



Smith Valley Fire Protection District
Strategic Plan
Fiscal Year 2010/2011

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Smith Valley Fire Protection District to protect the citizens of our District and their property from the effects of fire, accident, natural or man made disasters and to provide pre-hospital emergency medical services. Our mission will be accomplished with respect and compassion for the people we serve and concern for the well being of our members.

Executive Summary

Thank you for reading this document. It demonstrates that you have an interest in the future of the Smith Valley Fire Protection District.

The residents of Smith Valley are very fortunate; they have an exceptional group of dedicated, selfless volunteers that have been providing quality emergency services for over fifty years. Ours is the only fire organization in Lyon and the surrounding counties providing emergency services exclusively with volunteer responders.

This is the second edition of this document. We have made progress in some areas and other areas we have not. The concept is working and we are beginning to plan further into the future.

Our most important challenge continues to be recruiting and maintaining enough volunteers to meet our growing demands. We must recognize how valuable of a resource our volunteers are and do our absolute best to protect and grow that resource.

Increasing demands for Fire District resources just in the last year have made it apparent that a career position would be very beneficial. We need to plan for a career employee now.

Our infrastructure is basically sound. Many of our apparatus are past due for replacement but still serviceable. Our three fire stations give us enough space to expand and meet the needs of our community for the next twenty years.

Fiscally, we have a long history of sound and prudent management. Our income exceeds expenses. We are able to save for major purchases.

This document is designed as a foundation for making decisions that affect the future of our organization. Thank you again for your interest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jim Hardison

Jim Hardison
Assistant Fire Chief
Smith Valley Fire Protection District
February, 2010

Strategic Planning, Personnel

Recruitment and Retention

Vision: To muster sufficient numbers of adequately trained volunteer firefighters to safely and efficiently mitigate the emergencies that are within the capabilities of an organization our size.

SWOT analysis of the Smith Valley Fire Protection District's personnel.

Strengths:

- Core group of dedicated, quality individuals
- Decades of experience
- Pride in service
- Community support

Weaknesses:

- Too few members
- Aging volunteers (see table 1)
- Difficulty in attracting new members
- Lack of a mentoring program
- Lack of strong, consistent leadership

Table 1: (2009)

- Fourteen members on the roster
- Nine are active
- Average age - 48
- Members over age 50 - 68%
- Members over age 60 – 7%
- New members in the last five years that have stayed at least 12 months - 2

Opportunities:

- More potential volunteers are in Smith Valley
- The Smith Valley Fire Protection District has the resources to augment the current recruitment and retention program
- Help is available from national and state organizations

Threats:

- Losing members to attrition
- Losing members due to organizational insufficiencies
- Continued increase in workload causing burnout
- Increased time commitments imposed by regulating agencies
- Losing new recruits to lack of nurturing

Discussion: For the Smith Valley Fire Protection District to continue to provide emergency services into the future, recruitment and retention must be a priority.

Goal: To increase the number of volunteers to a level sufficient to comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations that address structural firefighting.

NFPA recommends that firefighters be organized into companies (NFPA 1710, 4.3.3), and “the fire department shall identify minimum staffing requirements to ensure that a sufficient number of members are available to operate safely and effectively” (NFPA 1710, 4.3.1). Industry standards for optimal staffing of a fire engine is four personnel; three personnel as a minimum.

OSHA procedures for interior structural firefighting require that fire attack teams number at least two personnel when entering hazardous atmospheres and that at least two additional personnel locate outside the atmosphere standing by for assistance or rescue of the attack team (OSHA CFR 29, Standard Number 1910.134).

With these requirements in mind, the goal for number of structural firefighters on scene would be a minimum of thirteen: three firefighters on each of the three structure engines, two firefighter/Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) on the ambulance, one water tender operator, and one incident commander.

Goal: Recruit five members per year until there are thirty active members on the roster.

Strategy: Assure that all citizens in Smith Valley know that recruitment is an on-going priority

Tactic: Direct mailing once yearly to all addresses in Smith Valley

Tactic: Advertise quarterly in local newspapers

Tactic: Present at churches and service clubs annually

Tactic: Create our own website

Tactic: Create and distribute recruitment posters (New for FY 11)

Progress: This goal was partially met in FY10; we created and mailed brochures, created a website, and presented at service clubs. We have four potential recruits in training and are using mentors.

Goal: Double the amount of EMTs on staff from eight to sixteen.

Strategy: Increase incentives for EMTs

Tactic: Compensate EMTs for the added training and responsibility

Tactic: Have a sufficient pool of EMTs to allow for a rotating on-call schedule for medical calls

Progress: This goal was not met; we did not increase our numbers of EMTs in FY 10

Goal: Retain active, productive members.

Strategy: Provide a stimulating, challenging, rewarding, and professional atmosphere that encourages participation

Tactic: Provide uniforms for all members

Tactic: Continue to upgrade equipment and facilities to the finest we can afford

Tactic: Expand the current incentive program

Tactic: Encourage, support, and compensate members willing to take on added responsibility

Tactic: Improve the training program to train for tangible goals and create more opportunity for all members to participate (See training section)

Tactic: Formally recognize outstanding performance

Tactic: Create a perpetual plaque to recognize members (New for FY 11)

Progress: This goal was partially met in FY 10; we have decided on uniforms, budgeted for a uniform allowance and an increase in incentives, and upgraded some equipment.

Goal: Motivate inactive, non-productive members to increase their participation.

Strategy: Learn why inactive members aren't participating more

Tactic: Meet and discuss with inactive members to learn how to better meet their needs

Progress: This goal was not met in FY 10

Training

Vision: To train all members of our organization to minimum standards recognized at the State and National level. To provide higher levels of training for members that demonstrate aptitude and motivation.

SWOT analysis of Smith Valley Fire Protection District's training program

Strengths:

- Training is regularly scheduled and the schedule adhered to
- Quality classroom facilities in-house
- Qualified in-house instructors
- Training provides a good mix of didactic and hands-on
- Outside training opportunities encouraged

Weaknesses:

- No minimum, documented training requirements for new recruits before they respond on calls
- No proficiency examinations or performance standards for fire training
- No specific objectives or achievement goals for fire training
- Department SOGs that require minimum attendance not enforced
- Local facilities not taken advantage of
- All members training at the same level, i.e., no operator or officer level
- Inadequate number of qualified instructors
- Insufficient number of qualified officers equates to inadequate leadership for new members
- Inflexible training schedule makes it difficult for some members to attend

Opportunities

- Adequate training budget
- Assistance from federal, state, local, and private agencies is available
- Instructor level training is readily available

Threats:

- Increased training requirements may alienate some members
- Expanded training program will impact budget

Discussion: Quality, performance based training is the best death and injury prevention program.

Goal: Develop a goal oriented fire training program with a flexible schedule to accommodate as many members as possible.

Strategy: Provide the opportunity for all members to become certified as Nevada Firefighter I and Firefighter II by attending in-house training.

Tactic: Meet with Nevada State Fire Marshall to develop curriculum

Tactic: Enlist outside instructors

Tactic: Develop a schedule that accommodates maximum number of volunteers

Tactic: Consider duplicating training to accommodate maximum number of volunteers

Tactic: Develop Firefighter Task Books using State Fire Marshall curriculum (New for FY 11)

Strategy: Provide advanced level training to volunteers who desire to advance their skill, knowledge, and level of responsibility

Tactic: Meet with Nevada State Fire Marshall to develop curriculum

Tactic: Enlist outside instructors

Tactic: Develop schedule that accommodates interested personnel

Strategy: Develop performance standards to document proficiency

Tactic: Have a performance standard for all major emergency functions that we provide

Progress: This goal was partially met in FY 10; we have contacted outside instructors and improved our relationship with the State Fire Marshall's office. We now require an Entry Level Firefighter certification for new recruits. We offer the certification in-house.

Discussion - When to consider paid staff

The Smith Valley Fire Protection District serves two kinds of customers, external and internal. The external customers are those who call for emergency service; the internal customers are the volunteers who provide that service. Any discussion on transitioning to a combination (paid and volunteer) department must consider both types of customers and the level of service we plan to deliver.

External Customers

The most rudimentary assessment of the issue would conclude that if 911 calls are being answered, then there is no need for any paid staff. However, further evaluation would bring to light such issues as: response times, adequate staffing, properly trained and qualified personnel. If the District wants to maintain the current level of service in the face of increasing population and waning numbers of volunteers, then a serious look at transitioning to a combination department is warranted.

Many services traditionally provided by the local fire department such as community education, fire prevention, school programs, and other beneficial involvement with the community could be offered if we had a career staff.

Internal Customers

Serving our internal customers is critical to the success of the organization. Recruitment, retention, training, nurturing, and mentoring are essential. The Smith Valley Fire Protection District's current volunteers represent the best that are available anywhere. We have a core group of dedicated individuals that keep this organization running in the absence of consistent leadership. Our core group is experienced, self-motivated, savvy, and has a history of making good decisions- both on and off the emergency ground. It is inevitable that we will lose this core group to attrition. They will hopefully be replaced as a result of our recruitment program. The replacements will lack the needed experience and training to make the same quality decisions.

It will be at this juncture, when new and inexperienced members outnumber the experienced members, that the lack of consistent leadership will prove to be detrimental to our organization. Consistent leadership is best provided by career staff.

To provide the best possible service to our internal customers requires that we offer strong and consistent leadership, quality training, mentoring, and incentives; and a strong organizational commitment to their well being. To provide this increased level of support to our volunteers, especially new recruits, would require either an exponentially increased time commitment by the volunteer chief officers or some form of paid staff.

Vision: The Smith Valley Fire Protection District proactively transitions to a combination organization before being forced to by crisis.

Goal: Establish circumstances that prompt consideration of the transition by using established criteria.

Strategy: The International Association of Fire Chiefs, Volunteer and Combination Officers Section has produced *Lighting the Path of Evolution the Red Ribbon Report-Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments*. In this document is a section “Signals of Change” that establishes indicators for change to a combination organization. Following are paraphrases from “Signals of Change”.

Losing Experience. The risk of inexperienced members operating without effective leadership increases when attrition causes the loss of the experienced members. This is a recipe for catastrophe.

Community Growth. As communities grow; the demand for emergency services increases.

Community Aging. An age profile that demonstrates community aging equates to more emergency medical calls per capita and fewer potential volunteers per capita.

Extended Response Times. Inadequate staffing results in longer response times when volunteers are waiting to staff apparatus.

Reduced Staffing. Inadequate staffing results in apparatus responding with less than the recommended number of firefighters; this decreases effectiveness and increases risk of death or injury to the firefighters.

Officers Filling Lower Operational Positions. When chief officers are filling firefighter roles on emergency scenes instead of command roles it is a “*sign of serious staffing problems*”.

Essential Services Not Being Provided. Fire prevention, fire inspections, community education, wild fire safety; these are important services that aren’t being provided in Smith Valley.

Missed Deadlines. Critical administrative deadlines: grant opportunities, reports, legally required documentation, and other administrative functions not being met are a sign of dysfunction.

Lack of Representation. The Smith Valley Fire Protection District is poorly represented with surrounding jurisdictions and agencies. This results in missed opportunities to improve service.

No One Being Groomed for Future Leadership. The Smith Valley Fire Protection District currently has no officer development program.

Rapid Growth. When the economy and the local housing market begin to grow, this will put an increased burden on the organization.

Missed Calls. Self explanatory.

Catastrophic Losses. Catastrophic losses are inevitable. Catastrophic losses that were avoidable with proper foresight are not inevitable.

The Smith Valley Fire Protection District already meets many of these criteria. The leaders of our organization must monitor the situation and have the courage to face the challenge of making the transition with customer service as the primary goal. The most critical indicator is the loss of experience. The loss of even one of the core group of essential individuals could push the organization into dysfunction.

Fiscally, we must decide now that the transition is unavoidable and begin to budget accordingly.

Improving service to both internal and external customers would best be accomplished by creating a career chief officer position. An individual with qualifications, experience, and education adequate to provide training, administrative support, and emergency response would be the most effective first career employee.

Interim measures must also be considered: paid-on-call positions for specific job functions, contracting with surrounding jurisdictions, part-time employees, and other strategies may ease the transition.

Progress: Progress was made in FY 10; we have committed to the inevitability of another paid position. We envision this position as part-time, at the chief officer level, and with a wide range of responsibilities, see addendum for draft job description.

Strategic Planning, Apparatus

Vision: To upgrade all sub-standard first out apparatus to be safe, functional, and NFPA compliant and do so without borrowing money.

Goal: Form an equipment committee to implement the purchase plan included in this document, to write specifications, and to decide on new or used equipment depending on budgetary concerns.

Current Inventory

Apparatus	NWCG Type	Statistics	Status	Comments
Engine 40 1996 Ford E-1	Type II	1000 GPM 1000 Gallon tank 3 Person cab	First out	
Brush 40 1991 International	Type IV	50 GPM 750 Gallon tank 3 Person cab	First out	
Rescue 40 1986 GMC	N/A	250 GPM 150 Gallon tank 3 Person cab	First out	Carries all hydraulic rescue tools and other extrication equipment
Medic 40 2004 Ford Ambulance	EMT Intermediate		First out	Type I Ambulance
Tender 40 1978 Crane	Type II	150 GPM 4000 Gallon tank 2 Person cab	First out	Not suitable for out of District
Medic 140 1987 Ford Ambulance	EMT Basic		Reserve	Reserve only, not suitable for extended first out
Engine 41 1966 Ford	N/A	750 GPM 1000 Gallon tank 3 Person cab	First out	Not suitable for out of District
Engine 42 1978 Ford/Pierce	N/A	1000 GPM 350 Gallon Tank 3 Person cab	First out	
Brush 42 1981 International	Type III	500 GPM 500 Gallon tank 3 Person cab	First out	Not suitable for out of District
Patrol 42 2007 Ford	Command Vehicle and Type VII	6 Passenger capability	First out	
Utility 41 1987 Ford	Utility	3 Person cab Utility bed	Utility	
Rhino 42 2008 Yamaha Rhino	N/A	2 Passenger	Off-Hwy Utility	UTV for off-road incidents

Discussion: Smith Valley Fire Protection District's number, type, and distribution of apparatus is adequate for current and projected call volume. The challenge lies in that many first out apparatus are outdated and in need of replacement. Looking at the chart above one can see that much of our equipment is more than twenty years old. Industry standards recommend that fire apparatus respond first out for ten years and then move to reserve status for ten more years and then be retired after twenty years of service. Smith Valley is able to get more longevity from our fire apparatus because of our low call volume.

NFPA 1911, 2007 edition, Chapter 5 Retirement of Fire Apparatus

5.1.1 "The fire department shall consider safety as the primary concern in the retirement of apparatus."

The following replacement schedule is prioritized based on safety and operational effectiveness. Major apparatus purchases are scheduled every other fiscal year to give the budget time to recover. The estimated costs represent off-the-shelf, non-custom apparatus. An additional cost factor of approximately ten percent should be included to adequately equip apparatus.

Apparatus Replacement Schedule

Fiscal Year	2010/2011	2010/2011	2013/2014	2014/2015
Apparatus to be replaced	Water Tender 40	Brush 42	Rescue 40	Medic 40 or Engine 42
Replacement Type	Water Tender	Type III or IV Brush Engine	Medium Duty Rescue	Ambulance Type II Engine
Estimated Cost				
New	\$220,000.00	\$240,000.00	\$110,000.00	TBD
Used	\$150,000.00	\$160,000.00	\$80,000.00	TBD

The estimated costs are derived from industry publications, actual costs will vary as a result of the equipment committee recommendations.

Progress: We made partial progress in FY 10; we have established an equipment committee and have been working on specifications for a new water tender.

Strategic Planning, Facilities

Discussion: The Smith Valley Fire Protection District owns four buildings: Stations 40, 41, and 42 and the retired Central Station. Our fire stations are generally low maintenance. Stations 40 and 42 are six years old. Following are maintenance issues and improvements that will impact the budget in the future.

Station 40 – Hardie Lane

Project	Timeline	Estimated Cost	Budget Category
Seal asphalt	FY 11	\$4,500.00	General Fund
Seal architectural block	FY 11	\$2,500.00	General Fund
Improve drainage on Hardie Lane	FY 11	TBD	Acquisition Fund
Enclose mezzanine exercise area	FY12	\$40,000.00	Acquisition Fund
Install high speed internet access with wireless capability	FY 11	\$100.00 and then \$50.00/Month	General Fund
Standby generator	TBD	TBD	Seek Grant Funds

Station 41 – Highway 208, Wellington

Project	Timeline	Estimated Cost	Budget Category
Seek new property for future expansion	Ongoing	TBD	Acquisition Fund

Station 42 – Colony

Project	Timeline	Estimated Cost	Budget Category
Seal asphalt	FY 11	\$1,500.00	General Fund
Landscape	FY 12	\$5,000.00	General Fund
Plan for future expansion	TBD	TBD	

Retired Station – Central

Form a committee to explore options for future disposition.

Strategic Planning, Fiscal

Discussion: The Smith Valley Fire Protection District is an independent unit of local government and tax district created under provisions of Nevada State law. The District was created by election in 1945.

There is a three member Board of Directors. The Directors are elected at large for four-year terms; the terms are staggered at two-year intervals: two seats available in one rotation and one seat the next. The Board is responsible for ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent judiciously, and for policy and planning.

Revenue: The Smith Valley Fire Protection District's revenue comes from two taxpayer sources: Ad Valorem and Consolidated Tax.

- Ad Valorem is a tax on real property. The current tax rate for the Smith Valley Fire Protection District is 26.97 cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation. Only taxpayers living within the boundaries of the Smith Valley Fire Protection District pay Ad Valorem tax to the District. Revenue from Ad Valorem taxes is fairly consistent and reliable; it changes with assessed valuation, with more property owners within the District, or by Board action.
- Consolidated tax, abbreviated CTX, is State sales tax monies that are redistributed to local governments. CTX fluctuates with Nevada's economy and the distribution formula can be changed by legislative action.

Additional income sources for The District are ambulance bills received and interest earned.

The Lyon County Comptroller controls Smith Valley Fire Protection District's money by the use of a voucher system.

Audits, required by State statute, are conducted annually by a private contractor.

Fundraiser and donated monies go into a separate account and are controlled by the volunteer firefighters. This money is used for special purchases, training expenses, and philanthropy. This account is audited annually.

Funds: The Smith Valley Fire Protection District's budget is divided into three funds:

- General Fund – The general fund is used for operating expenses.
- Acquisition Fund – The acquisition fund is used for major purchases. Unencumbered money from the general fund is typically transferred to the acquisition fund at the end of the fiscal year.
- Emergency Fund

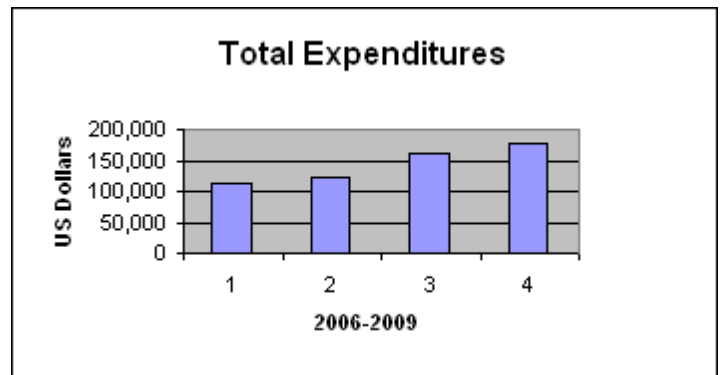
Debt: Smith Valley Fire Protection District entered into a purchase agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture in 2004 to partially finance fire station construction. The annual payment is \$24,560. This payment includes principle and interest (interest rate is 4.5%). In 2007 the unpaid balance was \$372,275. The loan will be paid off in 2033. Smith Valley Fire Protection District has no other debt.

Future considerations: Apparatus purchases and planning for career personnel need to be factored into fiscal planning.

Four-Year History

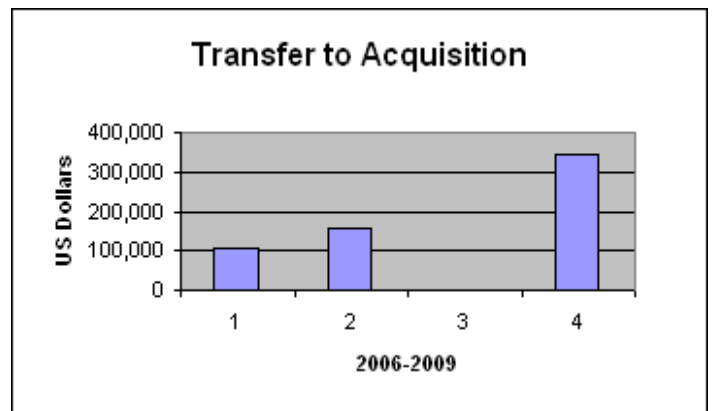
Total Expenditures

2006	2007	2008	2009
111,900	121,954	162,130	177,496



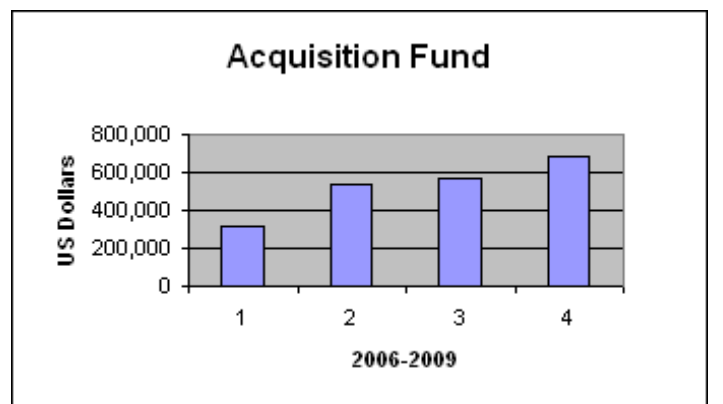
Transfer to Acquisition

2006	2007	2008	2009
103,988	155,937	0	345,000



Acquisition Fund

2006	2007	2008	2009
317,015	537,021	573,459	681,741



Afterword

This document is a tool for planning for the future; for this tool to be effective it must be regularly revisited and updated. We have taken important first steps. The first Strategic Planning Committee has met, reviewed the document and made changes, additions, and corrections. The committee will prioritize goals and then make recommendations to the Board of Directors for budgeting purposes.

Many thanks to the committee members for their dedication to the future of Smith Valley Fire Protection District:

Board Member Kitty Spencer
Fire Chief Rob Loveberg
Assistant Fire Chief Bill Park

FF/EMT and EMS Coordinator Kim Gattuso
FF/EMT Tom Spencer
FF/EMT Marlene Hardison

Contact information:

Fire Station Office	775.465.2577
Fire Chief Rob Loveberg	775.721.2282 firechief.svfpd@verizon.net
Asst. Chief Jim Hardison	775.230.0639
Asst. Chief Bill Park	775.721.0605

Addendum

Smith Valley Fire Protection District
Division Chief –Training, Health and Safety, Administration
FLSA Exempt

Draft Job Summary

Under direction of the District Fire Chief and Board of Directors provide highly responsible and complex administrative support. Supervises plans, coordinates and monitors activities in training, prevention, health and safety, and administration. Effectively coordinates activities with other divisions, outside agencies, and the general public. Directs emergency operations in fire, medical, hazardous materials incidents and large scale emergencies, performs all duties of a firefighter. Develops, presents and maintains budget in any area assigned. Establishes and accomplishes the goals and objectives for assigned division.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Plan and conduct training of all fire and EMS personnel.
- Plan and administer the Fire District's Health and Safety Program.
- Develop a fire prevention program.
- Manage records.
- Attend meetings at the county or state level at the request of the Fire Chief.
- Take a leadership role in Smith Valley Fire Protection District's recruitment and retention program
- Provides command and/or coordination of activities on emergency incidents.
- Participates as an integral part of the District's administrative team.

Supervision Received and Exercised

- An at-will position that answers to the Fire Chief.
- Manages programs and supervises personnel on the emergency scene and during routine training.

Education and Experience Requirements

- A minimum of seven years of progressively responsible full time employment with a fire/EMS organization that provides services similar to Smith Valley Fire Protection District with three years at Captain or higher.
- Experience with a volunteer or combination service
- AA Degree in Fire Science
- NFPA Fire Officer I
- NFPA Fire Instructor I
- Current CPR certification
- Nevada EMT Basic or ability to obtain within one year of employment
- Nevada EMT Instructor or ability to obtain within one year of employment
- Must live within the boundaries of Smith Valley Fire Protection District

- Experience in ambulance operations
- Experience in wildland firefighting
- Experience in structural firefighting
- Experience in fire code enforcement
- Valid Nevada Drivers License, Class B w/ F endorsement or higher, or other state equivalent; or ability to obtain within six (6) months of employment

Desired Qualifications

- Fire Officer II or higher
- Fire Instructor II or higher
- Bachelor's Degree in Fire Administration, Public Administration, or related field.