

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND MEMBERS OF
CENTER TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT AND SHORT AND MID-TERM ACTION PLANS FOR 2007-2012

*A summary of strategic meetings held summer/fall 2007 and review of prior strategic
planning notes*

Mission Statement for Center Township Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

Center Township Volunteer Fire Department's mission is to create and maintain a leading
emergency services organization by:

- ✓ Meeting the emergency response needs of Center Township rural residents, property
holders, and visitors.
 - ✓ Providing surrounding mutual aid agencies with support for fire prevention,
suppression, rescue, and medical aid operations.
 - ✓ Utilizing and constantly improving the skills and dedication of our members.
 - ✓ Constantly improving our emergency and prevention services, and operations.

In carrying out this mission, **Center Township Volunteer Fire and Rescue will:**

- ✓ Give the highest priority to firefighter health and safety and environmental concerns in
all operations.
 - ✓ Encourage the professional and personal development of our members.
 - ✓ Work as a team to take full advantage of our skills, knowledge and creativity.
 - ✓ Communicate openly and honestly to our members, community, and residents to inspire
trust and confidence.
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Observations and Trends

What is changing in the Fire Service throughout the United States?

1. *Medical calls and support have been over two thirds of CTVFD responses and will continue to grow as supported by national trends.*
2. *Management philosophies are replacing gut feelings. Focus on NIMS and ICS. More classes for volunteers are focused on human and physical resource management issues.*
3. *Recruitment and retention of volunteers will continue to be a challenge as aging baby boomers move out of the service and finding replacements continues to be a challenge.*
4. *Foam use in structural settings is gaining.*
5. *Firefighter safety issues will be at the forefront (OSHA,NFPA)and continue to be supported by national grant initiatives*
6. *Funding will be on the increase for specialty projects such as domestic terrorism, specialty rescue, and statewide – apparatus replacement, medical supplies, and communication upgrades - all interoperability issues*
7. *The administrative workload of running the fire department is becoming overwhelming. Fire reporting, training documentation, inspection duties, budget planning*
8. *Consolidation of busier fire agencies will continue to take place as issues of staffing and funding direct changes - fire districts / fire territories*
9. *More emphasis on training in the specialties. An “all hazards” view of emergency responders- locally*
10. *Securing stable consistent funding continues to be a high priority*
11. *Strategic planning will be an important part of the “business” we run.*
12. *Schools will require an increasing level of security and support from emergency responders.*
13. *Alternate fuels, hybrid vehicles, changes in building construction will pose an increasing challenge to emergency responders.*

What is changing in the Fire Service in LaPorte County? (State of IN and LaPorte County Initiatives)

1. *The northwestern county townships are facing the same growth issues and emergency response challenges that we are.*
2. *The E911 center will be under continued scrutiny to provide better performance. (2007– Increased expectations of services to fire departments with new facilities)*
3. *The dispatch system, number of frequencies, will continue to need to be expanded to meet departmental communication needs.. (tactical frequencies will be forthcoming)*
4. *800Mhz Statewide will be an initiative as long as the state has \$\$\$.*
5. *We will train and meet more frequently with our surrounding departments.*
6. *Center Township could loose a part of its tax base to LaPorte City. This could hasten the creation of a FPD with Coolspring VFD and possibly others.*
7. *LPC EMS will find continued pressure to retain its leading services. Within a short period of time for-profit ambulance services will be operating within LPC. (2007 – currently transfers)*
8. *Our township continues to expand at an ever increasing pace. Both population and business. (2007 – Potential for Inter-modal facility locating near or adjacent to township boundaries – expanding storage and transportation capabilities)*

9. *The state and federal governments will provide some level of funding to volunteer fire departments through grant programs and matching fund - a trend from direct grants to state directed grants*
10. *The state has adopted NFPA training certification. Centralized deliver systems and locations are being considered, and additional attention will be paid at the department level to administering compliant training.*
11. *Water rescue, ice rescue will continue to be an increasing source of calls.*
12. *A MABAS style of system of mutual aid system, in service in surrounding counties, will be considered in LaPorte Co. The LaPorte Co. chief's association will remain a weak representative of the needs of Center Township.*
13. *More local involvement with SEMA and state level agencies in local response coordination*
14. *There continues to be a lack of regular interaction (training, planning, orcommunication) among career and volunteer FDs in LP Co.*
15. *Future state consolidation efforts may modify or eliminate certain components of township and county government.*
16. *Continued property development will take place in the Summit and 39N areas.*

Who are our customers?

1. *Residents and guests within rural Center Township*
2. *Crichfield School and all students and staff*
3. *State of Indiana(i-80-90), LaPorte County government (parks)*
4. *Any mutual aid department (fire ,EMS ,law enforcement) LaPorte and Porter Co.*
5. *Folks traveling through our township on the Interstates*
6. *Utilities – gas/electric, telecommunications, pipelines,*
7. *Non-Resident property owners within rural Center Township*
8. *All members and related family of the fire department*
9. *Any state, local, or federal agencies that may require our services*

What are some of the biggest challenges facing CTVFD over the next few years?

1. *Securing sustainable funding sources.*
2. *Maintaining “corporation” autonomy and a non-for profit corporate structure*
3. *Recruiting and retaining staff*
4. *Increased administrative demands on the department*
5. *Departmental leadership and continued co-joining of current and prior members*
6. *Unplanned growth within the township of residences and light industrial and commercial.*
7. *Crichfield School growth (addition of pre-school)*
8. *Cooperative efforts with the Trustee's office and Board*
9. *Aging building – Maintenance / Replacement*
10. *Fleet Management – Apparatus Replacement / Repair*
11. *Providing adequate training*
12. *Meeting NFPA and OSHA mandates*
13. *Specialty Rescue requirements (Domestic Terrorism, HazMat, Trench Rescue)*
14. *2007– Adequate physical capabilities for firefighting challenges – Health and Welfare*

What changes are envisioned in the next five years?

1. *There may be some form of paid support staff. (Administrative, inspection, equipment maintenance, or response)*
 2. *The concept of a fire district or territory will continue to be investigated.*
 3. *Center VFD will need to continue to expand rescue and medical response operations as part of an overall fire ground strategy due to increased demand.*
 4. *The Township will grow with increased business operations and movement residentially to the northern and western part of the township*
 5. *Recruitment/Retention programs put in place*
 6. *Fire Education and Building Inspection Programs implemented. (2006 – investigate necessary certification and training for inspection position)*
 7. *The department will continually improve “Return on Investment” and cash flow sources*
 8. *The Township Trustee’s expectations will be exceeded as far as the level of service that we can continue to provide.*
 9. *Replacement cycle for equipment and apparatus will be established and maintained*
 10. *A broad-based training facility will be made available for our use, possibly through State of IN initiatives. (2007 - Michigan City Fire has been chosen as a district 1 location - good for CTVFD as to close proximity)*
 11. *A member Length of Service Award program may be considered and implemented.*
 12. *Additional training requirements will be implemented that will require a higher level of commitment. (2006 - Compliance with State NFPA minimum level training)*
 13. *The replacement of the fire station will be reviewed and planned.*
 14. *An aerial apparatus will be investigated for addition to the department.*
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Strengths

Strengths noted during Strategic Planning Discussions.

1. *Well Equipped (Apparatus, Loose Equipment)*
2. *Current proximity of members to station allows for a potential quick “in-service” time, station location is good for current growth and offers use for emergency and community events*
3. *Many diverse individual talents represented within the membership, many “well seasoned” veterans have returned with the re-enstatement of the corporation (2007 – additional members to be sought)*
4. *Progressive attitudes and open minded vision of many members*
5. *Broad knowledge base among members, committed to ongoing training programs*
6. *Good community involvement with our programs and good acceptance by the residents of the township*
7. *Strong mutual aid response(giving and receiving)*
8. *Solid tax base and recurring revenue stream, intermittent and limited revenue stream from grants*
9. *A solid relationship with the township residents, Trustee, advisory board*
10. *Improving water delivery systems (mobile and fixed)*
11. *Expanded rescue capability and support of the first responder program*

12. *Improving communications throughout the department, email - signage*
13. *Pumper / Tanker and water flow capabilities*
14. *Vehicle and Fleet management resources are good with new apparatus being planned for replacements.*

Changes in Training within the next 3-5 Years.

1. *Mandatory CPR, NIMS and Haz-Mat Refresher for all members*
2. *Work towards meeting NFPA training standards versus the older Indiana State training standards – State of Indiana training initiatives*
3. *Update CTVFD Standard Operating Guidelines*
4. *More emphasis on specialty rescue training*
5. *Improve CD/DVD training library – Use existing laptop, projector, and CDs*
6. *Improve workbook training library – Make it accessible*
7. *Attend local schools and trade shows more actively*
8. *Actively publish everyone's training program attendance- On-line*
9. *Exciting and productive Drill Nights(2006 – expand the ability to provide more one-on-one training to work around individual member's time schedules)*
10. *Provide training in preplanning and inspections*
11. *Do combined training with surrounding mutual aid departments*
12. *(2006 – Discussion on how to better involve members in training – to hold members accountable for knowing and understanding the operation of equipment and processes – modification of training programs to focus on member competence – offer departmental specialists who will provide specific skills training throughout the year – review points system and modify as necessary to focus on skills – mutual accountability – make training activities and requirements more visible – clearer expectations of instructors or trainers to provide sign-off criteria – Core Competency Program will be separate from Monthly training programs -)*

Core Competency Program

Breathing Air –SCBA use – Compressor use – SCBA maint. Bottle Care – Donning – Face Piece

Gas Powered Aux. Equipment –Saws-Fans-Generators-Ventilation- Lighting Equipment

Rescue Tools — Hydraulic Tools – Air bags – Rams Cribbing – Hand Tools –

Pumper Operations –Drafting-hydrant-tanker operations – handline and deck gun operations – foam operations –

Driving Skills — All apparatus review of driving skills and emergency response

Review Personal Responsibility Code for implementation with all members. Involve board with acceptance.

Changes in Public Education within the next 3-5 Years.

1. *Training be made available for fire prevention to interested departmental members*
2. *We strengthen our program and work at Crichfield School*

3. *We identify and train staff at the numerous “group” home settings we have within the township*
 4. *We use the NFPA format, training materials, and promotional efforts annually*
 5. *We use our fund raising letters and events to educate as well as ask for donations*
 6. *We actively participate with “home owners” associations in fire prevention activities*
 7. *Seek a higher level of “press” from the local paper for our fire prevention activities*
 8. *We will use the WEB site for additional communication to our residents*
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Weaknesses

Weaknesses noted during Strategic Planning Discussions.

1. *Often Department is managed by avoiding conflict and decision making*
 2. *A hesitant vision of the future, services to be provided, and equipment to be acquired*
 3. *Lack of and antiquated Standard Operating Guidelines and Apparatus Procedures*
 4. *Continued financial support from tax revenue could be declining or interrupted*
 5. *Lack of short and long term plans – good intentions with poor results – penny wise / pound foolish*
 6. *Continued support of the First Responder Program – staffing, expenses, apparatus, and equipment - additional human resource needs*
 7. *Communications – radio equipment, procedures, capabilities*
 8. *Overall physical fitness of department members – liability during emergency response duties*
 9. *Limited resources during the day time response hours*
 10. *Up Keep of equipment, facilities, and apparatus – routine truck maintenance and upkeep – building underutilized*
 11. *Recruitment and Retention of members*
 12. *Poorly planned or ineffective training and drills that are not planned or communicated to members – make up training for members not available at night – involvement and attendance by members – lack of attendance at state fire schools – Training library and AV equipment not utilized or available*
 13. *Public Relations – residents don’t know us or what we do*
 14. *Lack of training on basic fireground skills (ladder work, etc)*
 15. *Lack of Pre-plans, building inspections, or work with mutual aid departments*
 16. *POVs responding to calls – no plan of apparatus response – traffic problems with our own responders – lack of firefighters with fire gear on at the scene- not helping to clean up “after the call”*
 17. *Lack of a basic fire ground accountability system*
 18. *911 Dispatch and communications are often lacking*
 19. *Commitment to Fire Prevention and work with the schools is limited*
 20. *Mutual Aid – LaPorte Co. Little to no combination training*
 21. *Communications within the department of activities, duties, opportunities*
 22. *Re-unification of past department members and current firefighters*
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Opportunities

1. *MABAS and Mutual Agreements and Training*
 2. *EMS and emergency medical response*
 3. *Improvements in Communications – 800 mhz – Clear Text – Additional Channels*
 4. *State, local, and federal grants*
 5. *Improved community public relations – improved relations with township board and trustee, Trail Creek board*
 6. *Outsourcing activities (administrative duties, vehicle maintenance, hose test)*
 7. *Improvement in water supply and delivery*
 8. *Corporate involvement in departmental operations (business and operations)*
 9. *Creation of a North County Fire Association – Fire Protection District*
 10. *Training Improvements and Educational opportunities*
 11. *Fund Raising / Donations*
 12. *Fire Prevention and Public Education*
 13. *Acquisition of aerial apparatus as replacement or addition*
 14. *New Fire Station*
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Threats

1. *Lawsuits – Liabilities – Departmental Practices*
 2. *Annexation LaPorte City in the 39N area*
 3. *Growth around the Summit development and 39N corridors*
 4. *Trustee and Board elimination or changes from elections or state initiatives*
 5. *Loss of Grant Money– Tax Revenue Reductions*
 6. *Change in administration of department (overseen by county commissioners)*
 7. *NFPA / IOSHA requirements – ISO requirements*
 8. *Aging membership – lack of mutual respect for officers and other department members – inherited attitudes*
 9. *Requirements for training from State and Federal sources – Fire Marshal requirements – Federal mandates without funding*
 10. *Personal commitment – lack of time*
 11. *Continued cost increases in services and equipment*
 12. *Lack of focus and commitment by fire and business officers*
 13. *Lack of departmental focus on first responder services and necessary staffing*
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Administrative Action Plans for the next 1-5 Years.

1. *Continue to support the current computer aided accounting- administrative program. It is working well and offering ease of use and accurate monthly and yearly reporting. Update Firehouse software as needed.*
2. *Re-establish a township mailing database, and the creation and distribution of an annual newsletter fundraising mailing to create a sustainable revenue stream for the*

corporation. The funding will support the corporation efforts to improve recruitment and retention, training, and fire prevention efforts

3. *Negotiate an annual contract with the Township.*
 4. *Re-establish training and membership requirements for corporation participation.*
 5. *Establish a feasibility study to look at a new station design*
 6. *Update the CTVFD constitution*
 7. *Update Mutual Aid Agreements*
 8. *Regular Board of Director's meetings and minutes distributed electronically*
 9. *Continue to investigate the creation of a Fire Protection District*
 10. *Upgrade departmental insurance coverage as mandated by Indiana legislation*
 11. *Work to establish a continued fleet replacement program - specifically the acquisition of a new aerial apparatus*
 12. *Establish an apparatus committee to investigate and determine the needs for the acquisition of an aerial apparatus. Work with the township trustee, develop specifications and a budget estimate and time frame for completion of the project*
 13. *Review IOSHA regs and manage departmental risk assessment activities*
 14. *LOSAP Program – into Contracts – or separate within the department*
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Considerations from the Building and Grounds Group 1-5 Years.

1. *Establish a building committee to investigate and determine the needs of a new fire station. Working with the township trustee, develop a timeline for planning, funding and completion of the project.*
 - * Location
 - * Building Needs
 - * Projected Costs
 - * Property deeded
 1. *Remodel to include sleeping quarters, lounge, bathroom facilities*
 2. *Replace tables and chairs in the meeting room (2006 – continuous review)*
 3. *Paint the inside of apparatus bays (2006 – continue review of interior upgrades)*
 4. *Add diesel exhaust system to the apparatus bays*
 5. *Wash down annually the outside of the building (2006 – ongoing maintenance requirements)*
 6. *Add additional lighting to the apparatus bay floor area and move the master switch to the front door area (2006 – no further review of this)*
 7. *Repairs to the blacktop area – sealcoating, additional gravel on the north side, grounds management)*
 8. *Remodel rest rooms*
 9. *Create/ expand business and chiefs offices*
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