

Bluffton Township Fire District

Annual Report of Activities

Fiscal Year 2017

(July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017)



Bluffton Township Fire District Board

Mr. Michael Raymond, Board Chairperson
Mr. Joseph Paolo, Vice-Chairperson
Ms. Elaine Lust, Board Treasurer
Mr. Thomas Mike, Board Secretary
Mr. Edwin Olsen
Reverend Paul Hamilton
Mr. Louis Poindexter

Fire Administration

John W. Thompson, Jr., Fire Chief
J. Paul Boulware, Deputy Fire Chief, Administration
Richard Cramer, Deputy Fire Chief, Operations

Integrity – Pride - Professionalism

Introduction

Greetings!

Thank you for reading the 2017 edition of the Bluffton Township Fire District Annual Report of Activities. As the Chairman of the Board and Fire Chief we are honored to be able to provide this report for our citizens. This report along with the District's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) provides detailed insight into the operations and financial status of your fire department.

The Bluffton Township Fire District recognizes and appreciates the strong support it receives from the community. 2017 brought about several accomplishments for the Fire District and we look forward to more to come in 2018. The Fire District continues to adapt its services and capabilities based upon the needs of our ever growing and changing diverse population. There is no end in sight to the current rate of growth the area is witnessing. This situation will continue to impact the way our services are provided and it is our commitment to the public that we will do everything within reason to maintain service levels while limiting cost increases for those services. To do so is requiring us to look at situations in different ways and not always rely on the old adage of "that's the way we've always done it!"

This is where we need you! To be progressive and effective we must hear from our customers. We encourage you to contact us and give us your thoughts. Your comments and ideas will help us to better prepare and adapt to what the community needs, not only today, but into the future. We hope you find the report below interesting and informative and again we say thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Raymond
Fire Board Chairman

John W. Thompson, Jr.
Fire Chief



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Members of the Bluffton Township Fire District Honor Guard participate in a local ceremony. The Honor Guard represented the District at several events during FY 2016.



Bluffton Township Fire District Guiding Documents

Vision Statement

Our vision is to create a model of excellence in fire protection and rescue delivery, to be the leaders in fire protection and rescue for the District and support a customer-directed system to the citizens of our district. We will pursue our vision in partnership with our associates, citizens, and suppliers. We will develop innovative programs and services to benefit our citizens and enhance the overall quality of life in our community.

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Bluffton Township Fire District is to plan, evaluate, and implement a range of programs designed to protect the lives and property of the inhabitants and visitors of the Bluffton Township Fire District from the adverse effects of fires, life threatening medical emergencies, or dangerous conditions created by either man or nature. At Bluffton Township Fire District, we are committed to providing emergency services and rescue for our District in a courteous, cost-effective, and professional manner.

Goals and Objectives

Fire protection and rescue is a dynamic, vital service. It is, therefore, essential that as a fire protection and rescue provider, Bluffton Township Fire District become involved in and committed to planning for the future. As a fire protection and rescue provider, the District must continually be prepared to respond to new regulations, changing technology, and consumer trends.

The following goals and objectives have been identified:

- To provide high quality fire protection and rescue service at a reasonable cost.
- To maintain a reputation for excellence in the fire protection and rescue field.
- To provide a leadership role for fire protection and rescue needs of the community and identify opportunities for growth and service.
- To provide a work environment that offers employees the opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution to fire protection and rescue while earning a fair and equitable wage.
- To provide the staff with an atmosphere, facilities, and services that will stimulate experience in the rendering of fire protection and rescue.
- To seek employees of highest quality and select for employment on the basis of skill, training, ability, attitude, and character.



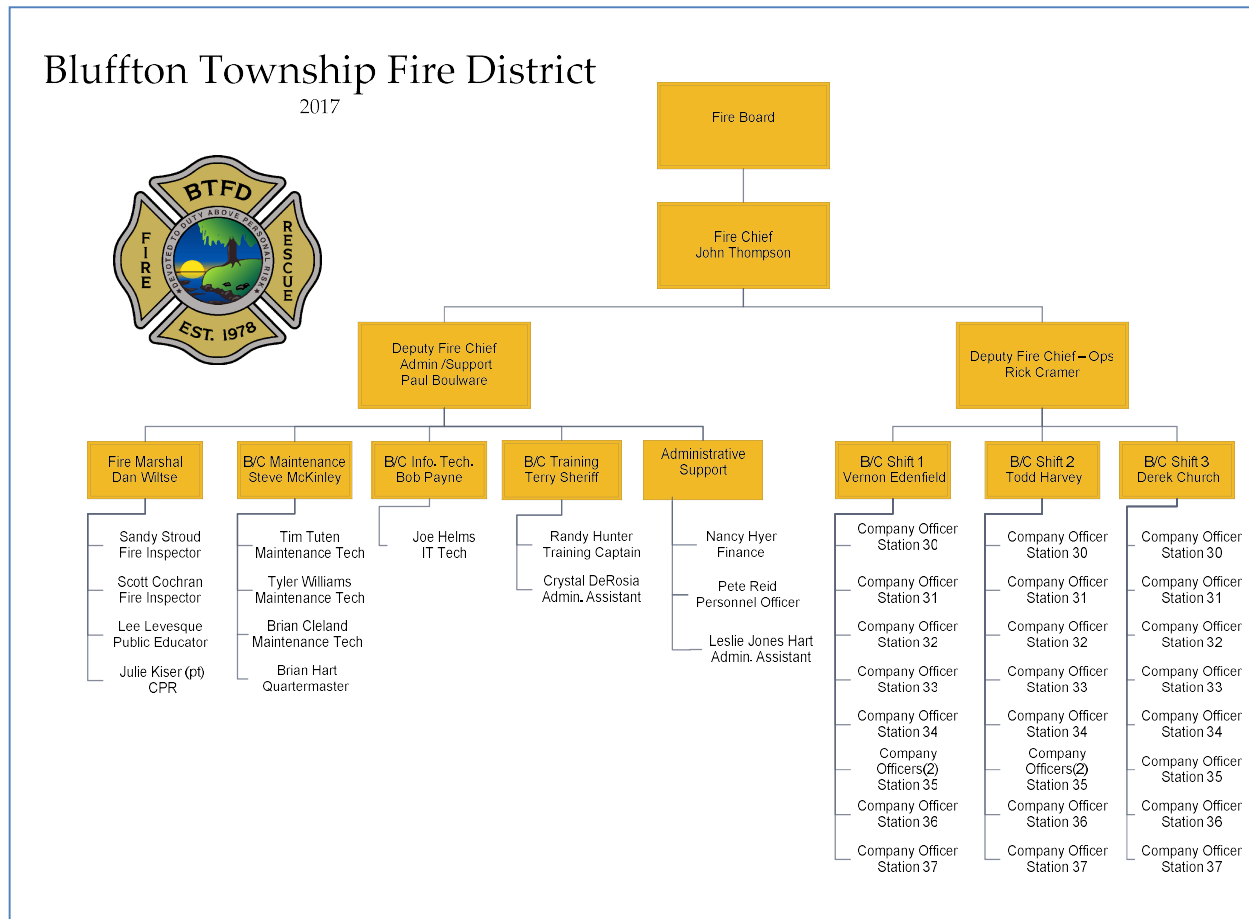
Core Values

Respect	We respect our customers and strive to protect their dignity, choice, and modesty.
Cost	We administer necessary fire protection and rescue services without unnecessary cost to the citizens.
Continuous Improvement	We strive to continuously improve by seeking feedback from our customers, providing fire prevention education, and improving our delivery system through training and professional development.
Leadership	We believe that we must be the leaders in guiding the community toward a fire-free environment.
Service	We maintain an attitude and a commitment of going “above and beyond” in serving our customers.
Trust	We develop a synergistic environment by fostering a climate of trust and cooperation with all team members.
Loyalty	We are loyal to our District and community by word and attitude.



Organizational Structure

The Bluffton Township Fire District is divided into two Divisions, Administration/Support and Operations. The Administration/Support Division provides internal and external services to make certain the members, equipment, and facilities of the fire department are prepared to respond to emergencies any time a call for help is received. The Operations Division provides for the daily response to emergencies and other calls for the service as needed.



Fire Board

The Fire Board is responsible for the general oversight policy of the Fire District. The Fire Board works closely with the Fire Chief and makes recommendations to the County Council on matters such as annual operating budgets, expenditures for equipment, personnel, and facilities, and other business related matters of the Fire District. The Fire Board consists of seven (7) members who are appointed to four (4) year terms by the County Council. There is one member for each of the five (5) County Council Districts within the protection area of the Fire District, one (1) member representing the Town of Bluffton, and one (1) member serving at large.



Bluffton Township Fire District Board Members and Contact Information

Mr. Mike Raymond, Chairman
Representing the Town of Bluffton
Contact: raymond@blufftonfd.com



Mr. Joseph Paolo, Vice Chairman
Representing County Council District 7
Contact: paolo@blufftonfd.com



Ms. Elaine Lust, Treasurer
Representing County Council District 8
Contact: lust@blufftonfd.com



Mr. Thomas Mike, Secretary
Representing County Council District 5
Contact: mike@blufftonfd.com



Mr. Edwin Olsen, Board Member
Representing Unincorporated Bluffton at Large
Contact: olsen@blufftonfd.com



Reverend Paul Hamilton, Board Member
District Lead Chaplain
Representing County Council District 9
Contact: Hamilton@blufftonfd.com



The Fire Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month at Fire & Rescue Headquarters, 357 Fording Island Road, in Okatie. The meetings begin at 4:00 pm and the public is invited to attend and contribute through public comment.

Fire Chief – John Thompson

Contact: Thompson@blufftonfd.com



John W. Thompson, Jr., serves as the Bluffton Fire Chief. The Fire Chief is the executive officer of the fire department and is responsible to make certain the fire department is capable of providing emergency services to meet the needs of the community. The Fire Chief routinely represents the Fire Department at public and community meetings and develops and fosters relationships between the county, Town of Bluffton and neighboring governmental entities in regards to the provision of adequate emergency services. The Fire Chief also develops the members of the fire department to provide a well-trained, qualified, and professional emergency services organization. In doing so, the Fire Chief provides for adequate pay, benefits, and supervision to provide an emergency services force with a positive attitude and good morale. The Fire Chief directly supervises the Administrative Deputy Fire Chief and the Operations Deputy Fire Chief.



Bluffton Township Firefighters make their initial attack on a well involved structure fire. A rapid response and the necessary tools, training and equipment are required to save lives and limit property loss.





Administration/Support Division – Paul Boulware

FY 2017 Operating Budget - \$2,116,330 or 16.6% of the total budget

The Deputy Fire Chief of Administration and Support (DC Admin/Support) is Paul Boulware (boulware@blufftonfd.com). The DC Admin/Support provides direct coordination and support to the functions of finance, vehicle and facility maintenance, training, fire prevention and investigation, information technology, and employee services. These functions all support the mission of the fire department by providing ancillary services that are required to keep operations personnel, facilities, and equipment prepared to provide emergency services 24 hours a day to the citizens of the Fire District.

The overall goals for the Administration/Support Division for 2018 are:

Goal 1 - Manage ongoing construction and infrastructure projects such as Fire Station 36 (Colleton River) which is scheduled for completion in March 2018, Fire Station 38 (Hampton Parkway) which is scheduled to begin construction in the third to fourth quarter of 2018, and Fire Station 32 (Callawassie) renovations which are scheduled to begin in the third quarter of 2018. The projects will be managed efficiently, within budget, and provide value to the District's overall infrastructure for many years to come.

Goal 2 – Review and adjust the District's benefit accrual process to make certain the benefits provided by the District to its employees are timely and cost effective to the taxpayers.

Goal 3 – Implement technical manuals in lieu of lengthy policies and standard operating guidelines where possible.

Goal 4 – Complete the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Process by June 30, 2018.

Goal 5 - Monitor the FY18 budget and strive to minimize expenditures to further grow the operating fund balance.

Goal 6 – Provide quality leadership, mentoring and guidance to all members of the Administration and Support Division.

Finance Department – Ms. Nancy Hyer

The District's financial administrator, Nancy Hyer (Hyer@blufftonfd.com) works closely with the DC Admin/Support in maintaining the financial wellbeing of the District. The DC Admin/Support serves as the District's budget manager and depends on the finance administrator to maintain the necessary records and reports to properly track the progress of the District's four funds: general fund, debt service fund, impact fee fund, and capital projects fund. Finance is also responsible for making certain the



bills of the fire department get paid accurately and in a timely manner.

The finance department was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the seventh consecutive year. The award recognizes the District for its work in providing a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) that meets accounting best practice standards. The latest version of the



CAFR can be found on the District's website at www.blufftonfd.com under the "Financial Reports" tab. In addition, the finance department was recognized by the Fire Board for another successful audit with no areas of improvement needed as reported by the District's independent third party auditing firm. Finance has worked diligently over the last year and greatly increased knowledge and information sharing between the District, the County Treasurer, and the County Finance Officer. This increase in communications has produced several new and very useful reports and tools that better allow the Fire District to track revenues, expenditures, and budget performance.

Over the course of FY2017 the finance department continued to advance the use of sound financial practices in all of its activities and track trends for revenues and expenditures within the fire department in an effort to help the administration make projections for the future. Maintaining close tabs on the finances is not only prudent but is especially important as the population increases so facilities, equipment, and services can be provided to meet the increasing demands of our customers.

Personnel Services Department – Captain Pete Reid

The Personnel Services Department is staffed by Captain Pete Reid. Captain Reid works closely with the Administrative/Support Deputy Chief to administer the human resources (HR) program for the Fire District. The Personnel Services Department was established in April 2016 due to the rapid growth of the Fire District. HR functions had been shared throughout the various offices in the fire department prior to the creation of the personnel department.



Since implementation of the Personnel Services office, employee benefits such as health, dental, and vision insurance have been evaluated and renewed at a significant savings. In addition, Personnel Services has developed a recruitment and retention plan that advances the BTFD Equality and Diversity Strategy as approved by the Fire Board in 2015. Major components of the recruitment plan include a new website devoted directly to the hiring of new personnel (www.joinbtfcd.com) and a new applicant preparation program which helps those interested in employment better understand and complete the written, physical, and interview assessments found in the hiring process. These efforts will continue into FY 2018.



In FY 2017 the Personnel Services department will begin a comprehensive compensation and classification study to assist in the development of a new job classification system, a formal compensation philosophy, a competitive compensation system, and a performance evaluation system for approximately 130 employees within the organization. The last compensation study was conducted in 2013 and market conditions require review every three (3) to five (5) years.

Personnel Services will also reevaluate the suite of insurance products and insurance benefits offered to employees. This allows the District to provide the most cost efficient and effective benefits for its employees. In addition, Personnel Services will be involved with creating a 501c(3) non-profit organization to assist several charitable and public service arms of the BTFD. This new registered non-profit will combine the efforts of the District's Auxiliary, Cooking Team, and Combat Team to provide better exposure and hopefully public funding for the several charities supported by these groups.

Vehicle and Facility Maintenance Battalion (VFM) – Battalion Chief Steve McKinley

The Vehicle and Facility Maintenance Battalion is responsible for maintaining the service and repairs of the District's emergency response fleet, administrative vehicles, 8 district fire stations, emergency standby generators and small engine equipment. This keeps the District's fleet and facilities maintained in a state of readiness second to none and the Firefighters are outfitted with exceptional equipment and gear. This combination ensures a quick response for the citizens of our Fire District with reliable apparatus, equipment and highly trained and outfitted personnel.



The VFM also contracts to provide periodic vehicle maintenance services and repairs for approximately 60 plus vehicles & equipment belonging to the Town of Bluffton and The Bluffton Police Department. The VFM is supervised by the Vehicle and Facility Maintenance Battalion Chief, Steve McKinley (McKinley@blufftonfd.com). The VFM also employes three (3) full-time maintenance technicians and the Quartermaster. The Quartermaster is responsible for ordering, maintaining and delivering all uniforms, station supplies, medical supplies and materials required for the Fire District. The Quartermaster also serves as the initial contact for any station maintenance repair prior to outside vendor contact to help maintain costs and efficiency. The VFM department is also responsible for the District's electronic communications which consist of programming, repairs and maintenance of all mobile and portable radios and interaction with the county's emergency dispatch center. It also encompasses our vehicle Wi-Fi, laptops, mapping and paging systems.

In total the VFM completed 1308 individual work orders during FY17. This is comparable to the number completed in FY16. The VFM also assisted the other Battalions in the District as needed and provided much needed input on several internal committees and boards.

Over the last fiscal year the VFM was involved with the completion of the District's new maintenance & training facilities. The building which is located off of Ulmer Road near the



intersection of Burnt Church Road was completed in September of 2016. The building is approximately 12,000 square feet in floor area and includes three (3) large bays capable of accommodating the District's largest vehicles for service. There are also two smaller bays designed specifically for working on smaller vehicles such as police cars, administrative staff vehicles, and pick-up trucks. The total cost of the project was \$3,000,000.

During Fiscal Year 2017 the VFM department completed its move and transition into the new facility and began to streamline its processes for business to provide increased efficiency to both internal and external customers by bringing all vehicle services and District logistics under one roof. The VFM Division also continued to build its business to other governmental agencies beyond the Town of Bluffton. Beginning in late August 2016 the VFM began servicing vehicles for the Technical College of the Lowcountry's Commercial Driver's Licensing program.

Looking ahead to 2018 the VFM has prepared the following goals and objectives;

Goal 1: Maintenance Technician Intern Program

This program, will involve an agreement between the Bluffton Township Fire District and May River High School's automotive maintenance technician program. The program will begin with one (1) student, and allow them the opportunity to gain knowledge and work experience in the maintenance technician's trade. The intern will get experience working alongside the District's maintenance technicians who are skilled and certified to repair all types of large truck systems, emergency vehicle systems, and passenger automobiles. The program will serve as a component of the pathway for students to find gainful employment after graduation with the Fire District or other vehicle maintenance facilities in the area.

Goal 2: Commercial Driver's License (CDL) - The Maintenance Division is responsible for transporting or delivery of District apparatus to various repair shops when needed. Almost all of the time, it requires us to cross state lines. State vehicle requirements vary from state to state. The District now has 2 aerial devices a water tanker and a fuel tanker. The fuel tanker requires a CDL with tanker and hazmat endorsements. The goal is to have the District maintenance technicians obtain a CDL and any endorsements needed to operate all District apparatus.

Goal 3: Maintenance Division Operational Procedure Manual - With the investment of two new facilities, maintenance and training, and both on a single campus, the daily operations and interaction of both divisions is one that is complex and dynamic. The need to know each division's operational concerns and daily routines is one of the keys to a successful operation. An operational procedure manual that incorporates the divisions' daily operations would not only be helpful and useful tool, it would help the District operate in the event of a void within the operational structure.

Goal 4: Drafting & Pump Testing Prop/Pit - The fire District currently subs out the annual pump test required by NPFA. Now that the District has a facility and campus large enough, we would like to bring our pump testing in house. This would allow us to conduct annual pump



test while the apparatus is in the shop for preventative maintenance. This prop/pit could also be utilized by the training division for drafting and pump operations. One of the largest benefits would be the impact on the water supply from Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority. Once the prop/pit tank has been filled it has an incorporated device for capturing the discharged water allowing for reuse. It would only need the occasional topping off. The VFM will conduct a study during 2018 to evaluate the benefits versus the cost for this project. Currently, money is earmarked in the FY2020 Capital Improvements Program for this project.

Goal 5: Administrative Operations Program - For some time the maintenance division has had the need for administrative assistance. With training and maintenance in the same building, this is now possible. The training and maintenance chiefs along with the training administrative assistant have met and discussed the needs of both divisions and the conclusion was that the training administrative assistant would be able to provide services for both divisions. Over the course of FY2018 additional VFM administrative duties will be assigned to the training administrative assistant. The workload will be carefully evaluated to determine if additional administrative support is needed.

Goal 6: Continue the expansion of vehicle services with promotional media - With our new facility, the maintenance division now has the capability of extending our services to other county & government agencies. One way to promote our services is through different types of media that are available to us. We would like to look into developing a promotional DVD video detailing our available services for other agencies.

Training Battalion – Battalion Chief Terry Sheriff



The Training Battalion is headed by Battalion Chief Terry Sheriff. Chief Sheriff is assisted by Fire Training Captain Randy Hunter and Administrative Assistant Crystal DeRosia-Kaznowski. The Training Division provides and creates training programs as necessary to meet established state and federal mandates each year. The Division is responsible for ensuring that all District members meet the requirements set forth by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Insurance Services Office (ISO), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and internal requirements as determined by the Fire District.

The Training Department is responsible for organizing, designing, implementing, and managing training and employee programs for the Bluffton Township Fire District. The Training Division will strive to provide the highest quality training, instruction, and educational support to our members. This is intended to prepare our Department to serve our community in the most efficient and effective means possible, and to ensure the safety of our personnel and citizens. District Firefighters train an average of two (2) or more hours each shift



day. This does not include countless hours that Training Division staff plans and prepares for the training.

Training also serves as the District's travel agency for those instances in which personnel must travel to training when the needed training cannot be achieved locally. The Training Division also works closely with the Bluffton High School to provide for the training and development of high school students in the area of Emergency and Firefighting Services. This collaborative program is part of the School District's Career and Technical Education (CATE) program. The program provides high school students the ability to obtain national firefighter certifications while still in high school, making them marketable for fire service careers not only with the Fire District but fire departments across the state and nation.

In fiscal year 2017 the Training Division continued to improve service delivery to the community by exploring partnerships with other emergency response agencies, by reviewing job duties of all employees and assessing job performance. This assisted in developing employees where skills and knowledge are lacking. The Training Division will also reviewed its policies and procedures to make certain they are meeting the requirements of the District's overall mission. The Training Division also continued to support effective community outreach and involvement through such programs as CATE, Fire Explorer Post #241, and the District's recruitment and retention plans. These programs

The Training Division will also work to provide and maintain quality training equipment and facilities by completing the construction of the District's new fire training facility on Burnt Church Road. The Training Division will also work toward the implementation of a comprehensive training facility and equipment maintenance plan.

Looking forward to Fiscal Year 2018





Fire Prevention Division – Fire Marshal Dan Wiltse

The Fire Prevention Division is headed by Battalion Chief Dan Wiltse. The remainder of the Division is made up of two Fire Inspectors (Sandy Stroud and Scott Cochran), one Public Education Officer (Lieutenant Lee Levesque) and one CPR Coordinator (Julie Kizer). The overall goal of the Fire Prevention Division is to protect the lives and property of the citizens and visitors of the Bluffton Township Fire District through an active Community Risk Reduction Program (CRR) which includes the use of fire inspections, new and renovation construction plans review, public fire and safety education and fire cause determination.

Fire Inspections/Code Enforcement

The main objective of this task is to gain voluntary compliance with the associated fire codes as adopted by the State of South Carolina. The Fire Inspectors complete annual inspections of all existing commercial properties along with needed follow up inspections. In FY2016, the Fire Prevention Division conducted 2,810 fire and life safety inspections. In addition to these annual inspections, the Division has other duties they are responsible for such as:

- Review of site plans, new construction plans, fire protection system plans and the like.
- Business license inspections as requested by Beaufort County.
- Acceptance testing of new fire protection systems.
- Bi-annual Click2Enter inspections. (Click2Enter is an automated gate controller that allows the District’s vehicles access to gated communities in the event of an emergency)
- Special Events inspections.
- Burn permit issuance (inside the Town of Bluffton).

In addition to these duties, the Fire Inspectors must be certified through the State of South Carolina as Resident Fire Marshals. This also requires annual continuing education through authorized training agencies.

Fire Investigation

The Fire District is authorized by South Carolina State law to investigate all fires to determine the origin and cause of the fire. The Fire District’s Investigation Team consists of the Fire Prevention Division. All Division members are Certified Fire and Explosion Investigators through the National Association of Fire Investigators. The team works with local law enforcement such as the Beaufort County Sheriff’s Department and the Town of Bluffton Police Department as well as South Carolina State Agencies such as the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division’s Arson Investigators in the event of incendiary fires. The Fire Investigation Team completes 40 hours of training per year in accordance with ISO standards.

Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Program

Julie Kizer was hired two years ago to take over as our CPR Coordinator. Julie is responsible for all aspects of CPR instruction and overseeing all of the Fire District’s CPR Instructors. We



currently offer three different CPR courses: BLS for Healthcare Providers, BLS Heartsaver and Friends and Family CPR. In FY2016, Julie taught approximately 1300 students CPR. In addition to these duties, Julie has started a Public Access Defibrillator Program. The purpose of this program is to provide Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public places to decrease the time for a bystander to start providing emergency medical care in the event of sudden cardiac arrest. This program is starting in the Town of Bluffton and will eventually encompass the entire Fire District.

The CPR program will also continue to expand with a goal of training at least 1800 citizens in the use of CPR, automated external defibrillators (AED's), and first aid. The District will also be placing into service its first of approximately 30 community AED's to bolster the program. Placing AED's in community areas makes the life-saving equipment available so bystanders that are trained can begin intervention for those in sudden cardiac arrest while our first responders on the fire engines and ambulances are on the way.

Public Education

The Bluffton Township Fire District accepts life safety education as one of its most important priorities. With that sentiment in mind, every member of the district accepts the responsibility of preventing the emergency before it affects those we protect. To assist our residents in protecting themselves we provide a number of community outreach programs that are tailored to specific audiences, specific community hazards, and the general public at large. In FY2016 The BTFD conducted 472 community outreach programs such as:

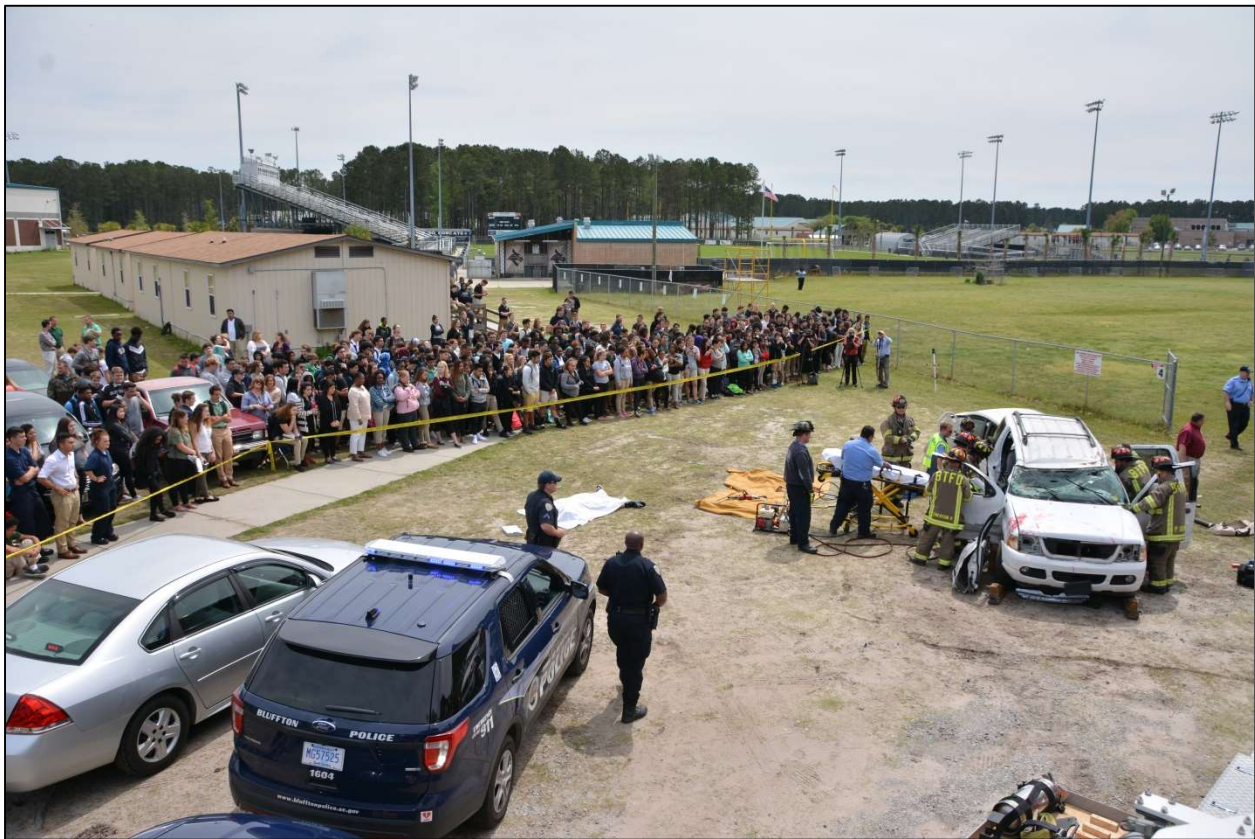


Public Education Officer Lt. Lee Levesque provides a safety lesson to local students at a public education event regarding driving while intoxicated.

- Smoke alarm installation and inspection with 177 smoke alarms installed throughout the District.
- Fire extinguisher inspection and installation with 37 fire extinguishers installed throughout the District.
- Holiday Specific Safety Presentations
- Fall Prevention Presentations
- Home Fire Safety Survey Program
- School Lunch Program
- Prom Promise/Safe Driving Programs
- College Fire Safety Program
- 9-1-1/Smart 9-1-1 Program



In FY 2017 the Fire Prevention Division will enhance the education of its personnel to provide the best possible service to the community. In addition Fire Prevention will help to increase community involvement through the expansion of fire and life safety educational programs throughout the community. This will be accomplished by becoming more involved in local property and homeowners associations as well as rolling out new programs to increase community risk reduction (CRR) awareness.



Bluffton Township firefighters, Bluffton Police officers, and Beaufort County EMS personnel demonstrate extricating patients from a simulated vehicle collision. Each year, the Fire District works with the staff of local schools to provide these demonstrations during the time of most high school proms to reinforce the hazards of drinking and driving. This year's demonstration was a part of the "Prom Promise" program in which students vow not to drink and drive.



Information Technology Division – Battalion Chief Robert Payne



The Information Technology Division (IT) is led by Battalion Chief Robert Payne. Chief Payne is assisted by IT Technician Joe Helms. The IT Division is primarily responsible for the design, procurement, implementation, troubleshooting and maintenance of information-based technological resources within the Bluffton Township Fire District.

During FY 2016 the IT Division completely re-vamped district server functions, replacing one failing server and installing four new servers in its place while at the same time reallocating software responsibilities among the new server groups. IT also redesigned and revamped the 9 local area networks to allow for better service currently as well as to prepare for future needs. IT also participated in twelve district as well as one county-wide emergency communications exercises, the purpose of which was to test emergency communications response to various types of disaster scenarios. In addition, IT was instrumental in the installation and troubleshooting for the new NovaTime time reporting system, which provides automated time clock reporting functions for district employees.

In FY 2017 the IT Division will provide design, procurement, installation, and maintenance services of a new local area network, 16-channel video security monitoring and recording system, a personnel access control system, a video TV distribution system, an intercom/PA system, a classroom projection system, and a classroom teleconferencing system to the new Maintenance/Training facility located off Ulmer Road in Bluffton. In addition, the IT Division will also design, procure, install, and maintain a new video district-wide teleconferencing system in order to replace the old PolyCom video conferencing system which has long ago reached end-of-life and is no longer supported by its original manufacturer.

IT will also design, procure, implement, and train district personnel on the use of an aerial drone surveillance system which will allow district personnel to provide aerial monitoring and investigation of major events (such as structure, brush fires, and hazmat scenes) and to provide limited delivery services of essential life-preserving instruments, medications, and materials to persons who are trapped in remote/hazardous locations that fire department personnel cannot immediately access or enter. Finally, the IT Division will design, procure, install, and maintain a new district-wide security access control system which purpose is to limit access to district property to authorized personnel only and to deny access to any person or persons who may pose a threat to district property or personnel.

The IT Battalion is also responsible for the District's electronic communications which consist of programming, repairs and maintenance of all mobile and portable radios and interaction with the county's emergency dispatch center. It also encompasses our vehicle Wi-Fi, laptops, mapping and paging systems.



Personnel Services Department – Captain Pete Reid



The Personnel Services Department is staffed by Captain Pete Reid. Captain Reid works closely with the Administrative/Support Deputy Chief to administer the human resources (HR) program for the Fire District. The Personnel Services Department was established in April 2016 due to the rapid growth of the Fire District. HR functions had been shared throughout the various offices in the fire department prior to the creation of the personnel department.

Since implementation of the Personnel Services office, employee benefits such as health, dental, and vision insurance have been evaluated and renewed at a significant savings. In addition, Personnel Services has developed a recruitment and retention plan that advances the BTFD Equality and Diversity Strategy as approved by the Fire Board in 2015. Major components of the recruitment plan include a new website devoted directly to the hiring of new personnel (www.joinbtfd.com) and a new applicant preparation program which helps those interested in employment better understand and complete the written, physical, and interview assessments found in the hiring process. These efforts will continue into FY 2017.

In FY 2017 the Personnel Services department will begin a comprehensive compensation and classification study to assist in the development of a new job classification system, a formal compensation philosophy, a competitive compensation system, and a performance evaluation system for approximately 130 employees within the organization. The last compensation study was conducted in 2013 and market conditions require review every three (3) to five (5) years.

Personnel Services will also reevaluate the suite of insurance products and insurance benefits offered to employees. This allows the District to provide the most cost efficient and effective benefits for its employees. In addition, Personnel Services will be involved with creating a 501c(3) non-profit organization to assist several charitable and public service arms of the BTFD. This new registered non-profit will combine the efforts of the District's Auxiliary, Cooking Team, and Combat Team to provide better exposure and hopefully public funding for the several charities supported by these groups.



Members of the Bluffton Township Fire District participate in promotional testing. The personnel department works closely with the Training Division to maintain the highest standards for all testing and promotion opportunities in the fire department. Promotional testing occurs annually and employees are encouraged to constantly improve their skills and abilities to better serve the public.



Operations Division – Deputy Chief Richard Cramer

FY2016 Operations Budget – \$10,594,888 or 83.4% of the total budget



The primary function of the Operations Division is to carry out the mission of the fire district by delivering outstanding customer service to our citizens in a cost effective and



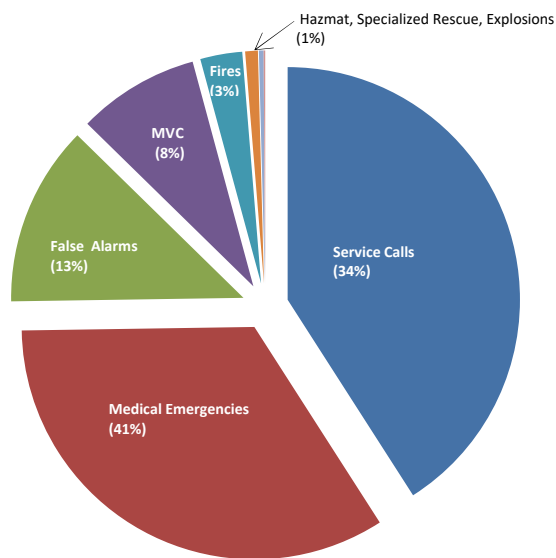
professional manner. This process is systematically executed with a staff of 112 highly trained firefighting professionals. The Operations Division is managed by one Deputy Chief and three line Battalion Chiefs. The Battalion Chiefs are assigned to one of three shifts, which operate on a 24 hour basis. The shift's schedule follows a 24 hour on and 48 hour off rotation. There are numerous tasks carried out each day by the Operations Division members, but some of the primary responsibilities are:

responding to normal emergencies, responding to special operation incidents (Haz-mat, Technical Rescue), handling non-emergent situations, conducting training, and attending community events. When the operations staff isn't mitigating emergency calls, they are carrying out required administrative duties, as well as performing general maintenance and upkeep on the district's expansive list of equipment.

Division Highlights

During FY2016 the Operations Division was kept extremely busy responding to emergency calls. As a whole, the fire district responded to 5,387 calls for service. The chart below demonstrates how the calls were distributed by call type:

Call Type	Number of Calls District Wide
Medical Emergency	2,204
Service Calls	1,823
False Alarms	677
Motor Vehicle Collisions(MVC)	456
Fires (All Types)	157
Hazmat	48
Specialized Rescues	17
Explosions	5



Call Types as a Percentage of Total Call Volume



As the numbers above demonstrate, our operational staff devotes a large amount of time responding to medical emergencies. Knowing this, a good portion of our training program is directed at making our people better medical providers. By working closely with the District's Training Division, the operations staff spends between 20 and 25 hours a month in active hands-on or didactic training. In addition to the medical training, the staff devotes many hours staying proficient in firefighting skills, auto extrication and other specialized operations. The District's specialized teams, such as the Joint Haz-Mat Team and the Urban Search & Rescue Regional Response Team, devote additional hours each month training alongside their teammates from Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue. These two teams are a deployable resource for hazard mitigation at the local and state level. In addition to ongoing month training, both of these teams participated in state sanctioned operational readiness exercises this past year, with both receiving high marks from the evaluators.

Striving for Excellence

The Operations Division constantly strives to improve performance both on and off the fire ground. One of the ways we strive to achieve this is through improved response times. After the fire district completed a comprehensive response time analysis in 2015, work quickly began in operations trying to identify ways to improve response times. Response boundaries were evaluated, turnout times were addressed, and potential new station locations were identified. The data collected in the analysis will be extremely useful as we move forward toward completing the districts first "Standards of Cover."



In FY 2017 the Operations Division will continue to strive for excellence as the District begins the rigorous process of becoming an accredited agency through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). This long and detailed process will identify areas of improvement throughout the entire District through a self-assessment process that is nationally based on industry best standards.

The self-assessment is a top to bottom evaluation that touches every aspect of the Fire District. It contains 10 categories: Governance and Administration, Assessment and Planning, Goals and Objectives, Financial Resources, Programs, Physical Resources, Human Resources, Training and Competency, Essential Resources, and finally External Systems Relationships. The benefits of becoming accredited are: It cultivates the promotion of excellences; it inspires quality improvement; it clarifies and defines interrelated objectives and defines the mission; it pinpoints strengths and weakness; it clearly lays out a plan for improvement; it seeks input and promotes a positive relationship with firefighters; and it supports the enrichment of



organizational and procedural documents. Ultimately, the goal is to provide improved services through the most fiscally responsible methodology to the stake holders of the District.

Improving performance through training is another initiative the operations division is embracing. This training includes proficiency training in all skill sets, as well as physical fitness training. The District believes in order to be efficient on the fireground, the firefighter must be prepared in all facets of the job. With the help of the District wellness coordinator and committee members, a District wide wellness program was launched with the idea of creating a healthier and more prepared workforce. This program in conjunction with the District's newly approved fire training facility will combine to create a firefighting force completely capable of handling any emergency within the community.



Members of the Bluffton Township Fire District deploy a new “BlitzForce” nozzle on a well involved dwelling fire. The new specialized nozzle allows crews to more rapidly deploy large streams of water to control the spread of fire. The nozzles are a part of the package of equipment purchased with the new fire engines.



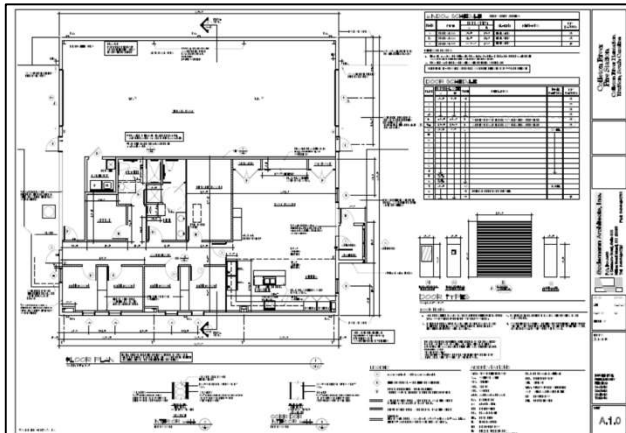
Capital Projects

The District has several capital improvement projects currently underway or in the planning stages at this time. Some of those projects have been thoroughly discussed earlier in this report such as:

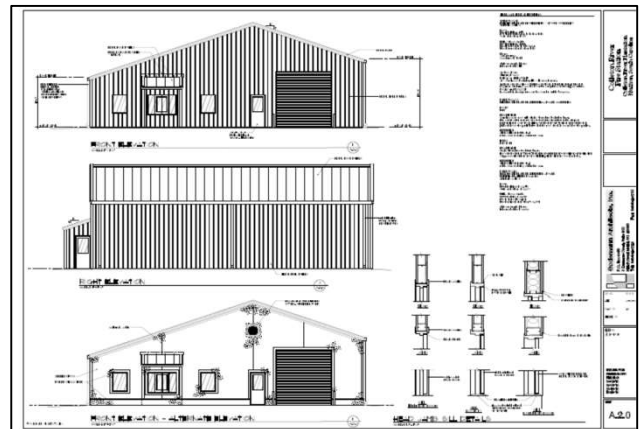
1. Fire Engine Fleet Replacement – completed (\$3,700,000)
2. Maintenance Facility Construction – under construction and nearing completion (\$3,000,000)
3. Training Building Construction – scheduled to start construction in October 2016 (\$700,000)

In addition to these projects the District will undertake the following during FY2017:

1. Fire Station #36 Permanent Facility – This new station will replace an existing temporary facility out of which crews have been working since 2013. The temporary facility was designed to support the crew approximately 18 – 24 months, until a new station could be constructed. This project is being funded out of the District's fire impact fee account and will not require a tax increase. This projected cost is approximately \$1,200,000 and is expected to be completed by September 2017. The project will be funded from the District's impact fee fund and will not require debt or additional taxation.



Building floor plans for the permanent fire station in Colleton River



Building elevations for the new fire station in Colleton River



2. Replacement Battalion Chief's Response Vehicle – The Battalion Chief responds to all multi-company emergencies and provides overall incident supervision to the working crews. The Battalion Chief is responding in a Chevrolet Tahoe that is specially equipped to provide for incident command and direction. The vehicle is 10 years old and is in need of replacement. This project will provide for a new vehicle at a total estimated cost of \$65,000 once fully equipped.

3. Replacement Staff Vehicles – This project will replace four (4) staff vehicles with new trucks. The District maintains a vehicle maintenance and repair plan which estimates among other things end of service life for all of its vehicles. Once vehicles come up for replacement in the plan they are re-evaluated as to their physical condition and current maintenance costs before a decision to replace is made by the Maintenance Battalion Chief. The District has four staff vehicles that meet the criteria for replacement at a cost of approximately \$120,000 once fully equipped.

