

# **City of St. Cloud**

## **Fire Department Strategic Plan**



### **Progress Report to City Council and Administration**

**December 2008**



## Fire Department

The Honorable Dave Kleis  
Mayor of St. Cloud  
400 Second Street South  
St. Cloud, MN 56301-3699

Dear Mayor Kleis,

I am pleased to submit to you this Progress Report for the St. Cloud Fire Department's Strategic Plan. As you are aware the Strategic Plan was completed in June of 2005 and identified eight goals to be completed over the next 3-5 years. I am happy to report, and you will see detailed in the enclosed report, that the City of St. Cloud has made very good progress toward the completion of the identified goals.

I would hope that you would note I stated the City of St. Cloud has made this progress and not just the Fire Department. This has truly been a city wide effort involving most all departments and sections. I would specifically like to thank our City Human Resources Director Dede Gaetz, our Planning Director Matt Glaesman, our Finance Director John Norman, and City Administrator Mike Williams for all of the support, guidance, and help they and their staffs provided to the Fire Department in furtherance of the completion of these plans, goals and objectives.

Last, but certainly not least, our citizens contributed greatly to the completion of many of these goals by their approval of the Public Safety Referendum in November of 2006. Many of the identified goals and objectives required a significant financial investment by our taxpayers and they provided that support with the passage of the referendum.

Sincerely,

William M. Mund  
Fire Chief

***Dedicated to protecting life and property in our community through professionally delivered fire prevention and emergency services.***

## **BACKGROUND**

On August 23, 2004 the City Council approved the contracting with Emergency Services Consulting, Inc. (ESCi) to prepare and deliver a Fire Protection Master Plan for the City of St. Cloud. This Master Plan was completed and presented to the City Council on April 4, 2005.

On April 18, 2005 the City Council authorized a second contract with Emergency Services Consulting, Inc. (ESCi) to assist the City of St. Cloud in developing a Strategic Plan to guide the city and the Fire Department over the next 3-5 years.

The Fire Department, with the help and advice of ESCi, assembled a Strategic Planning Group to meet and develop a Fire Department Strategic Plan. The goal of this group was to review the already completed Fire Protection Master Plan and develop specific goals and objectives that could be completed over the next 3-5 years. In addition, this group would create new Fire Department Mission, Vision, and Values Statements.

The Strategic Planning Work Group was composed of members from the Fire Department (representing all ranks and divisions), and other city staff. Those personnel who served on the Fire Department Strategic Planning Group are as follows:

<i>Bill Mund - Fire Chief</i>	<i>Mike Williams-City Admin.</i>	<i>Matt Glaesman-Planning Dir.</i>
<i>Dede Gaetz-HR Director</i>	<i>John Norman-Finance Director</i>	<i>Mike Foehrenbacher-Ast Chief</i>
<i>Leon Faust-Assistant Chief</i>	<i>Den Wrobbel-Deputy Chief</i>	<i>Greg Newinski-Lieutenant</i>
<i>Jim Bleichner-Lieutenant</i>	<i>Jake Ganfield-Firefighter</i>	<i>Dave Golden-Firefighter</i>
<i>Dan Ford-Firefighter</i>	<i>Mike Post-Fire Marshal</i>	<i>Carol Eisenrich- Secretary</i>
<i>Tom Zabinski-Volunteer Chief</i>	<i>Joe Cordie-Volunteer Captain</i>	<i>Joel Jacobs-Volunteer Lt</i>
	<i>Todd Schwinghammer-Vol. FF</i>	

On May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of 2005 the Strategic Planning Group convened with our facilitator (ESCi) and began the work to develop the Fire Department Strategic Plan. The final product provided new mission, vision and values statements and eight goals with corresponding objectives to be worked towards over the next 3-5 years.

### **St. Cloud Fire Department Mission Statement**

*Dedicated to protecting life and property in our community through professionally delivered fire prevention and emergency services.*

## **St. Cloud Fire Department Vision Statement**

In the coming years, the Saint Cloud Fire Department will be a team whose members are effective, empowered and enthusiastic in their service. We will be recognized as a regional leader by our community, neighbors and peers and enthusiastically supported by our community which views us with pride, respect and confidence. Our mission will be accomplished by a physically fit, healthy and increasingly diverse work force, well trained in a multitude of specialized skills and empowered with a high level of involvement in our success. Our equipment will be dependable, capable and consistent with the needs of the community, embracing cutting-edge technology and emphasizing firefighter safety. We will meet the challenges of the future through:

- The implementation of a unified and functional organizational structure
- The development of adequate facilities, properly located and designed so as to provide optimum response and quality service delivery
- The consistent provision of adequate duty staffing to safely and successfully meet our service demand by effectively blending both full-time and paid-on-call firefighting personnel
- The use of adequate and appropriately trained staff to support prevention, training, and administration
- The integration of our emergency medical response capability with other service providers to ensure that the closest and most appropriate medical responder provides immediate service to the customer.
- The implementation of an appropriate and progressive continuing education plan for both career and paid-on-call firefighters
- The utilization of a technically capable communications center that efficiently dispatches personnel for emergency response and services
- Consistent analysis of critical data through a progressive, reliable records management system and computer network

## **St. Cloud Fire Department Values Statement**

We believe that service to the public is our reason for being and strive to deliver quality services in a highly professional and cost-effective manner.

We believe that fiscal responsibility and the prudent stewardship of public funds is essential for citizen confidence in government.

We believe that ethics and integrity are foundations blocks of public trust and confidence and that all meaningful relationships are built on these values.

We believe that citizens are the owners of the City, that the fire department members work for the owners, and that all citizens are to be treated with the greatest of courtesy and respect.

We believe that open and honest communications is essential for an informed and involved citizenry and to foster a positive working environment for employees.

We believe that continuous improvement is the mark of professionalism and are committed to applying this principle to the services we offer and the development of our employees.

We believe that the very essence of leadership is to be visionary and to plan for the future.

We believe in the importance of balancing individual, family and organizational growth.

We believe in a reasonable balance of personal risk versus the value of life and property, and will continually strive to limit the danger faced by our employees to those times when it is absolutely necessary.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal 1 – Develop a fresh, functional, and unified organizational structure for the Saint Cloud Fire Department**

Objective 1-A: Develop an organizational structure to fully integrate the career and volunteer divisions

Timelines Two months

#### Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Review master plan (recommended organizational chart) and current organizational chart.

- 2 • Develop an updated organizational chart draft.
- 3 • Present, review and receive input from all divisions within the fire department.
- 4 • Present proposed organizational chart to city administration for review and modification.
- 5 • Present proposed organizational chart to city council for approval.

Objective 1-B: Develop and/or update job descriptions

Timelines Four months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Review current job descriptions and update as needed
- 2 • Develop job descriptions for new positions identified in approved organization chart.
- 3 • Submit new/updated job description to HR for review and approval.
- 4 • Discuss and develop compensation packages for new positions.

Objective 1-C: Implement new organizational structure

Timelines Two months - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Review, update and merge current SOG, Policies, work rules, bylaws, etc
- 2 • Update work rules to include new positions.
- 3 • Conduct needs analysis and prioritize filling of new positions.
- 4 • Seek funding approval of new positions as appropriate.

Objective 1-D: Develop and implement an ongoing evaluation process to determine the functionality and effectiveness of the new organizational structure

Timelines Two months - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Establish review committee.
- 2 • Review previous goals, objectives and critical tasks.
- 3 • Establish review timeline/schedule
- 4 • Conduct periodic reviews.
- 5 • Review information and implement any changes in the appropriate manner.

**Goal 2 – Integrate our emergency medical response capability with other service providers to ensure that the closest and most appropriate medical responder provides immediate service to the customer**

Objective 2-A: Analyze need and justification for change

Timelines Two months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Determine existing response rate.
- 2 • Compare to accepted standards.
- 3 • Determine impact on police availability.

- 4 • Quantify cost to fire department.

Objective 2-B: Obtain city-wide consensus that providing joint EMS is an effective idea

Timelines Two months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Conduct meetings with all interested parties.
- 2 • Develop proposal for combined fire/police/ambulance service that quantifies cost.
- 3 • Present proposal to interested parties for refinement and buy in.
- 4 • Present to city administration.
- 5 • Present to city council for approval.

Objective 2-C: Develop standard operating guidelines and policy

Timelines One month

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Review current applicable standard operating guidelines and policies.
- 2 • Receive input from all department personnel towards needed guidelines and policies.
- 3 • Develop dispatch guidelines.
- 4 • Develop scene safety policy.
- 5 • Develop incident reports policy.
- 6 • Establish a HIPPA compliance officer.

Objective 2-D: Conduct Training

Timelines Two months - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Conduct on scene patient care training with Goldcross/PD/Fire Department personnel.
- 2 • Conduct training on HIPPA laws.
- 3 • Conduct training on EMS report writing.
- 4 • Train dispatchers on dispatch guidelines.

Objective 2-E: Implement guidelines and policies

Timelines Two months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Determine an implementation date.
- 2 • Advise general public on fire department involvement in delivering EMS services.
- 3 • Purchase necessary supplies.

Objective 2-F: Review effectiveness on a regular basis

Timelines Monthly - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Create a review board.
- 2 • Establish regular scheduled meetings for the review board.
- 3 • Review board reports to administration on effectiveness of program.

**Goal 3 – Implement a centralized records management system that can provide accessible & usable analysis data (GIS, Maps, Payroll, etc)**

Objective 3-A: Develop a research team of technically competent people with a vested interest in the outcome

Timelines One month

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Identify appropriate departments
- 2 • Identify team members
- 3 • Set meeting and agenda

Objective 3-B: Evaluate current programs for strengths and weaknesses

Timelines Three months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Identify current programs
- 2 • Identify strengths and weaknesses of current programs

Objective 3-C: Determine current and future needs

Timelines Three months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Assess current hardware and software needs
- 2 • Assess future hardware and software needs

Objective 3-D: Identify resources to meet needs

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Research vendors
- 2 • Evaluate costs
- 3 • Evaluate time and training personnel commitment

Objective 3-E: Select and implement programs

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Secure funding
- 2 • Conduct training
- 3 • Install timeline

Objective 3-F: Develop system to assess technology to meet changing departmental needs

Timelines Quarterly - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Set date for initial review
- 2 • Set schedule for periodic reviews

**Goal 4 – Improve service delivery by improving the strategic location and design of all fire service facilities**

Objective 4-A: Determine the need and priority for facility improvements

Timelines One month

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Review fire department master plan and city facility assessment study.
- 2 • Determine all proposed fire department facility improvements.
- 3 • Establish priorities.

Objective 4-B: Identify Costs

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Identify sites for new facilities.
- 2 • Develop preliminary plans for new facilities.
- 3 • Develop preliminary plans for renovation of existing facilities.
- 4 • Create cost estimates for all proposed plans.

Objective 4-C: Funding Projects

Timelines Three months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Identify available resources.
- 2 • Explore savings/cost sharing options from co-locating with other agencies.
- 3 • Explore state/federal grants.
- 4 • Explore other creative funding options.

Objective 4-D: Determine phase in plan for improvements

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Reprioritize facility improvements based on identified cost and funding availability.
- 2 • Review phase in plan with planning department; include in city's capital improvement plan.
- 3 • Incorporate CIP recommendations into fire department annual budget requests.

**Goal 5 – Achieve an on-duty staffing availability of at least 17 personnel at all times by effectively utilizing full-time and paid on-call firefighting personnel**

Objective 5-A: Research current staff levels and policies

Timelines Two months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Assign a research team.

- 2 • Evaluate mid-term staffing strategies in master plan.

Objective 5-B: Develop a plan to attain shift staffing assignment of 19

Timelines Up to nine months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Budget for six (6) full-time firefighters.
- 2 • Assess SAFER grant opportunities.

Objective 5-C: Develop a plan to integrate paid on-call and full-time staffing levels.

Timelines Four months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Develop a policy for full staffing.
- 2 • Develop a policy for minimum staffing.

Objective 5-D: Implement minimum and full staffing policies

Timelines Two months - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Obtain Administrative approval.
- 2 • Train on policies.
- 3 • Complete implementation.
- 4 • Conduct periodic review assessment.

## **Goal 6 – Achieve the use of a technically superior communications center that efficiently dispatches personnel for emergency response and services**

Objective 6-A: Develop a team of technically competent personnel from departments with vested interest

Timelines Two months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Identify participating departments.
- 2 • Assign a team.
- 3 • Review master plan.

Objective 6-B: Identify deficiencies in current system

Timelines Three months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Explain current system.
- 2 • Collect input form all parties.
- 3 • Analyze data.

Objective 6-C: Determine Options (alternatives) for more efficient dispatching

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Research other dispatch centers.
- 2 • Develop list of options and costs.
- 3 • Meet with county and city administrators to discuss funding.

- 4 • Select option.

Objective 6-D: Implement new dispatch system

Timelines Three months - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Determine equipment and staffing needs.
- 2 • Train personnel.
- 3 • Conversion plan.
- 4 • Set review dates.

**Goal 7 – Maintain an adequate and appropriately trained support staff for non-emergency programs, including prevention, training and administration**

Objective 7-A: Evaluate potential department efficiencies to meet future and existing need

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Review master plan for each function.
- 2 • Discuss each function with that supervisor(s) for potential streamlining and task prioritization.
- 3 • Investigate efficiencies through interdepartmental operations.
- 4 • Compare operations with other jurisdictions for best practices.

Objective 7-B: Quantify short and mid-term staffing needs and costs

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Review recommendations of the master plan.
- 2 • Break out each function and review individually.
- 3 • Associate costs with any determined deficiencies.
- 4 • Prioritize short and mid-term needs and plan incremental staffing increases.

Objective 7-C: Obtain financial resources to meet needs

Timelines Up to nine months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Research available funding sources (grants, aid, etc).
- 2 • Explore additional local funding (permits, user fee's, etc).
- 3 • Explore benefits of contract areas.
- 4 • Explore creative funding sources.
- 5 • Bring recommendations to council.

Objective 7-D: Establish favorable policies and environment for retention and hiring of staff

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Review salary and incentive packages for comparison with other cities.

- 2 • Review turnover/employee loss exit interviews.
- 3 • Develop family friendly policies (a sense of place).

**Goal 8 – Develop and implement a comprehensive training program that provides for continuous education and career preparation opportunities to all personnel**

Objective 8-A: Review current training curriculum; identify current training levels.

Timelines Three months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Establish training committee.
- 2 • Identify current training levels.
- 3 • Conduct a needs analysis to determine skill levels required by all positions.

Objective 8-B: Identify required training levels

Timelines Three months - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Identify OSHA required training.
- 2 • Identify NFPA, state and other nationally recognized training standards.
- 3 • Establish minimum training.

Objective 8-C: Identify specialized skills training requirements

Timelines Three months - ongoing

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Identify OSHA requirements.
- 2 • Identify NFPA, state and other nationally recognized training standards.
- 3 • Establish minimum training required for specialized skills.

Objective 8-D: Develop a department training plan

Timelines Six months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Establish department training objectives.
- 2 • Create a training records system.
- 3 • Identify personnel and resource needs to deliver training.
- 4 • Create a department master training plan.
- 5 • Develop the training division budget.

Objective 8-E: Implement the department training plan

Timelines Up to nine months

Critical Tasks:

- 1 • Secure funding for training program.
- 2 • Create monthly training schedule.
- 3 • Create continuing education/recertification program for instructors.

On June 6, 2005 the final Fire Department Strategic Plan document was

presented to the City Council. The department then began the process of working towards the completion of the identified goals and objectives. The Fire Department formally adopted the Mission, Vision, and Values Statements on June 7, 2005.

## **PROGRESS REPORT – DECEMBER 2008**

This section will review each of the eight goals listed in our strategic plan and provide an update on the progress made over the last 3 ½ years towards completing the specific goal.

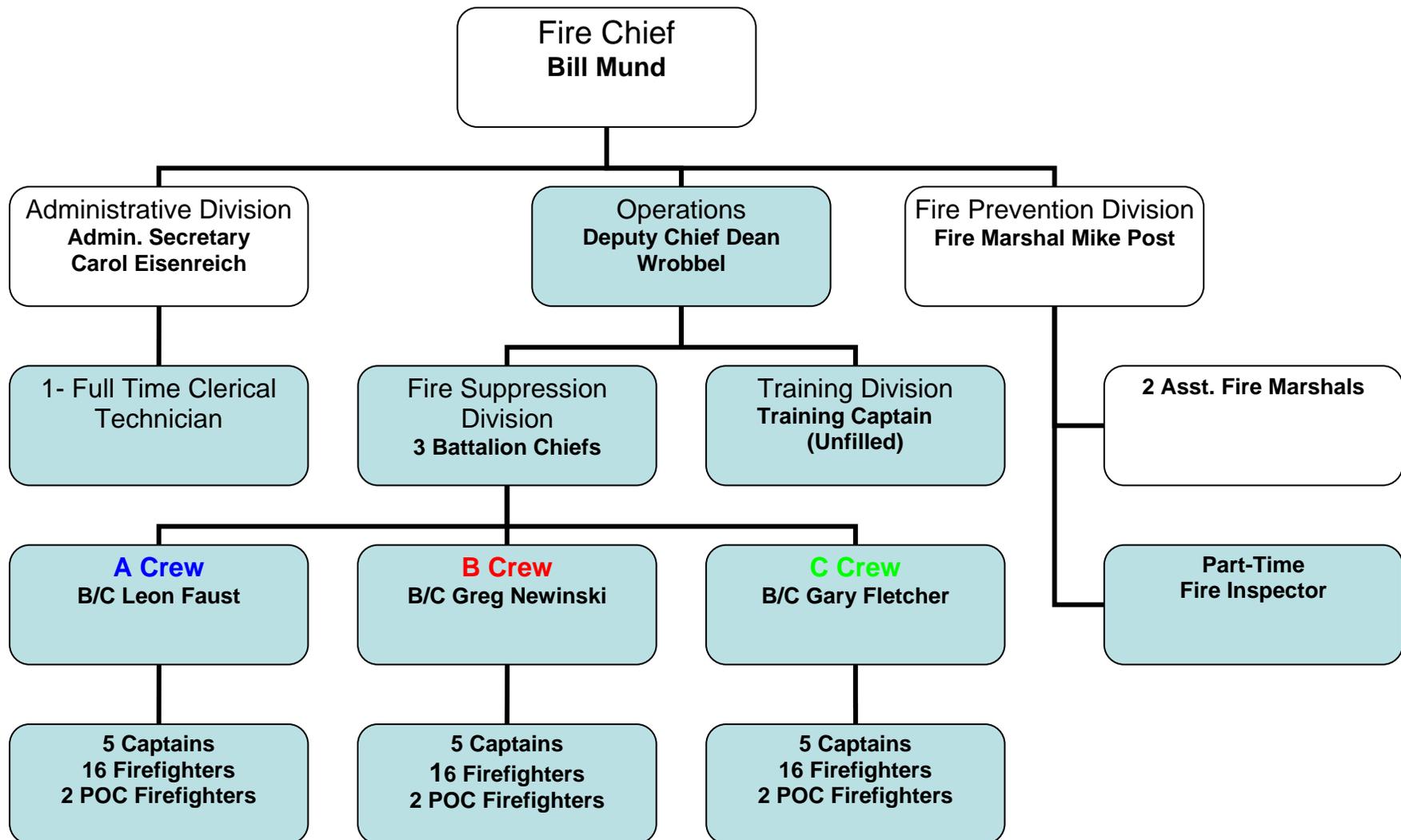
### **Goal 1 – Develop a fresh, functional, and unified organizational structure for the Saint Cloud Fire Department **COMPLETED DECEMBER 2005****

Due to the expiration of the merger agreement on December 31, 2005 the Fire Department, with the concurrence of the City Administration, decided we needed to prioritize the completion of this goal to prepare for 2006. The four objectives identified in this goal were:

- 1-A Develop an organizational structure to fully integrate the career and volunteer divisions – **Presented to Council on July 25, 2005**
- 1-B Develop and/or update job descriptions – **Completed December 19, 2005**
- 1-C Implement new organizational structure – **Implemented January 1, 2006**
- 1-D Develop and implement an ongoing evaluation process to determine the functionality and effectiveness of the new organizational structure

**This objective is ongoing at the fire department. Initiatives to continue the ongoing evaluation include quarterly crew and officer meetings to discuss any issue that have developed. POC training evenings are also used to obtain feedback from the POC Fire Fighters. The fact that changes have been made over the last 3 ½ years has demonstrated that this objective is being met.**

**Our current organizational structure has been modified over the last three years as we have discovered the needs for minor variations from what our consultant originally proposed and what the department originally proposed to the City Council. The current Fire Department organization chart is as follows:**



**Goal 2 – Integrate our emergency medical response capability with other service providers to ensure that the closest and most appropriate medical responder provides immediate service to the customer **COMPLETED JANUARY 1, 2007****

On January 1, 2007 the St. Cloud Fire Department began responding to medical calls within the City of St. Cloud. This function had previously been accomplished by our Police Department. Initially, our citizens who called for a medical emergency would receive a joint response from both the Police and Fire Departments. Since its initial beginnings the response protocols have been modified and now the Fire Department is handling the majority of calls by themselves. The Police Department still responds with the Fire Department on Level 1 calls for service. These are typically the more critical patients.

The Fire Department responded to 2,099 Medical Calls in 2007 and through October 27, 2008 the department has responded to 2,054 Medical Calls. This is a significant increase in our previous call volumes but the department has absorbed this additional workload without significant expenses besides fuel consumption. Even these additional expenses were covered within existing budget dollars.

The objectives Identified in this goal are:

2-A: Analyze need and justification for change - **Completed June 2006**

2-B: Obtain city-wide consensus that providing joint EMS is an effective idea - **Completed November 2006**

2-C: Develop standard operating guidelines and policy - **Completed November 2006**

2-D: Conduct Training - **Completed December 2006**

2-E: Implement guidelines and policies – **Completed November 2006**

2-F: Review effectiveness on a regular basis – **Completed (Ongoing)**

**Goal 3 – Implement a centralized records management system that can provide accessible & usable analysis data (GIS, Maps, Payroll, etc) **PROGRESSING IN SOME AREAS, STILL IN PROCESS****

The Fire Department has made some significant progress in the realm of the City GIS Systems. All of our front line apparatus now have laptops with access to the City GIS System. In addition, with the help of our Planning Section

and ProWest and Associates the department has developed a FIRE GIS application. This application allows on scene retrieval of preplans, building photos, and specific building information that would be applicable for dealing with an emergency at a particular structure. As the department continues to become proficient with the GIS Systems additional applications are being researched and developed.

The department has received a proposal from ProWest and Associates to change our current mapping to one that is consistent with the City GIS System. The proposal is in the neighborhood of \$8,500. The department currently uses Mustang Mapping to provide all of the various maps required. All of our maps are updated annually. Changes that occur during the year are currently entered by hand on all department maps. This can and has become a very time consuming effort to keep our maps as up to date as possible. If we are able to print our own maps using the City GIS System, changes could be inputted on a much faster time table and those sections of the map updated very quickly. The department has also very recently been exploring a partner project with the SCSU Geography Department to review our current mapping methods and perhaps provide a more workable solution. The use of student interns may provide a valuable experience for SCSU students and also provide a low cost alternative for the department.

No progress has been made on updating the department's payroll system. A city wide effort is underway to update most of our electronic records systems and the Fire Department will most likely be a part of that solution. To date payroll is still a labor intensive pen and paper system.

Our current incident reporting software has very limited ability to retrieve usable data for long range planning purposes. The department would someday like to transition to a more modern system. The goal would be to have a single system that could meet most of the department records functions including incident reporting. Our current records information system, FIRE Programs, was purchased in 2001 for approximately \$3,000. While the system is marginally meeting our state and federal reporting requirements it is difficult to access the data and put it into a format that helps facilitate decision making. Again, our IT Division is working towards a city wide records management system and the Fire Department has expressed our needs to them for possible inclusion.

The objectives Identified in this goal are:

- 3-A: Develop a research team of technically competent people with a vested interest in the outcome – In Process
- 3-B: Evaluate current programs for strengths and weaknesses – In Process

- 3-C: Determine current and future needs – In Process
- 3-D: Identify resources to meet needs – In Process
- 3-E: Select and implement programs – In Process
- 3-F: Develop system to assess technology to meet changing departmental needs – In Process

**Goal 4 – Improve service delivery by improving the strategic location and design of all fire service facilities – COMPLETE OCTOBER 2008**

The Fire Department Master Plan presented in March of 2005 suggested a long range station deployment model that included a total of seven stations to adequately serve the City of St. Cloud. This plan included two new stations in the south and southwest portions of the City of St. Cloud and remodeling the existing North Volunteer Fire Station (currently being used by the APO) to accommodate full time staffing.

As the department began pre-design work for a new south side fire station there was a desire to also remodel and update our existing fire station #2. Initial estimates for the remodeling of fire station #2 were between 1.8 and 2 million dollars. As the department and the city administration looked at our options we asked our original consultant (ESCi) to see if a new facility on the west side of St. Cloud could eliminate the plan to eventually remodel the old North Volunteer Station and staff it along with the existing Fire Station #2.

ESCi reviewed our proposal and responded to us that by replacing our existing Fire Station #2 with a station located further to the west the eventual need to remodel and staff the old volunteer station would no longer be necessary. This had a long term savings of not only the remodeling but 12 additional staff.

A proposal was developed to build two new facilities and hire 12 additional staff for the new south side station. A Public Safety Bond Referendum was successfully passed in November of 2006 and final design was begun shortly thereafter. Construction began in earnest in the fall of 2007 and our two new facilities were opened by October of 2008.

Long range the city will need to look to building an additional fire station to the southwest portion of the city. This is in the 10-15 year time range. As a part of the Neenah Creek Regional Park Master Planning process a proposed site is included in the parks master plan.

The objectives identified in this goal are:

- 4-A: Determine the need and priority for facility improvements - Completed

4-B: Identify Costs - **Completed**

4-C: Funding Projects - **Completed**

4-D: Determine phase in plan for improvements - **Completed**

**Goal 5 – Achieve an on-duty staffing availability of at least 17 personnel at all times by effectively utilizing full-time and paid on-call firefighting personnel – **COMPLETED, utilization of POC's still in process.****

With the passage of the Public Safety Referendum in November of 2006 the department planned on hiring the 12 positions to coincide with the opening of our new south side station. Previous to the passage of the referendum, the department had applied for a SAFER Grant to assist with this hiring. The department was notified in early 2007 that we had been awarded a grant to hire three new staff positions. The city administration and council approved the acceptance of this grant and three new positions were filled in April of 2007.

On September 2, 2008 the nine additional positions approved for opening our new station began the one month recruit academy and graduated on September 26, 2008. Our new south station officially opened with full staffing on September 27, 2008.

The department currently has 6 Paid-on-Call fire fighters although we are budgeted for 12 POC positions. Due to the current hiring freeze we have not filled any of the open positions. As a part of the testing process for our new full time hires we did create a list of those applicants that would be interested in filling a POC position if not hired full time. Our experience to date with the POC fire fighters has been both positive and negative. We have utilized their shift coverage hours to boost on duty staffing levels but have not found a way to consistently use our POC staff to fill shortages in staffing levels when they occur. The current POC fire fighters work 24 hours of shift coverage per month when they are available. Their availability does not usually coincide with lower staffing levels that occur due to vacations, special assignments or other leaves of absence.

The Fire Chief has had discussions with the City Administrator about how the program could possibly be revamped or if we should review the programs cost and benefits versus the current budget allocations. More discussion is needed in this area.

Our fire suppression crews are currently staffed at 22 full time personnel and 2 POC personnel. This has allowed us to maintain adequate forces on duty at all times to meet this goal. We currently maintain a minimum staffing level of 18 personnel on duty at all times which allows us to respond 16 personnel to any

emergency in the city while maintaining our dispatcher and airport fire fighter.

The objectives identified in this goal are:

5-A: Research current staff levels and policies - **Completed**

5-B: Develop a plan to attain shift staffing assignment of 19 – **Completed with Modifications**

5-C: Develop a plan to integrate paid on-call and full-time staffing levels – **Completed with mixed results. Still in progress.**

5-D: Implement minimum and full staffing policies - **Completed**

**Goal 6 – Achieve the use of a technically superior communications center that efficiently dispatches personnel for emergency response and services – IN PROCESS, ON HOLD PENDING COMPLETION OF THE NEW LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER**

The Fire Department currently uses one fire suppression staff position to operate our own dispatch center located at Fire Station #1. This position is rotated between personnel on the various crews. For several years the department has pursued transferring all dispatch functions to the Stearns County Communications Center which currently dispatches our Police Department. There have been a number of issues that have prevented this concept from happening. At one point the department was given a figure of approximately \$105,000 per year to provide this service.

With the department beginning to respond to medical calls in January of 2007 the dispatch center began providing more dispatch services for medical calls. In discussions with the Stearns County Sherriff it appears that after the Police Department relocates, the Sherriff's Department will be proposing to take over all dispatching county wide at no charge.

The department's long range desire is to remove dispatching services from the department and have those functions performed by the Stearns County Communications Center. This would free a current fire fighter position to be assigned to field operations. This was identified as an area for change in our Master Plan. The department intends to continue to pursue this goal in the future.

The objectives identified in this goal are:

6-A: Develop a team of technically competent personnel from departments with vested interest - **in Process**

6-B: Identify deficiencies in current system - **in Process**

6-C: Determine Options (alternatives) for more efficient dispatching - **In Process**

6-D: Implement new dispatch system - **In Process**

**Goal 7 – Maintain an adequate and appropriately trained support staff for non-emergency programs, including prevention, training and administration – **SOME PROGRESS, IN PROCESS****

As detailed in our Master Plan the Fire Department had 6.3 Administrative and Support Staff in March of 2005. These positions were:

<b>Administrative and Support Staff (2005)</b>	
<b>Position / Title</b>	<b>Number (FTE)</b>
Fire Chief	1.0
Deputy Chief of Training and Administration	1.0
Administrative Secretary	1.0
Fire Marshal	1.0
Assistant Chiefs (Now titled Battalion Chiefs)	1.8
Special Projects Assistant	.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.3</b>

Our Master Plan suggested an appropriate number in the short term would be 8 and eventually the appropriate level would be 12 in the long range plan. Since the ultimate configuration of fire stations and staff has been reduced from our original Master Plan (New Fire Station #2 replacing both the existing Fire Station #2 and the North Volunteer Station), the long range administrative and support staffing level can probably be reduced from 12 to 10 FTE's.

In completing Goal #1, detailed above, the department was reorganized in a manner that would achieve an Administrative and Support Staffing level of 7.8 FTE's. The Deputy Chief of Training and Administration was replaced with a Training Captain. The plan called for the creation of the new position of Deputy Chief of Operations. This new position would be the second in command within the department or a true assistant department head.

In March of 2008 this new position was filled, but in doing so the position of Training Captain has been left vacant for budgetary reasons. In addition, the half time special projects assistant position was upgraded to a full time Clerical Tech position. Our current Administrative and Support Staff is shown in the chart below:

<b>Administrative and Support Staff (2005)</b>	
<b>Position / Title</b>	<b>Number (FTE)</b>
Fire Chief	1.0
Deputy Chief of Operations	1.0
Administrative Secretary	1.0
Clerical Tech	1.0
Fire Marshal	1.0
Battalion Chiefs (Administrative Duties)	1.8
Training Captain	VACANT
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.8</b>

As you can see by the above chart, if the Training Captain position can be filled the department will be very close to what was identified as our short term goal for administrative and support staff. The Deputy Chief has been coordinating our Training Division since that position was created but this is a short term solution as the department has grown significantly.

The department has looked at two possible options to fill the Training Captain position:

1. In May of 2008, the Fire Department responded to an RFP for the MN State Fire Training Board Executive Director position. Our proposal would have allowed us to fill at least two full time and one part time position. We would have used these positions to provide the Executive Director duties and also provide additional staff time for our Training and Fire Prevention Divisions. In addition, the proposal would have paid the city for office space located in our new facilities. Our proposal would actually have generated a net profit for the City of St. Cloud in the range of \$50,000 annually. Unfortunately, our proposal was not awarded the contract.
2. Another option that has been discussed internally would be to use an existing fire fighter and pay that person Acting Captain pay. This proposal would rotate fire fighters through the position every six months or annually. The cost of filling the Training Captain position could be significantly reduced from approximately \$85,000 per year to approximately \$15,000 per year. There are advantages and disadvantages to this concept. The department will be submitting a more detailed report to Administration as a part of the 2010 budget process.

Staffing for Fire Prevention was slightly increased in February 2007 by using a Part Time Inspector who works approximately 15 hours per week. This position has proven helpful in allowing our Fire Prevention Division to keep pace with its workload. This position was used extensively for the liquor establishment inspections concerning occupancy. To date 90% of these establishments have

been inspected and new occupant loads calculated and posted. The remaining 10% are in process. In addition to bar inspections, the part time inspector assisted with inspections of all residents' halls and most assembly areas at SCSU. New occupant loads and emergency procedures have been created and posted. Posting emergency procedures and practicing them was a new code requirement in Minnesota and SCSU leads the state in compliance.

The department is also looking at using our on duty suppression crews to provide some assistance with inspections as suggested in our Master Plan. We have not had the time to formalize the plans for this to happen, but with the new stations now complete and our new suppression staff in place we expect to make more progress in this area in 2009.

The department has looked at potential ways to increase the available hours for our part time inspector including a proposal to provide inspection services to the City of Waite Park. We will continue to research and develop alternative funding sources to increase our Fire prevention Division staffing levels.

The objectives identified in this goal are:

7-A: Evaluate potential department efficiencies to meet future and existing need - **Completed**

7-B: Quantify short and mid-term staffing needs and costs - **Completed**

7-C: Obtain financial resources to meet needs - **Ongoing**

7-D: Establish favorable policies and environment for retention and hiring of staff - **Ongoing**

**Goal 8 – Develop and implement a comprehensive training program that provides for continuous education and career preparation opportunities to all personnel – **COMPLETED, ON-GOING****

The department has made significant and important improvements to its training programs over the last three years, beginning with the creation of the Deputy Chief of Training and Administration position in 2005, a position that was replaced with the Training Captain in our reorganization of 2006. Today, the Deputy Chief of Operations is running the Training Division due to the Training Captain position being vacant.

Prior to having a dedicated position for training our record keeping and levels of training were not keeping pace with the ever changing requirements being thrust upon the fire service. In addition to the basic fire fighter training we have done for years, the department also provides initial and ongoing training for

its personnel in a number of specialty areas. These include:

1. Hazardous Materials Operations Level for the entire department.
2. Hazardous Materials Technician and Specialist level for approximately 30 personnel
3. Airport Fire Fighter Training (Including annual live burn course in Duluth) for 12 personnel
4. Technical Rescue and Confined Space rescue for entire department.
5. Medical First Responder and EMT Refresher training for entire department.
6. National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) Training including ICS 100, ICS 200, ICS 300, ICS 400, ICS 700, and ICS 800 for the entire department.

As a part of our increased requirements for promotion the department also assists with Fire Instructor I and Fire Officer I certification courses. These are now required certifications for promotion to Fire Captain. These courses are helping to prepare the future leaders of the department. We expect to begin facilitating the next level of officer certification courses in 2009.

The department has also taken advantage of many outside training activities for our personnel, in most cases significantly funded by state and federal grant dollars. Numerous members of the department have had the opportunity to continue their education at these national institutions.

The Training Division has also developed a list of annual classes and certifications that must be completed by our personnel to ensure we are in compliance with state and federal laws and requirements. This was used for the development of our annual training program which is broken out into monthly training schedules. Also included in the development of this training schedule was a data base that can track employee training completed to ensure no employees get missed due to vacations or other time off.

The department has developed a significant group of in house instructors that we use to help keep our costs for delivery of training to a minimum. These instructors have also provided training for other city departments as needed and/or requested. Some examples would be CPR certification and the required NIMS Training.

The Training Division has also updated and gotten all of our personnel updated in the State of Minnesota Fire Service Certification System. It is expected in the future that any grant applicants will be required to meet some state certification levels in order to apply for state and federal grants. Our department has received significant grant funding since 2003. The Deputy Chief of Operations, Dean Wrobbel, has recently been appointed to the State

Certification Board of Directors.

The department also recently completed a recruit academy for our new hires in September of 2008. This one month academy was planned, prepared, and delivered by in house personnel and has given our new fire fighters a great foundation as they begin their careers with the department. The department will continue to evaluate our training needs and make changes as necessary to ensure our personnel our prepared to deliver the services we provide.

The objectives identified in this goal are:

8-A: Review current training curriculum; identify current training levels - **Complete**

8-B: Identify required training levels - **Complete**

8-C: Identify specialized skills training requirements - **Complete**

8-D: Develop a department training plan - **Complete**

8-E: Implement the department training plan – **Complete – Ongoing due to changes in operations and regulations**

## **CONCLUSION**

The department has made significant progress towards the completion of the goals and objectives identified in its 2005 Strategic Plan. While there are still some areas to continue working toward, we should also consider developing a new strategic plan for the next 3-5 years. Our existing Master Plan and the experience gained from our efforts over the last three years could be used as the foundation for crafting this next Strategic Plan.

The chart on the next page summarizes the progress that has been made specific to each of the identified goals and objectives.

PROGRESS REPORT  
 2005 FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN  
 DECEMBER 2008

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>Goal 1 – Develop a fresh, functional, and unified organizational structure for the Saint Cloud Fire Department</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>
<b>Goal 2 – Integrate our emergency medical response capability with other service providers to ensure that the closest and most appropriate medical responder provides immediate service to the customer</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>
<b>Goal 3 – Implement a centralized records management system that can provide accessible &amp; usable analysis data (GIS, Maps, Payroll, etc)</b>	SOME PROGRESS IN PROCESS
<b>Goal 4 – Improve service delivery by improving the strategic location and design of all fire service facilities</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>
<b>Goal 5 – Achieve an on-duty staffing availability of at least 17 personnel at all times by effectively utilizing full-time and paid on-call firefighting personnel</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b> (Utilization of POC Still in Process)
<b>Goal 6 – Achieve the use of a technically superior communications center that efficiently dispatches personnel for emergency response and services</b>	IN PROCESS
<b>Goal 7 – Maintain an adequate and appropriately trained support staff for non-emergency programs, including prevention, training and administration</b>	SOME PROGRESS IN PROCESS
<b>Goal 8 – Develop and implement a comprehensive training program that provides for continuous education and career preparation opportunities to all personnel</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>