few individuals/departments ever get. The Sun Valley and Ketchum consolidation will become the model for the County and most likely the state.
6. Media – Don't overlook the media. Unfortunately, the consultants have found that smaller newspapers, in particular, have a tendency to want to create more controversy in order to increase sales. However, this same group, given the facts and allowed access to the decision makers, can become a great ally and will be essential in getting the correct story out. Remember, most people will immediately rush to the potential cost savings. Consolidations have many more benefits than just saving money and in the Cities of Sun Valley and Ketchum improved services and reduction in redundancy will be seen.
7. Bargaining – there will be those that suggest that each community remains separate, but increase the amount of functional consolidation. The consultants heard this when discussing a shared fire station. The statement was made that “we could share a fire station without consolidating.”

It will not be surprising to see the process stall as people evaluate the report and determine how it effects each department as well as them personally. Remember that the process of addressing public issues which are not supported usually follows these steps: attack the product (report); find any issue that can question whether this is a good idea; attack the authors and those that commissioned the study as either uninformed or having a personal/biased interest; and finally, if nothing works to this point, attack everything hoping that something might raise enough questions to delay or derail the project. One must remember that these are not bad people; they either truly believe that consolidation is not in the City's best interest or they fear some type of personal loss.

8. Threats – in extreme cases “if you do this I will quit.” However, not consolidating because someone or a small group might quit places the municipality in the position that they must ensure that there are other alternatives in providing services. Once this threat is used and one City backs down as a result of such a threat, one can be assured it will happen again.

The reality is that the individuals that will see the least amount of change in the department are the rank and file. Their services will continue to be needed and they will be afforded a number of growth opportunities because of the process.

9. Acceptance – with good communication and understanding, those that are championing the project will see that the members of the department really do want what is best for those they protect. The process will develop exciting opportunities for all that stay with and support the ultimate outcome.

#### **Step 4 – Start with a Victory**

The consultants have referred to a group that will champion this project. The most likely candidates would be the Joint Powers board. It should involve elected board officials, Fire Chiefs, City Administrators, and both Mayors. Assigning a single spokesperson is often very advantageous and ensures a consistent message to all parties.

Always start significant change with a victory. No matter how small, capitalize on the departments' past ability to work together and make very visible changes. Assign members to begin to develop the new department's patch. Have members develop a process for determining the newly consolidated department's name. Both Cities are developing budgets and should align those budgets with the knowledge that the next fiscal budget will be from a different taxing authority.

Do not underestimate the importance of identifying successes. Success begets success, and once the ball get rolling do not lose that momentum. The efforts to restart the road to consolidation take time and effort that can better be directed toward the consolidation process.

#### **Step 5 – Identify the Major Challenges and Develop a Strategic Plan**

Some of the more major challenges of the reorganization of the two departments into a single agency are listed in the table below:

**Table 60: Sample Listing of Tasks**

**North Valley Fire & Rescue Department**

**Phase 1**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Party Responsible</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Conduct comparable audit of finances		
Listing of all assets and liabilities		
Description of the terms, conditions and status of all current grants & contracts		
Listing of all leases of buildings and/or loans		
Listing of capital equipment & apparatus		
Apparatus replacement plan and funding		
Copies of any loans or liens against any assets		
Statement regarding any threatened or pending litigation		
Actuarial accounting of pension liability		
Copies of personnel policies, employment contracts		
Description of insurance coverage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liability</li> <li>• Worker’s compensation</li> <li>• Property</li> <li>• Equipment/apparatus</li> </ul>		
Titles and/or deeds of equipment/property that will be transferred		
Listing of what each City will retain ownership		
Purchase property for the shared facility		

**Phase 2**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Party Responsible</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Development of personnel plan		
Develop policies and procedures		
Establish Joint Powers Board		
Determine Joint Powers Board members & term of office		
Determine operating procedures of the Joint Powers Board		
Establish hiring procedures		
Establish pension board		
Address insurance issues (health, dental, worker’s compensation, property, liability, etc.)		
Evaluate pension administration		
Establish new organizational structure		
Develop compensation structure & conversion		

<b>Task</b>	<b>Party Responsible</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Develop budget		
Develop the new taxing authority		
Ensure communication to department members		
Begin construction on the new shared fire station		
Develop new standard operating procedures		

### **Phase 3**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Party Responsible</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Transfer all titles of all property to the consolidated department		
Transfer assets to the district		
Transfer all employees		
Transfer funds		
Transfer apparatus titles		
Transfer employee benefits in district's name		
Effect transfer of personnel		
Set date of new operation		

The above implementation table is not an all-inclusive list inasmuch as new challenges and opportunities will develop, but it should serve as an initial guide. There will be new and different roles for existing members and many opportunities for others. The consultants were told that no one would lose their job, but when individuals retire the question of whether that position is still needed must be examined.

## **Consolidation – Summary of Recommendation**

The determination benchmark for all decisions facing the consolidation effort should be:  
**“What Is In the Best Interest of the People We Serve”**

### **Formation of a Consolidated District**

- The Cities of Sun Valley and Ketchum should consolidate the two Fire Departments under a full consolidation.
- The governing structure of the consolidated department should be a Joint Powers agreement between the two Cities
- The governing board should consist of five members:
  - One current council member from Sun Valley
  - One current council member from Ketchum
  - City Administrator of Sun Valley
  - City Administrator of Ketchum
  - Fifth member would be appointed by this body by consensus agreement.

### **Sun Valley Customer Service Philosophy**

- Current Sun Valley Fire Chief should be given the title of Chief of Community Services, in addition to any title he holds in the new consolidated department.

### **Consolidated Fire Station**

- Sun Valley and Ketchum should build a joint fire/EMS facility in one of the three site locations recommended in the report.
- If the site for the new consolidated fire station is the Saddle Road location, traffic control pre-emption system should be installed at Saddle Road and State Highway 75.
- A five bay drive-thru station should be jointly constructed.
- The consultants have made a comprehensive list of features that should be considered in the new fire station.

### **Apparatus**

- Sun Valley and Ketchum Fire Departments should purchase a single engine to be utilized in the consolidated department.
- The consolidated Fire Department should utilize the apparatus replacement schedule as outlined in the report.
- The consolidated department should have the following apparatus:
  - Three engines: one consolidated station, one Elkhorn station, and one reserve
  - One aerial platform
  - No tanker – assuming that the rural will continue to have two tankers that could be utilized. Sun Valley and Ketchum is completely served by hydrants
  - Two utility vehicles – one consolidation station, one Elkhorn station
  - One wildland vehicle
  - Three administrative cars
  - One station vehicle – consolidated station

One command motor home

### **Staffing**

- Perhaps the greatest benefit of consolidation is the ability to enlarge the pool of paid-on-call. Consolidation will cease the competition of each department recruiting from the same limited number of paid-on-call and form a larger employee pool.

### **Consolidated Department Fire Chief**

- The consolidated department has the greatest chance of success if one of the existing Fire Chiefs serves as the Fire Chief of the consolidated Fire Department.
- Ketchum's Fire Chief is recommended as the Chief of the newly formed department.
- The administrative organization chart should be designed after the Federal National Incident Management System model.

### **Human Resources**

- The consolidated Fire Department needs to address a number of items as outlined in the Human Resource section of the report.
- A career salary structure is recommended for the new consolidated department.
- The consolidated department should develop a base paid-on-call firefighter rate and give increases for desired additional certifications.
- Administrative support should be contracted through the City of Ketchum until such time as the consolidated department desires to establish its own.
- A new policy manual needs to be developed through a committee of paid-on-call, career, and officers.

### **Fiscal**

- A 24,000 square-foot joint fire station should cost in the range of \$3,600,000.
- The FFE for the above station should cost in the range of \$234,000.
- Eliminate the current Ketchum fire station. Convert the Sun Valley fire station to usable space for the City Hall campus.
- Consolidated joint station could save the taxpayers of the Cities of Sun Valley and Ketchum \$1,592,625.
- Joint purchase of a single engine utilized by the consolidated department could save the Cities of Sun Valley and Ketchum taxpayers \$425,000.
- Future cost avoidance is the largest savings of consolidation.
- The consolidated department should not seek national accreditation.

### **Training**

- A single individual should be named training officer and oversee all aspects of training for the consolidated department.

**Dispatch/Communication**

- The consolidated Fire Department should consolidate into the County Communication Center.

**Fire Prevention**

- A single individual should be titled as Fire Prevention Officer and oversee all fire prevention and public safety education for the consolidated district.
- The NFPA and Lowe's Home Safety Council Risk Watch program should be implemented in conjunction with the area police departments.

**Consolidated Housing**

- Additional housing for paid-on-call members is encouraged and if possible should be incorporated into the new station site.
- Consideration should be given to a housing allowance for career members.

## **Appendix A – Sun Valley Headquarters Station**

## **Appendix B – Sun Valley City Hall Station**

## **Appendix C – City of Ketchum Station**

## **Appendix D – City of Ketchum Station – Close View**

## **Appendix E – Ketchum Rural Station #2**

## **Appendix F – Ketchum Rural Station #3**

## **Appendix G – Consolidated Station Site #1**

## **Appendix H – Consolidated Station Site #2**

## **Appendix I – Consolidated Station Site #3**

## **Appendix J – Consolidated Station Site #4**