

**CONDUCTING AN EFFECTIVE
CITIZEN SURVEY**

Strategic Management of Change

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**An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy as part of the
Executive Fire Officer Program**

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ABSTRACT

The problem was that the district desired to solicit public input into a comprehensive plan review process. The purpose of this research project was to develop an effective citizen survey which could collect the opinions of a randomly selected group on specific topics. This study used a descriptive research methodology.

The research questions were:

1. Can the district effectively utilize a customer service survey to validate customer satisfaction?
2. Can a survey be developed which will demonstrate the public's willingness to support potential future capital improvement issues?
3. Can a customer service survey be utilized to inform the public about selected services offered through the fire district?

The procedure involved the creation of a citizen survey with subsequent analysis of the data. Surveys were developed and sent to 500 randomly selected registered voters. One hundred sixty-seven responses were received within a two-week time frame.

Surveys were tallied and entered into a database. A Chi Square analysis was performed to determine if the responses on certain questions may have been affected by demographic makeup.

The results of the survey indicated 72% of the respondents rated the overall quality of service as excellent, with an additional 21% rating the quality as good. Seventy-one percent of the respondents indicated they were willing to pay for decreased response times in the form of apparatus purchases and facilities upgrades through a capital improvement issue. Questions relating to services provided by the district indicate a need to educate the public on the need to conduct pre-incident planning; no fee when offered Public Education classes; and respondents understood the need to conduct Fire Code inspections, although there is some difference of opinion as to which type of occupancies require this action.

The recommendation was that fire service organizations institute the use of citizens surveys as part of any future planning process.

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INTRODUCTION

The District desired to expand public input into a comprehensive plan review process. The purpose of this research project was to develop an effective citizen survey which could collect the opinions of a randomly selected group on specific topics. This Applied Research Project uses a descriptive research methodology. The research questions are:

1. Can the district effectively utilize a customer service survey to validate customer satisfaction?
2. Can a survey be developed which will demonstrate the public's willingness to support potential future capital improvement issues?
3. Can a customer service survey be utilized to inform the public about selected services offered through the fire district?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

During the spring of 1992, Spokane County Fire District No.4 conducted the District's first comprehensive planning process. This process was facilitated by an outside contractor and stressed public input through the use of a community focus group. This handpicked focus group reviewed the District's present condition/situation by functional areas. The findings of this community focus group were forwarded to the District's Board of Commissioners for review and acceptance at their discretion. This process brought together firefighters, citizens and the Board of Commissioners for the common cause of setting direction for the District's future. This project provided the blue print utilized to successfully pass the District's first capital improvement bond issue in 1993.

This bond issue allowed the District to replace three (3) inadequate fire stations and 12 pieces of outdated apparatus. Five years later, the District found itself in the position to review the outcomes of the 1992 planning document.

Prior to beginning the review process, it was determined that the District desired to expand the scope of citizen involvement in the planning process. The 1992 citizen focus group, although effective, lacked the depth of citizen input the District desired. The selection of the 1992 citizen focus group did not represent a true cross section of our communities. We decided a citizen survey designed to collect a certain population's view on fire district topics and issues should be developed. Surveys are the most common method of gathering qualitative

and quantitative data (Zikmund, 1994).

The significance of this research to the National Fire Academy is twofold. First, this study provides a model of conducting customer service surveys which may be utilized by present or future Executive Fire Officer students. Second, the findings of the survey may be utilized by present or future students conducting research on a specific topic area(s) related to the survey's findings.

This applied research project is related to Strategic Management of Change Module Four Leading Change using the Change Management Model. As stated in the text, no change in any organization will survive for long unless it improves the product or service for the consumer. In an industry as open to the public eye as the fire service, any major change must be positively perceived by the taxpayer in order to avoid potential political and economic fallout (NFA, 1996). Economic factors which will increase citizen demand for higher service standards and more strict budget accountability are affecting community expectations (Bruegman, 1991).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer support and approval can be tied to a simple adage learned early by corporate America, "give the customers what they want." No change in any organization will survive for long unless it improves the product or service for the consumer (NFPA, 1996). Governments in the state of Washington by no means have evaded the declining confidence in government. The mood of Washington polls revealed that only 32 percent of those polled expressed satisfaction with the way government works, and only 34 percent agreed that they "have a real say" with what government does. Seventy-two percent agreed that they were frustrated with the way government works (Paulson, 1996). Some degree of this is attributed to complex regulations and the rapid growth of government, which to many seems faceless (Municipal League, 1992). As our population and government agencies grow in size, the citizen's representatives in government begin to seem less accessible, less accountable and less in tune with the needs of all groups they are expected to represent.

As government agencies, we must focus on how to draw people into caring about their community. Citizen involvement is essential for tasks such as developing a vision for the community's future (Miller, 1996). This can be accomplished by helping citizens to recognize common values and the develop the commitment to each other's welfare. Citizens are more inclined to become involved in the process if they feel their efforts will meet their long term interests. Once an agency commits to involving its citizens in the process, a suitable vehicle

must be created to stay in touch with and involve the affected citizen group (Paulson, 1996). As part of our agency's commitment to involve and inform the public, the District chose to utilize a citizen survey to solicit input and direction.

Surveys are the most common method of gathering qualitative and quantitative data (Zikmund, 1994). This form of data collection is quick, relatively inexpensive, efficient and an accurate means of collecting a certain population's views on decided upon topics. Providing that a random sample of a population is taken and a representative amount of those chosen respond to the survey in a truthful manner, surveys can be considered the best way to determine an overall attitude of a group (Zikmund, 1994).

Before composing a survey instrument, three major factors must be considered:

- What questions need to be asked?
- What issues need to be addressed?
- Who is the population that is going to be surveyed? (Hanke, 1998)

Survey composition can best be summed up with the phrase "the shorter, the better." When possible, a survey instrument should not be more than one page front and back. The longer the survey, the lower the response rate (Hanke, 1998).

With a population of 13,507 registered voters, a random sampling approach to this appears to be appropriate. A survey sampling must remain random or the validity survey is lost (Zikmund, 1994).

Once designed, the surveys were mailed with a cover letter to the selected individuals. When conducting mail surveys, it is important to pay attention to small details to improve response rates. Signed personalized letters with a self-addressed stamped envelope are vital to most mailings (DSS, 1998).

Persons conducting surveys are often surprised by lower than expected return rates. Mail response rates of 1% to 2% can mean a highly successful mailing for some credit card offers. Surveys covering high involvement products or socially relevant issues typically have response rates of 30 to 35% (DDS, 1998).

Once returned, survey results need to be tabulated and responses entered into a database. As a method of validation, a comparison needs to be conducted to determine if the feelings on certain subjects are different due to differing demographic groups (gender, age and income) (Hanke, 1998).

Practical application of the response data developed by the survey is the key to providing assurance to the public that government agencies are listening. Our customers have special needs that they will be happy to tell us about if we will only ask and show the willingness to listen (Templeton, 1996).

In summary, a review of the literature review supports the process we utilized to complete this random survey. Additionally, the survey supports our organization's belief in the need for citizen involvement in setting organizational goals and priorities. Polls paint a grim picture of citizen understanding and trust of government as a whole. Processes such as this survey must be completed in a professional manner with tangible communicated outcomes to those we serve.

PROCEDURES

The research procedures used in preparing this paper consisted of literature reviews conducted in three locations: Learning Resource Center of the National Emergency Training Center, Spokane County Library System and via internet access during the months of March, April and May of 1998.

Personal interviews were conducted with John Hank, a Research Methods Instructor at Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Washington in May and June of 1998.

In May of 1998, Spokane County Fire District No.4 performed a citizen survey as part of a comprehensive plan review process (Appendix A). The need for a survey became apparent during three focus group meetings involving Fire Captains, Volunteer Firefighters and a citizen's group. The following is a summary of the survey procedure. An illustration of this process is shown as Appendix B.

Survey Purpose

Before performing a survey, the purpose and objective must be defined. This is usually determined through focus groups, interviews, meetings, or other similarly formatted gatherings to determine the questions or problem that are weighing heavily on the organization. The objectives for the citizen survey were:

- To gather information from a wide variety of the citizen constituents of the fire district.
- To determine the likelihood of a passing vote on possible bond issues.
- To inform the community about services that are offered through the fire district.

Survey Preparation

Before composing a survey instrument, three major factors must be considered.

- What questions need to be asked?
- What issues need to be addressed?

For Fire District No.4, three issues stood out:

- 1) Customer or citizen satisfaction with current response times.
 - 2) Likelihood that a bond issue would be passed for the purpose of purchasing needed apparatus and building new stations.
 - 3) Which current services provided by Fire District No.4 are useful and should be continued, and for what price.
- Who is the population that is going to be surveyed? For the purpose of this project, a voter registration list of the District's 13,507 registered voters was utilized. This type of random sample taken from a voter registration list usually produces a 15% -20% response rate. Some local citizens are highly involved in community processes; however, an equal or greater amount keep to themselves. Given this fact and that the issues were considered only moderately controversial, we believed the response rate to this survey would be within the normal of 15% - 20%.

Based upon these factors Professor Hanke suggested mailing 500 surveys to obtain 100 responses, or a 20% response rate (Hanke, 1998).

Random Sampling

To ensure randomness for this survey, all 13,507 voters were given an equal opportunity of being chosen for the survey. To choose 500 people, the number of desired people (500) was divided into the total number of the population (13,507) – $13,507/500 = 27$, To give everyone an equal opportunity, slips of paper, numbered one through 27, were placed in a bowl, mixed up and one number was drawn. That number was counted out beginning at the top of the list. The person who represented that number from the top of the list was the first recipient of the survey. From that name, 27 people were counted to get to the next name. This process continued until 500 people had been chosen.

Mailing the Survey

The survey was prepared on plain white paper with Spokane County Fire Protection District No. 4 as the heading. The survey, along with a cover letter signed by the Board of Commissioners and a self addressed, stamped envelope, was enclosed in district stationery. A deadline of two weeks was imposed to keep the project on track.

Citizen Response

One hundred sixty-seven responses were received within the deadline time frame. This equates to a 33% response rate.

Survey Tally and Analysis

The surveys were tallied and counted by hand and entered into a database. Totals were calculated and where applicable, percentages of total respondents were tabulated. Comparisons were made for differing demographic groups (gender, age and income), to determine if the feelings on certain subjects were different due to any of these factors. A chi square analysis was performed to detect any significance between the demographic factors and their answers to specific questions.

Application of Data

The application of the data is an ongoing process. The survey's findings were the primary subject of the District's Fall 1998 public newsletter, which is sent to every household in the District (Appendix C). Additionally, survey findings became key components of the District revised comprehensive plan in November of 1998.

Limitations and Assumptions

It was assumed that all persons who responded to the survey answered the questions truthfully. Additionally, it was assumed they understood the questions in the survey. Neither of these assumptions could be validated, although the answers to question #3 lead us to believe that it was poorly worded and/or misunderstood. The validity of the voters registration list comes into question, given that fifteen of the 500 randomly selected survey recipients envelopes were returned with no forwarding address. The survey was limited to a random sampling rather than attempting to contact 100% of the registered voters due to financial and time constraints.

Definitions

Chi Square – Mathematical equation to test differences between proportions.

RESULTS

Research Question One was:

Can the district effectively utilize a customer service survey to validate customer satisfaction?

Questions 4, 5 and 6 of the citizen survey provide information relating to customer satisfaction.

4) Have you, or someone you know, been served by Fire District No.4 in the last three years?

Yes	37%
No	62%

If yes, please check all that apply:

Emergency Residence	64%	Public Events	11%
Emergency Business	1%	Schools	7%
Responding to request for other assistance	6%	Investigation	2%
Inspection, Code Enforcement, Plan Review	1%	Other	6%

5) Please rate the overall quality of service provided in question 4 above.

Poor	0%
Fair	5%
Good	21%
Excellent	72%
No Opinion	2%

6) Please refer to the services listed in question 4. As a taxpayer, you pay for these services. Do you feel you are getting your money's worth?

Yes	66%
Partially	13%
No	3%
No Opinion	17%

These questions provide the following feedback and results related to research Question One:

- 37% of the respondents have or know someone who has received service from Fire District No. 4 within the last three years.
- 64% of the respondents have been or know someone who has received service from Fire District 4

in the residence on an emergency basis.

- 72% of the respondents rate the overall quality of service provided by Fire District No.4 as excellent.
- 66% of the respondents feel they are getting their money's worth with the services that Fire District No.4 provides.
- 17% had no opinion to this question.

These results indicate that a customer service survey can be utilized as an effective tool to measure customer satisfaction if the responses to these questions fall within an acceptable perimeter for the organization. In the case of this study, the Board of Commissioners felt the answers to these questions substantiate a positive customer satisfaction rate.

Research Question Two:

Can a survey be developed which will demonstrate through feedback the public's willingness to support potential future capital improvement issues?

Questions 7 and 8 of the citizen survey provide information relating to the public's willingness to support improvement issues.

7) Would you be willing to pay more for increased levels of service?

Yes	6%
Yes, with justification	56%
Probably not	27%
Absolutely not	10%

8) Lowering the response times (for example reaching an emergency in 10 minutes versus 20 minutes) in some areas within the fire district could require the purchase of additional equipment or construction of a new station. Would you be willing to pay for increased response capability?

Yes	7%
Yes, with justification	64%
Probably not	19%
Absolutely not	8%

These questions provide the following feedback related to Research Question Two:

- 62% of the respondents are willing to pay for increased levels of service.
- 56% of the 62% require appropriate justification.

- 71% of the respondents are willing to pay for decreased response times in the form of additional equipment or a new station. It is key to recognize that 64% of the respondents require some form of justification.

These responses indicate a willingness to financially support improvements to the delivery system if such improvements can be justified to the taxpayer.

Research Question Three was:

Can a customer service survey be utilized to inform the public about selected services offered through the fire district?

Survey questions 11,12 and 13 were designed to solicit public input into present or potential future services outside of emergency response which are, or may be provided by the District.

11) Which of the following emergency medical education and training opportunities should the District provide to the public?

<u>No Fee</u>		<u>Fee</u>	
CPR	66%	CPR	29%
First Aid	51%	First Aid	35% None 11%
Safety Classes for baby sitters and mothers	47%	Safety classes for baby sitters and mothers	27%

12) Fire Code inspections should be conducted by the District (Please check one):

- 33% Annually for Schools, Health Care Facilities and Nursing Homes.
- 7% Annually for all Commercial Occupancy Structures
- 3% Annually for all Commercial and Residential Structures
- 12% As requested Residential Inspections and High Risk Areas
- 47% Annually for Schools, Health Care Facilities, Nursing Homes, Commercial Occupancies; as requested Residential Structures and High Risk Areas.
- 4% Not at all.

13) Prior planning and prevention education for fire and emergency medical incidents should occur (Please check one):

- 13% All High Risk Occupancies.
- 19% All High and Medium Risk Occupancies.
- 11% All Structures and Occupancies.
- 39% District not required to do so.

These questions provide the following feedback related to Research Question Three:

- When providing training opportunities, the majority of respondents feel that classes offered should be for no fee.
- Nearly half the respondents feel that inspections ought to be annually performed in specific occupancies.
- Thirty-nine percent of the respondents see no need for providing prior planning of occupancies for emergency response.

These results offer direction in three specific areas:

- A) When offered, classes should be offered at no fee.
- B) Respondents understand a need to conduct Fire Code Inspections annually, although there is some question about which occupancies need to be covered by the program.
- C) Prior to conducting preplanning programs, the public needs additional education and justification as to the need for these programs.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if a citizen survey could be utilized to effectively solicit public input in the planning process. The answer is yes and no.

This customer service survey validated customer satisfaction. Ninety-three percent of the respondents felt that the quality of service they received from Fire District No. 4 was Good (21%) or Excellent (72%). No one felt that the service was poor.

Sixty-six percent of the respondents felt they were getting their money's worth from Fire District No. 4. The mood of Washington polls revealed that only 32% of those polled expressed satisfaction with the way government works (Paulson, 1996).

When exploring the public's willingness to support future capital improvement issues, the need for justification became very apparent. Sixty-two percent of the respondents are willing to pay for increased levels of service, with 56% needing justification. Decreasing response times through the addition of new equipment and stations was favored by 71% of the respondents, with 64% needing justification.

The need for information by the respondents prior to approval is apparent by the wording of these two questions. Question 7 simply asked the question (would you be willing to pay more for increased levels of

service?). Question 8 (with a 9% higher approval rate) was a detailed explanation of the need for such improvement, which demonstrates the respondents need for justification.

Customer service surveys can be utilized to inform the public about selected service offered through the fire district, provided the questions are properly worded. Unfortunately, our survey did not adequately address this research question. The wording of Questions 11, 12 and 13 were targeted to assist the district in determining what services need to be offered with limited success.

This study's outcome has provided three specific organizational implications. First, it has validated a long-held belief that the public feels they are receiving excellent quality service. Second, with justification, the public indicated they would support capital improvements if these improvements can be justified. Third, the Board of Commissioners have created two organizational goals based upon this survey: 1) Conduct a capital needs assessment; and 2) establish response time criteria for all four (4) demographic areas (urban, suburban, rural and wilderness).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the use of effective citizen surveys, government entities can determine citizen support and service expectations. Citizen surveys are an effective means to communicate with the public in an era that is marked by a lack of citizen involvement. The greatest strength of a citizen survey is they have the potential to sample the viewpoints of all citizens—not simply those who choose to participate (Streib, 1990). Conversely, citizen expectations may not align with the beliefs / direction of the political entity. If the organization is not willing to live with the answer, they may not want to ask the question.

Based upon the results of the study, it is recommended that fire service organizations institute the use of citizen surveys as part of any future planning process. Additionally, citizen surveys, if properly worded, can be utilized to examine citizen opinions on various community issues as they become part of our ever-changing environment.

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APPENDIX A

SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 4

CITIZEN SURVEY

1. (Optional) Name: _____

Address: _____

2. In which type of area do you live?

- Urban (More than one home/business, etc. per acre)
- Suburban (home/business, etc. on one to five acre parcel)
- Rural (Parcel of land greater than five acres with public access roads)
- Wilderness (rural undeveloped area without public access roads)

3. Your nearest fire station number or location (if known): _____

4. Have you, or someone you know, been served by Fire District No. 4 in the last three years?

Yes No (If no, skip to question 6)

If yes, please check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Response at Residence | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Events (fairs, presentations, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Response at Place of Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to Request for Other Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Investigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspection, Code Enforcement, Plan Review | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

5. Please rate the overall quality of service provided in question 4 above. (please check one)

Poor Fair Good Excellent No Opinion

Comment: _____

6. Please refer to the services listed in question 4. As a taxpayer, you pay for these services. Do you feel you are getting your money's worth?

Yes Partially No No Opinion

Comment: _____

7. Would you be willing to pay more for increased levels of service?

Yes Yes, with appropriate justification Probably not Absolutely not

Comment: _____

8. Lowering the response times (for example, reaching an emergency in 10 mins. versus 20 mins.) in some areas within the fire district could require the purchase of additional equipment or construction of a new fire station. Would you be willing to pay for the increased response capability? Please check one.

- Yes
 Yes, with appropriate justification
 Probably not
 Absolutely not

Comment: _____

9. In your opinion — what amount of time is it reasonable to expect Fire District No. 4 to provide fire and emergency medical response within each area listed below? Please check one for each area.

	<u>7 min. or less</u>	<u>10 min.</u>	<u>20 min.</u>	<u>30+ min.</u>
Urban Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suburban Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wilderness Areas		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment: _____

10. Transportation by ambulance, when required in a medical emergency, is presently provided by contract with a local ambulance service. Please indicate your preference as stated below. Please check one.

- I prefer the District to provide its own internal ambulance service.
 I prefer the District contract for the ambulance service from an external contractor.
 I prefer the most cost effective solution, whether it be internal or external.

Comment: _____

11. Which of the following emergency medical education and training opportunities should the District provide to the public? Please check all that apply.

- CPR training at no fee
 Basic First Aid at no fee
 Safety classes for babysitters and new mothers at no fee
 CPR training for a fee
 Basic First Aid for a fee
 Safety classes for babysitters and new mothers for a fee
 No training classes, but do provide contact information for classes given outside the District

Comment: _____

12. Fire code inspections should be conducted by the District (Please check one):

- a. Annually for all schools, health care facilities, and nursing homes
- b. Annually for all commercial occupancy structures
- c. Annually for all commercial and residential structures
- d. As requested residential inspections and high-risk areas
- e. a, b, and d above
- f. Not at all

Comment: _____

13. Prior planning and prevention education for fire and emergency medical incidents should occur (Please check one):

- For all high-risk (risk determined by the District) occupancy situations
- For all high- and medium-risk occupancy situations
- For all structures and occupancy situations
- District should not be required to do this. It is the responsibility of the occupants.

Comment: _____

14. What is your age?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 - 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 + |

15. What is your gender?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Female |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|

16. What is the combined level of income for your household?

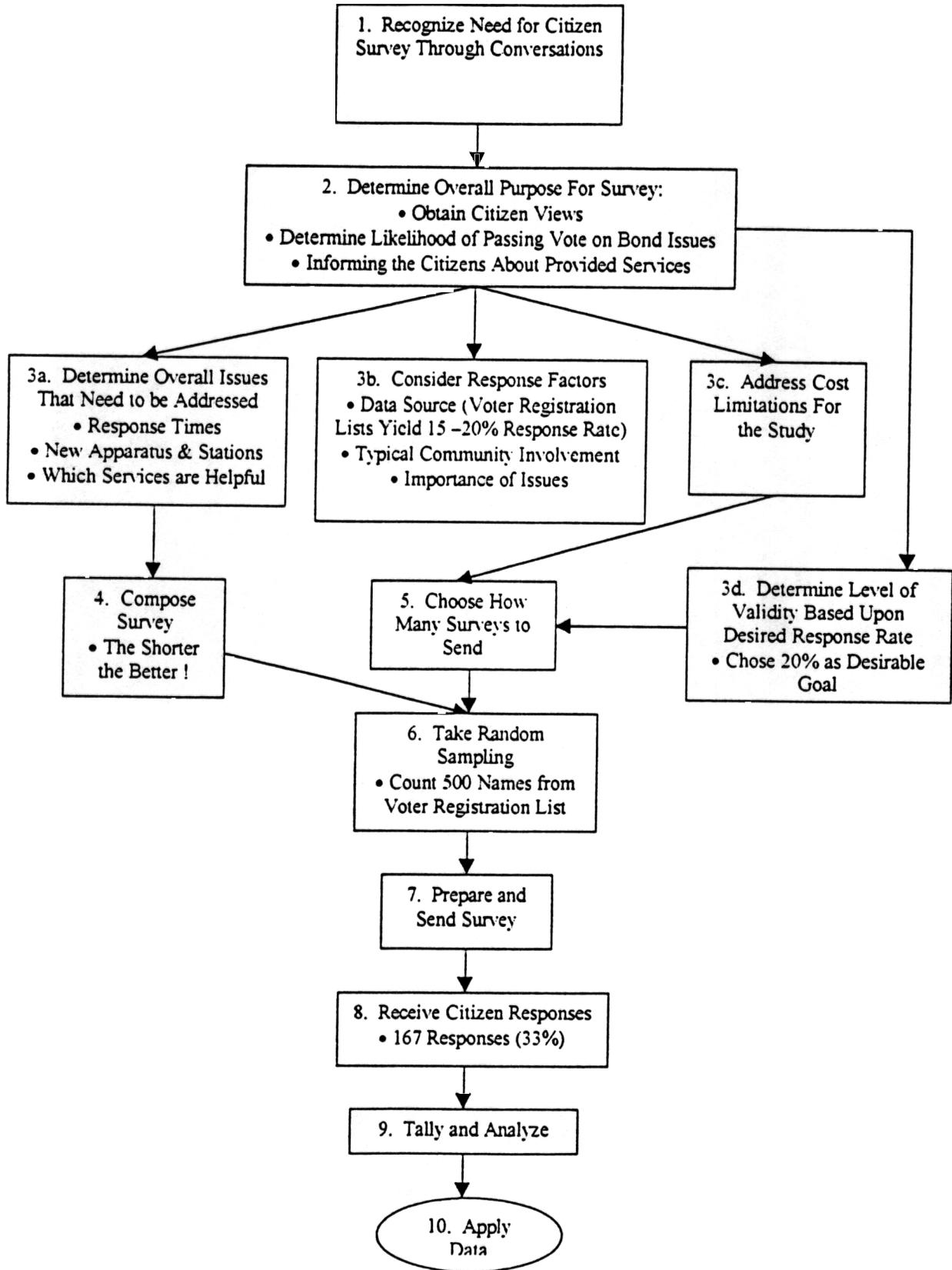
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$20,000/yr. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,001 - \$80,000/yr. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,001 - \$40,000/yr. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,001 - \$99,999/yr. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,001 - \$60,000/yr. | <input type="checkbox"/> Over \$100,000/yr. |

Thank you very much for your time and assistance. Please send your response to Haupt Management Consultants, L.L.C. in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF CITIZEN SURVEY PROCESS

Spokane County Fire Protection District # 4



APPENDIX C



DISTRICT 4 DISPATCH

ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER

A publication designed to keep you informed on your local fire department-Proudly serving the communities of North Mead, Mt. Spokane, Green Bluff, Colbert, Chattaroy, Riverside, Elk, Deer Park, Wild Rose, and Wayside.



A Message From The Chief

In the previous issue of District 4 Dispatch, I discussed our organization's desire to deliver a level of service which matches our citizens expectations.

As part of a recent Comprehensive Plan Review, the Board of Commissioners, with the assistance of a Citizen Focus Group, created a community survey instrument. Once developed, the survey was mailed to 500 randomly selected registered voters in an effort to obtain clarification on what level of service you expect from the Fire District. A return rate of nearly 35% of these surveys indicates a strong interest in Fire District issues. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who filled out the surveys. On Pages 1 and 2 of this newsletter, we will share a portion of the results obtained from this document. Survey findings will be utilized by our Board of Commissioners and staff as we establish future goals for the direction of Spokane County Fire District 4.

If you are interested in further information on this survey, please give me a call.

Getting Money's Worth

Yes	66%
Partially	13%
No	3%
No Opinion	17%

Conclusion: 66% of the respondents (two-thirds) feel as if they are getting their money's worth with the services that Fire District #4 provides. 17% have no opinion.



Citizen Survey Results

Who Responded to Our Survey?

Age of Respondents

18-24	5%
25-34	12%
35-44	26%
45-54	26%
55-64	16%
65+	13%

Conclusion: 52% (over half) of the respondents are between the ages of 35-54.



Gender of Respondents

Male	47%
Female	53%

Conclusion: There was a good representation of both males and females in this survey, approximately half of each.

Combined Level of Income

<\$20,000/yr.	10%
\$20,001 - \$40,000/yr.	21%
\$40,001 - \$60,000/yr.	32%
\$60,001 - \$80,000/yr.	18%
\$80,001 - \$99,999/yr.	11%
>\$100,000/yr.	9%

Conclusion: 32% of the respondents have a combined family income of \$40,001 - \$60,000/yr.

Where The Respondents Live

Urban	19%
Suburban	36%
Rural	43%
Wilderness	2%

Conclusion: 79% of the respondents are either from Suburban or Rural Neighborhoods. These are the most populated areas within District #4, therefore, it makes sense that these would be the largest respondent groups.

Survey Results Continued Next Page

Citizen Survey Results

(Continued)

Level of Service Questions

Reasonable Response Times

Urban		Suburban	
7 min.	77%	7 min.	31%
10	22%	10	62%
20	1%	20	6%
30	1%	30	1%
Rural		Wilderness	
7 min.	5%	7 min.	2%
10	50%	10	13%
20	41%	20	33%
30	3%	30	52%

Conclusion: The respondents feel that the most reasonable response times for each area are:

Urban	7 min.
Suburban	10 min.
Rural	10 to 20 min.
Wilderness	30+ min.

The respondents' expectations appear to be in line with the response times that the Fire District is trying to maintain.

Previously Received Services

Yes	37%
No	62%

Conclusion: 37% of the respondents have had some contact with the Fire District in the last three years.



Perceived Quality of Service in Reference to Previous Service

Poor	0%
Fair	5%
Good	21%
Excellent	72%
No Opinion	2%

Conclusion: 93% of the respondents feel that the quality of service they received from Fire District #4 was Good (21%) or Excellent (72%). No one felt that the service was poor.

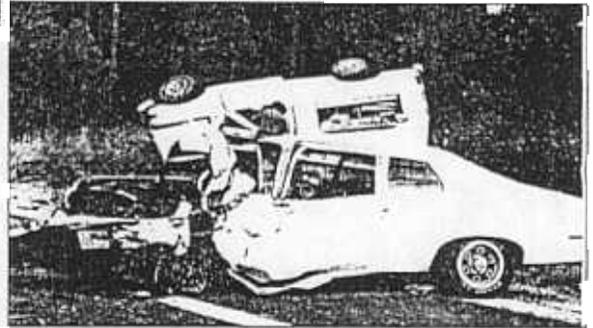
Would You Be Willing To Pay For Increased Levels of Service?

Yes	7%
Yes with justification	64%
Probably Not	27%
Absolutely Not	8%

Conclusion: 71% of the respondents are willing to pay for decreased response times in the form of additional equipment or a new station. 64% require appropriate justification. 27% say they do not wish to pay for decreased response times.

Yes	6%
Yes with justification	56%
Probably Not	27%
Absolutely Not	10%

Conclusion: 62% of the respondents are willing to pay for increased levels of service. 56% require appropriate justification. 37% say they do not wish to pay for increases in service.



Cost of Doing Business

Fire District 4's ability to provide service is governed by two primary components: Human Resources to provide service, and a stable funding source. Fire District 4 is funded primarily by property taxes. Current Annual Maintenance and Operation tax levies provide the funding necessary to support the existing fire and emergency medical services provided by the organization. The amount of revenue obtained from regular and EMS levies for 1998 is:

Regular Tax Collection \$1,457,088 * (1.50 per thousand of assessed value)

EMS Levy \$ 232,302 * (.25 per thousand of assessed value)

*\$174,406 is collected by Contract For Services with the City of Deer Park at the same regular tax collection and EMS levy rates as county residents.

What are the funds used for?

Ø Costs associated with responding to nearly 1,500 emergencies annually (i.e. fuel, medical supplies, hose, etc...).



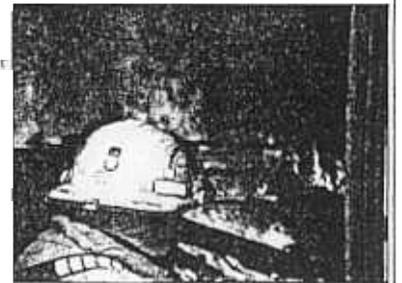
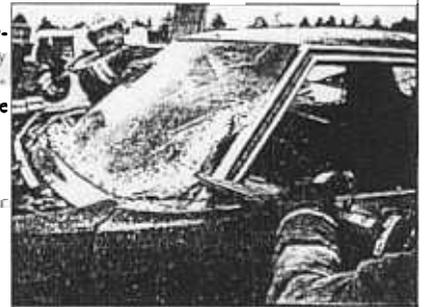
Ø Maintaining the Fire District's nine fire stations and three support facilities.

Ø Fire, emergency medical, and rescue training programs for response personnel.

Ø Maintaining over 40 emergency response vehicles.

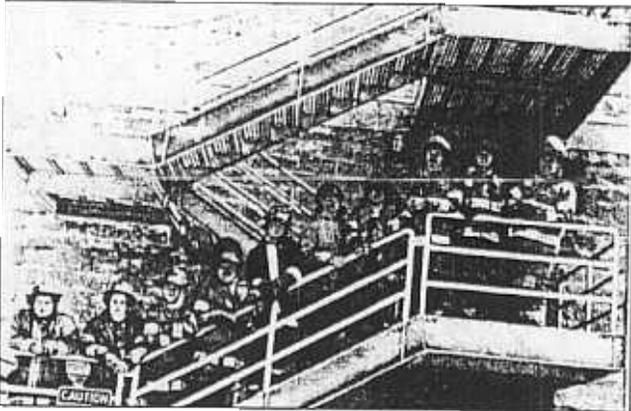
Ø Costs associated with staffing a combination department of 13 career and 192 volunteer personnel (i.e. wages, reimbursement of volunteers etc...).

Ø Cost to provide Education and Prevention programs (i.e. handout materials, EDITH trailer rental etc...).



Our People - A Winning "Combination"

Fire Districts have several different ways of providing staffing for the delivery of emergency services. The three most common methods are all paid personnel, all volunteer personnel and a combination of paid and volunteer personnel. In Fire District 4, we have chosen the combination department to provide the most efficient service we can. Our personnel blend together to form a Fire District of emergency services professionals dedicated to serving you. Let's look at the personnel that are members of our Fire District.



"Our personnel blend together to form a Fire District of emergency services professionals dedicated to serving you."

VOLUNTEER STAFF

These people are the core of our organization. They are comprised of one hundred fifty-eight (158) men and women who live and work in your neighborhood. These men and women wear pagers and, when available, go to the fire station when their pager goes off. Many of these firefighters live close to their fire stations and are able to get to the station and respond on the emergency apparatus within minutes of receiving the incident information. These dedicated personnel spend many hours away from their family performing valuable services for the community. Initial and on-going training takes up many hours and requires a huge commitment from the volunteer and his or her family. Our volunteer officers and committee members dedicate additional hours assisting us in the management and operation of the District. Finally, incident response requires a high level of dedication as they can happen any time, day or night. Meals with the family, holidays, birthdays and sleep can often be interrupted by an incident alarm.

STATION RESIDENTS

These young men and women live in two of our Fire Stations (Station 41 in Deer Park and Station 44 in Colbert). Every weeknight and weekend, one resident at each station is on-shift to perform the day-to-day station duties that ensure our two busiest stations are ready to respond. These resident firefighters are required to respond to alarms when they are on-shift and can also respond when they are off-shift in the station. Many of our residents are graduates or students of the Spokane Community College Fire Science degree program.

PAID STAFF

Fire District #4 has a paid response staff of twelve personnel. Currently, we have eight full-time and four part-time response personnel. These personnel staff two stations (Station 41 in Deer Park and Station 44 in Colbert) and our Administrative Office (in Deer Park) from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Our paid staff provides two important components of our service. First, they provide emergency response during the time period many of our volunteer's work. Secondly, they administrate many of the programs that make our District successful. These programs include Training, Emergency Medical Services, Community Education, Fire Prevention/Inspections, Hose Testing and Hydrant Testing. The Fire Chief and two Deputy Chiefs provide overall guidance, response command and administration for the District. Additionally, the District employs two full-time mechanics to keep our more than 40 response vehicles maintained, and a full-time facilities maintenance person.

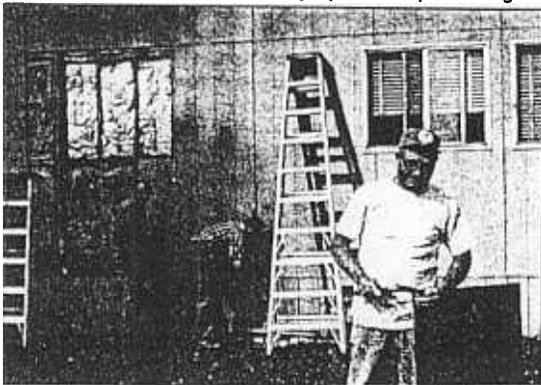


Neighbors Helping Neighbors

SPECIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Even though this group of thirty-four (34) volunteers does not deliver emergency services, they are a critical part of our response group. These men and women provide on-scene support to the response personnel at major incidents. Special Support Services is in charge of the rehabilitation of tired response personnel at the scene. Using our rehab bus, they ensure each firefighter receives adequate rest, food and liquids during incident rehab periods. They also have an administrative branch that assists us with clerical and office duties. This includes the copying and distribution of our monthly in-house newsletter.

As you can see, our combination organization is a blend of talented people who come together to provide professional emergency services to the community. The neat thing about our organization is the fact that there is no change in the response services that the different groups of staff can provide. Our training, operating standards and philosophies are the same throughout our agency. This allows us to provide a seamless, professional service to our citizens. It is our belief that our people make up a winning combination.



Public CPR Class Schedule Expanded

An additional date and location has been added for public CPR classes. Classes will now be offered on the second Wednesday of each month at Station 41 located at 315 E. A Street in Deer Park, and on the last Wednesday of each month at Station 44 located at 17207 N. Highway 2 (across from Cat Tales).

Enrollment for both of these classes is limited to 30 students on a "first come" basis. All classes will begin promptly at 7:00 PM.

For more information contact John Nelson at 238-6870 or 276-3050.



1998 Fall Outdoor Burning Dates

If you live outside the **No Burn Area**, you may burn your yard and garden debris between 9 AM and 5 PM on these dates:

Fall 1998 (5 days)
October 17, 18, 23, 24,
and 25

All burning guidelines
must be followed.

*These dates are subject to change due to weather and/or air quality conditions.

Please Note:

No Burn Area Boundaries have changed!

Please contact SCAPCA at 456-4710 to verify locations and check daily burning conditions.

Exercise
your right to
be heard-
Remember to

Vote

Find us on the Internet at: www.scfd4.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Am I supporting our local firefighters when I buy concert tickets or send in a pledge card as a result of contacts from telephone solicitors?

Unfortunately phone solicitors leave the impression with our citizens that sending contributions or buying concert tickets supports our local efforts to provide you service. This is really not the case. A very small portion of the money you send (the tele-marketer keeps up to 90% for soliciting costs!) is used to support the agenda of the organization soliciting funds. Their agenda may or may not support the philosophy of this organization. We receive no direct benefit from these types of contributions. **Fire District 4 currently does no phone solicitation.**

While visiting relatives in another area I had a heart attack and the local fire department was called to help me. The outcome was successful and I am grateful to all those who cared for me in my time of need. However, I was shocked to receive a bill from the fire department in addition to the bill from the private ambulance company. Does Fire District 4 charge a service fee to non-residents?

Fire District 4 does not charge a fee for providing service at this time. Although charging a fee for service is a funding option available to fire departments, relatively few departments currently assess such a charge. The fact that these departments seek this additional revenue source to fund their operations speaks to the inadequacy of the current property tax-based system to fund their current levels of service. We expect to see considerable debate on this issue in the future.

My neighbor has logged his property and the slash created by the operation has me worried that a fire might start and burn my home. Can the fire department make him clean up the mess?

The jurisdiction for enforcing logging regulations lies with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). We advise you to contact the DNR at (509) 684-7474 and they will assist you in determining whether or not the debris in question meets the definition of an *extreme hazard*. Generally speaking, to meet this standard the debris must be created by a landowner act (ie. logging, thinning). Debris created by *Ice Storm* is an act of nature and does not fall under this enforcement option.

"Where's My Closest Fire Station?"

Station 41- 315 E. A Street	City of Deer Park
Station 42- 3219 E. Chattaroy Rd.	Chattaroy Community
Station 43- 40116 N. Elk-Camden Rd.	Elk Community
Station 44- 17207 N. Highway 2	N. Mead Community
Station 45- 3929 W. Wild Rose Rd.	Wild Rose Prairie Community
Station 46- 35007 N. Highway 2	Riverside Community
Station 47- 9814 E. Green Bluff Rd.	Green Bluff Community
Station 48- 19820 N. Mt Spokane Park Drive	Mt. Spokane Community
Station 49- 1909 W. Monroe Rd.	Wayside Community



To comment on this publication or any of the information featured in this issue please give us a call at (509) 467-4500, write to us at 712N. Cedar Ave., Deer Park WA 99006, Fax us at (509) 276-5060 or E-Mail us from the links on our Home Page.