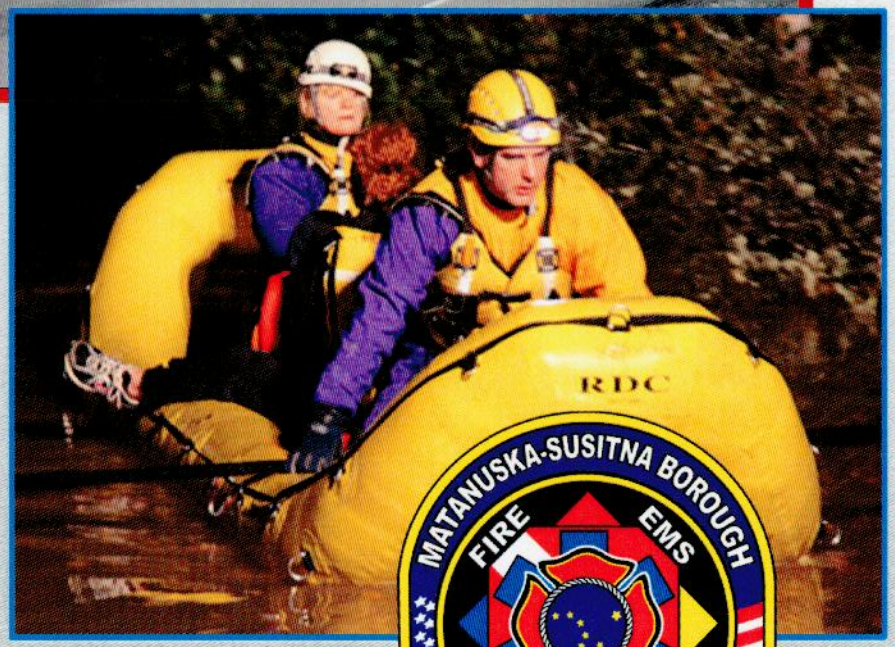

DES

Strategic Initiatives

September 2015

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
FIRE
EMS
RESCUE
HAZMAT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

DES OPERATIONS

Strategic Initiative: DES Consolidated Services

Objective: Improved Workforce Effectiveness and Efficiency

Goals:
1. Reduction of scheduled overtime and the associated cost.
2. More effective utilization of resources.
3. Enhanced coverage for 911 calls for assistance.

Problem: DES Core EMS paid more than $535,000 in overtime during FY2015.

The current operational scheduling model used by the DES Core EMS FTE workforce is unable to take advantage of current labor laws that allows for cross trained Fire/EMS full-time employees to work 53 hours per week before accruing overtime. Currently the full-time EMS responders are only allowed to work 40 hours before overtime pay begins. The EMS full-time medics work two 24 hour shifts per week, DES is obligated to 16 hours of regularly scheduled overtime per two week pay period.

Solution: A consolidation of Core EMS and Core Rescue Services with the Core Fire Service Areas would give DES the ability to schedule FTE firefighter/medics to 56 hour work weeks reducing 16 hours of obligated overtime per two week pay period to 6 hours, thus significantly reducing scheduled overtime expenses.

A consolidation would require cross training of FTE's resulting in a more efficient utilization of our full-time workforce.

Challenges:
1. Current EMS FTE's that do not want to cross train.
2. Contracting with the FSA's to provide EMS/Rescue Service.
3. Fire Departments operating outside of their respective FSA boundaries for EMS/Rescue Services.
4. Training and implementation plan.
5. Contracting with the City of Palmer for services.

Resources Needed: Legal, HR, DES Administration, FSA's, EMS, MSBEA

Responsible Party: Department of Emergency Services

DES OPERATIONS

Strategic Initiative: Ambulance Operations and Revenue Stream

Objective: Ambulance revenue stream enhancement via Electronic Patient Care Reporting (ePCR) and contractual agreement with Mat-Su Regional Medical Center(MSRMC) for inter-facility and return-to-residence transport services

Goals: ePCR)

1. Reduce billing denials due to documentation errors
2. Improved revenue stream for ambulance services

(MSRMC contractual agreement)

1. True dedicated transport ambulance staged at MSRMC resulting in better customer service
2. Improved revenue stream for ambulance services
3. Improved public safety coverage as a dedicated asset at MSRMC reduces frequency of 911 ambulances diverting for non-emergent purposes

Possible solution for challenge of utilizing non-cross-trained EMS employees following consolidation of Emergency Services

Problem: DES Core EMS loses an estimated $1,000,000 each year due to Medicare and insurance company billing denials.

Public safety needs outpace availability of staffed 911 ambulances.

Major customer (MSRMC) needs not met due to lack of staffed ambulances for non-emergent assignments.

Solution: Continue development and implementation of ePCR capability.

Develop a contractual agreement with MSRMC for MSB EMS to provide a dedicated ambulance that is funded by a source other than MSB Areawide funds.

Challenges: Additional full-time positions required for dedicated ambulance at MSRMC.
Training and implementation plan.

Resources Needed: Legal, HR, DES Administration, Ambulance billing department, EMS, MSBEA

Responsible Party: Department of Emergency Services

DES OPERATIONS

Strategic Initiative: Radio and Alerting System Improvements

Objective: Modernize Our Current Radio and Alerting System

Goals:

1. Increase radio coverage and eliminate current breaks in coverage.
2. Increased capacity.
3. Increased reliability.
4. Improve maintenance call-out times.
5. Provide for radio system security.
6. Partner with Municipality of Anchorage.
7. Secondary means of alerting and communication.

Problem: The current DES emergency radio and alerting system is outdated and in need of modernization.

There are many problems plaguing our current radio and alerting system, three of them are the breaks in radio coverage, a lack of more than one primary frequency, and the inability to mult-cast from our repeaters. At times the sheer volume of radio traffic overwhelms the 911 dispatchers because of our single channel system. Tactical channels can provide some relief to the primary channel, but they cannot be monitored and recorded at the dispatch center. They are strictly line of sight with limited range. Our radio coverage is inconsistent. This results in dead zones where radio communications and pager alerts cannot be heard. Because our radio towers are not multi-cast capable, responders cannot always hear each other using the radios. This forces the dispatchers to repeat radio transmissions, sometimes multiple times, causing confusion and frustration.

Solution: We need to modernize and grow our radio and alerting system to meet current demands and future needs. This is going to require adding communication towers, equipment, and possibly partnering with the Municipality of Anchorage to share resources.

Challenges:

1. Modernizing is estimated to cost between $2.1 million and $4.5 million.
2. It could take three or more years to upgrade.
3. Partnering with the Municipality of Anchorage.

Resources Needed: DES Admin., IT, Dispatch Services, Municipality of Anchorage.

Responsible Party: Department of Emergency Services and IT.

DES FLEET MAINTENANCE

Strategic Initiative: Fleet Maintenance Facility and Program Improvements

Objective: Establish a vehicle maintenance program that addresses current and future DES needs.

Goals:
1. Acquire a maintenance facility that is suitable for the work that needs to be done.
2. Hire sufficient full-time and part-time staff.

Problem: The current maintenance facility is undersized for the work being done. Our lease is about to expire and the City of Wasilla is asking us to vacate the building.

DES Fleet maintenance is under-staffed. Currently, very little preventative maintenance is accomplished. Most work is contracted out. Mechanics spend 20-30% of their time doing admin work and another 20-30% for travel time. Existing maintenance shop has safety issues. Routine maintenance is sometimes delayed due to inadequate staffing. National average ratio mechanic vs. vehicle is approximately 28, currently were at 75. This does not include the other equipment each mechanic works on such as SCBA air compressors, rescue hydraulic equipment, generators, PP fans, smoke machines, chain saws, weed whackers, lawn mowers, etc. Our mechanics are overwhelmed unable to keep up. The DES fleet has doubled in size, equipment has aged, call volume has increased, yet the fleet maintenance staff has not increased in 14 years.

Solution:
1. Purchase existing or construct a new maintenance facility that will meet current future needs.
2. Hire two additional full-time mechanics.
3. Hire full-time admin assistant.
4. Hire a 1000 hour employee to shuttle vehicles, pick up parts, and assist mechanics.

Challenges:
1. Cost to purchase existing building or construct a new maintenance facility.
2. Cost of full-time and part-time employees.
4. Establishing an effective scheduled and preventative maintenance program.

Resources Needed: Legal, HR, DES Administration, FSA's, EMS, and MSBEA

Responsible Party: Department of Emergency Services

DES ADMINISTRATION AND EOC

Strategic Initiative: Re-Locate and Co-Locate DES Administration and EOC

Objective: Secure Facility Where DES Administration and EOC can Co-Locate

Goals: Find or build building to meet current and future size requirements of DES Administration and EOC.
Have EOC in a constant "Stand-By" configuration.
Facility should have "Stand-Alone" radio and communications capability.

Problem: The Central Mat-Su FD/FSA has asked DES Administration to vacate Cottonwood Public Safety Building (Sta. 65). The EOC is located in a fire station away from DES Administration and kept in a "Cold" configuration.

DES Administration has been occupying the administrative area of the Cottonwood Public Safety Building for more than 25 years. DES does not pay rent and only splits the utilities with the Central Mat-Su FD. DES has failed over the years to provide project funds to help repair and pay for the upkeep of the fire station. The Central Mat-Su FD/FSA has been asking for DES to vacate the building for approximately 5 years. The EOC is located in a training room at Station 61 approximately 3 miles away from DES Admin. Because it is not co-located with DES Administration it must be kept in a "Cold" configuration and the EOC equipment kept locked in a secure closet. This cost valuable time in "Standing-Up" the EOC during a disaster or exercise. The EOC and DES Administration should be co-located

Solution: Move and co-locate DES Administration and EOC into a facility large enough to meet current and future needs.

Challenges: Finding or constructing an adequate building.
The cost associated with re-locating and moving to a new facility.
The process of physically moving to another building.

Resources Needed: DES Admin., IT, Project Management

Responsible Party: Department of Emergency Services