

COUNTY-WIDE FIRE AND EMS SERVICE – AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME?
League of Women Voters of Collier County – Hot Topics Luncheon – August 29, 2006

Discussion Outline

Objectives of today's session:

- Continue to build our base of knowledge about our community
- Provide specific information about today's topic so we will be better-informed as the issue moves forward

Test your knowledge –

1. Who answers the phone and what happens when you dial 911 to report a fire or medical emergency?
2. Who provides your fire service today? If you don't know, do you know how to find out?
3. Who provides your emergency medical service today?
4. How are fire and EMS services paid for in Collier County?
5. Why has the county commission recommended that the independent fire districts consider merging? What steps are required for the fire districts to merge?
6. What is the current status of this issue?
7. How can you influence fire and EMS services in Collier County as an informed and active participant in government?

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- 1) Who answers the phone when you dial 911 to report a fire or medical emergency?
 - a) Collier County Sheriff's Department -- 12 intake positions with phones and radios
 - i) For fire emergencies, dispatches fire and police
 - ii) For medical emergencies, dispatches fire, EMS and police
- 2) Who provides your fire service today?
 - a) 5 independent fire departments, 2 dependent fire departments, 2 city fire departments
 - b) Independent fire departments – overseen by elected boards of commissioners
 - i) Big Corkscrew Island Fire Control & Rescue District
 - ii) East Naples Fire Control & Rescue District
 - iii) Golden Gate Fire Control & Rescue District
 - iv) Immokalee Fire Control District
 - v) North Naples Fire Control & Rescue District
 - c) Dependent fire departments – part of county government
 - i) Isles of Capri Fire and Rescue
 - ii) Ochopee Fire Control District
 - d) City fire departments – part of city government
 - i) Naples Fire Department
 - ii) City of Marco Island Fire Rescue
- 3) If you don't know, do you know how to find out?
 - a) Noted on your voter registration card
 - b) Call county sheriff's office
- 4) Who provides your emergency medical service today?
 - a) Since 1981, operated as a department in Collier County government, under direction of the Emergency Management Services Dept (Dan Summers) – which reports through Leo Ochs, Deputy County Manager, to County Manager Jim Mudd
 - i) 161 employees – including 145 field positions (NDN 7/7/06)
 - (1) Interviewing now to hire 28 new field workers for upcoming year (NDN 7/7/06)
 - ii) 30 ambulances (NDN 7/7/06)
 - (1) 22 ambulances are in service every day, usually staffed by 2 EMS workers (NDN 7/7/06)
 - (2) balance are backups (NDN 7/7/06)
 - b) Collier EMS is the only agency licensed to transport from the scene of medical emergencies (NDN 7/7/06) – others can apply to county for Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity
- 5) How are fire and EMS services paid for in Collier County?
 - a) Ad valorem taxes assessed as a millage rate times your property's assessed value
 - i) 1 mil is 1/10 of a cent per dollar of property value, or \$1 dollar per \$1000 of assessed value
 - ii) For a \$1M house, 1 mil rate = \$1000
 - iii) For a \$1M house, 4 mil rate = \$4000
 - b) Fire (rates per NDN 7/14/06)
 - i) Independent fire districts have taxing authority
 - (1) North Naples = 1 mil
 - (2) Golden Gate = 1 mil
 - (3) East Naples = 1.5 mil
 - (4) Big Corkscrew Island = 2 mil
 - (5) Immokalee = 3 mil
 - ii) Dependent fire districts' rate is set by the Board of County Commissioners
 - (1) Isle of Capri = 1.5 mil
 - (2) Ochopee = 4 mil
 - iii) City fire districts' rate is set by City government

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- (1) less than 1 mil (Naples about ½ mil – per Jim Mudd interview with Jeff Lytle)
- c) EMS
 - i) Part of county budget (\$24M gross), partially offset by user fees (\$14M) → \$10M net cost (\$10.4M proposed budget for 2006)
- 6) Why has the county commission recommended that the independent fire districts consider merging?
 - a) According to the Naples Daily News (6/24/06):
 - i) Cost: idea was raised by Commissioner Fred Coyle at the end of 2 days of budget workshop hearings
 - (1) ..., “ Coyle said. ‘I think the fire districts can do a better job (of running EMS) than we can.’ ”
 - (2) “ ‘The fire districts are suspicious that we want to take them over,’ Coyle said. ‘I don’t want to do that.’ ”
 - (3) “Coyle spoke after the commissioners discussed ways to cut spending in the fiscal 2007 budget. He said getting rid of EMS would be a good way to cut spending.... The other commissioners enthusiastically agreed with Coyle.”
 - b) According to Jim Mudd in an interview with Jeff Lytle (One-on-One, 7/16/06):
 - i) Get rid of competition for employees between fire districts and EMS
 - ii) Stabilize service – less turnover
 - iii) Standardize service across the county
 - (1) North Naples is very good with some of the finest trained in the country; others are just getting by in terms of training, equipment and pay... what you can afford equates to service on the ground
- 7) What steps are required for the fire districts to merge?
 - a) Agreement of fire districts, including compromise on structural differences (e.g. tax rates, seniority, retirement packages)
 - b) Public hearings
 - c) Approval of State Legislature
 - d) Approval by voters
 - e) → could take years
- 8) What is the current status of this issue?
 - a) Fire districts created a fire services subcommittee in July that has begun to meet
 - b) Coyle said if fire districts don’t make progress toward consolidating within the next year, commissioners might put the issue up in a straw ballot in 2007 (NDN 7/2/06)
 - c) Meanwhile, on 8/14, North Naples and Bonita Springs fire districts agreed to take first steps toward merging their two districts
 - i) Bonita Springs Fire Department commissioners voted unanimously in favor of budgeting \$50,000 at their final budget meeting on 9/11 to hire a consultant to explore best ways for the 2 districts to merge
 - ii) The two districts have voted to explore prospect of sharing equipment and improving emergency communication between the agencies
- 9) How can you influence fire and EMS services in Collier County as an informed and active participant in government?
 - a) Become informed
 - b) Attend meetings
 - c) Vote and/or run for your fire district board (4 year term)

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The following fire departments are located in Collier County.

Big Corkscrew Island Fire Control & Rescue
District (election 2006)
13240 Immokalee Rd
Naples, FL 34120
<http://www.bcifr.com/>

City of Marco Island Fire Rescue
1280 San Marco Rd
Marco Island, FL 34145
http://www.cityofmarcoisland.com/Public_Documents/MarcoIslandFL_Depts/fire

East Naples Fire Control & Rescue District
(election 2006)
4798 Davis Blvd
Naples, FL 34104
<http://www.enfd.org/>

Golden Gate Fire Control & Rescue District (election
2006)
4741 Golden Gate Pkwy
Naples, FL 34116-6901
<http://www.ggfire.com/>

Immokalee Fire Control District (election 2006)
502 E New Market Rd
Immokalee, FL 34142
<http://www.naples.net/social/db/146.htm>

Isles of Capri Fire & Rescue
175 Capri Blvd
Naples, FL 34113
<http://www.caprifire.net/home.htm>

Naples Fire Department
355 Riverside Cir
Naples, FL 34102
<http://naplesfire.com/>

North Naples Fire Control and Rescue District (election
2006)
1885 Veterans Park Dr
Naples, FL 34109
<http://www.northnaplesfire.com/>

Ochopee Fire Control District
201 Buckner Ave
Ochopee, FL 34139
<http://www.ochopeefire.org/>