



# Forest Lakes Fire District

*where customer service is job one*

## **MISSION**

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

## **VISION**

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

## **GUIDING OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

### **Excellence**

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

### **Integrity**

We will act with integrity in everything we do.

### **Responsibility**

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

### **Compliance**

We will comply with all legal and statutory requirements.

### **Safety**

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

## **STRATEGIC GOALS**

Goal: Begin construction on a new fire station no later than July 2017.

Goal: Repurpose our existing fire station by July 2018 per Building Committee recommendations.

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

Goal: Leverage community resources to improve non-tax revenues via the Auxiliary, grants, on-going donations and corporate/other benefactors by showing increases year over year.

Goal: Decrease our Mil rate by \$.25 by the 2019/2020 fiscal year to \$3.00.

## **DISTRICT ISSUES**

**Space/Equipment.** We are in need of rolling stock upgrades in order to maintain our service delivery model; the need for a new station has been well documented. We now have the financial head room to pursue these much needed upgrades. Because of our remote location, the front loader has been deemed an essential piece of emergency equipment, and the old loader was replaced with a new unit last year. This year, we were able to procure a new mini-pumper with the use of FEMA grant funding assistance (95/5 cost share), replacing two older vehicles. A new building committee effort is underway to provide much needed conditioned air equipment storage space and crew quarters. Funding is projected to come equally from non-levy community based funding support, external grant assistance and low interest rate bank loans.

**Staffing Model/Sustainability/Demographics.** Our combination staffing model continues to receive high marks from our customer survey. Our customers want us to maintain the 24X7 Paramedic plus Firefighter service delivery model. We remain concerned about the declining participation of Paid-On-Call support from the local community. Our 5 Year Finance and Budget projections are based on maintaining the current level of Paid-On-Call support. Our community is changing, and with that comes changes in demographics. It will be a challenge to keep the community engaged in supporting the fire district as it has in the past.

**Revenue Constraints.** There continues to be downward pressure on fire district revenues. Fire districts are limited to a maximum of 8% year over year increases in tax levies; property valuations are limited to a 5% increase year over year; and Mill rates are capped at \$3.25 per \$100 assessed valuations. We are effectively triple constrained. For districts like Forest Lakes, this essentially means we are restricted to a 5% year-over-year tax levy increases, presenting additional challenges to the leadership team for addressing our building needs and sustaining our staffing and service delivery models. Therefore, to accomplish our strategic goals over the coming 3-5 year time frame, we are committed to finding new revenue sources outside of the traditional tax revenue structure.