

# ST. CHARLES FIRE DEPARTMENT



***STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2012-2016:  
Serving Others Always***

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# PREFACE

March 16, 2011

Greetings;

The direction, focus, and long-term success of emergency service organizations often vary in direct proportion to the degree of energy and effort the organization invests in strategic thinking. By thinking strategically, a fire department attempts to promote a broad understanding to the corporate authority, the employees, and the community about the organization's purpose, mission and vision for the future. Strategic thinking provides a conceptual diagram for linking goals and actions into a common representation of the future. A Strategic Plan serves as a touchstone for gauging how all separate activities and funding commitments within the organization contribute to the fulfillment of mission and achievement of vision over the term of the Plan.

This revised Strategic Plan for the St. Charles Fire Department attempts to define a mission and a vision for our organization that focuses our allocation of time, energy, and resources over the next four years from 2012 through 2016. Although the Fire Department introduced its first Strategic Plan slightly less than two-years ago, we deemed it appropriate to publish this revision due to significant shifts in the basic assumptions underlying that first document. Our justification for an early revision reasoned that if the basic assumptions of the plan have changed, we must reassess the validity of the document overall.

The termination of the service contract between the City of St. Charles and the Fox River and Countryside Fire Rescue District for fire and rescue services and the departure of the Fire District from the intergovernmental agreement with Tri-City Ambulance resulted in significant impacts to the Fire Department in terms of jurisdictional area served, population protected, nature of services rendered, and budgetary burden assumed. These effects included; a reduction of jurisdictional area from 50 square miles to 15, a decrease in population served from 56,000 to 34,000, a reduction in emergency service demand of 1,100 incidents (21.56 percent) annually, a decline in funding revenues of \$1,800,000 (16 percent), and a cutback in the number of front-line fire companies from 4 to 3 (25 percent).

The Department, with the facilitation of Lynn Montei of Lynn Montei Associates, reconvened most of the original plan development committee as well as several new participants to examine the basic document. The review began with the whole committee looking at the Plan Assumptions, the Mission and Goals. No changes were recommended. One addition was suggested to the Guiding Principles and multiple changes were adapted to the Action Plans to address a desire for more tangible expectations. The group worked to update "current reality" as much had changed since the Plan was developed early in 2010. Committee members reviewed the circumstances of the previous two years. They acknowledge successes, recognized a great deal of work remained undone, and expressed disappointment over challenges that impeded progress.

In order to establish the context for this revised Plan, we must identify the assumptions that drive the effort and expectations. The essential assumptions regarding the operational and political environment influencing the St. Charles Fire Department between 2012-2016 will consist of the following.

1. There will be no significant changes to the geographic area served by the St. Charles Fire Department; whether through annexation, de-annexation, or contractual service additions.
2. There will be no significant change to the population protected; whether through development or depopulation.
3. There will be no significant change to the volume of service demanded.
4. There will be no significant change in the nature of services provided by the Fire Department to the public.
5. There will be no significant change in the number of front-line fire and ambulance companies deployed by the St. Charles Fire Department and Tri-City Ambulance.
6. Budgets will continue to be impacted by static revenue streams.
7. Both the public and the City Council will voice rising expectations for efficiency and effectiveness from City Departments.
8. The professional knowledge and skill base for all Fire Department personnel will continue to expand.
9. There will be continued pressure to utilize technology in order to gain advantages in efficiency and effectiveness.
10. Attitudes within the Fire Department, the City Council, and the community are not fixed or unchangeable, but changing perspectives and managing perceptions will require a significant commitment to communications, openness, and tolerance throughout the organization.

Individuals who participated in this effort represented a broad cross-section of the organization and included administrative staff, shift personnel, supervisors, bargaining unit members, non-affiliated members, EMA staff, union executive board members, civilian employees, and civilian contractors. Many put aside their disappointments and misgivings to participate. All joined in out of a strong sense of concern for the welfare of the Fire Department. I am grateful to all of them for their willingness to step forward and work collectively. The resulting plan came together through their effort.

At this point, our work is not finished. This document only represents the end of the plan revision process. Future success of this plan and of our organization will depend upon how vigorously and creatively we pursue the implementation, evaluation, and adaptation of this plan.

Sincerely,

Fire Chief Patrick J. Mullen  
St. Charles Fire Department

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document was developed over a four-month period in late 2011 and early 2012 by employees representing all positions, ranks, divisions, and segments within the Fire Department. The Department retained a consultant to facilitate and assist the group to synthesize and organize the content. The result is a Plan revision that focuses on the years 2012-2016. It is a strategic plan, not a tactical plan, but it attempts to respond to requests from development committee members for inclusion of some specific tangible (tactical) task expectations in order to more readily measure progress. The Plan Framework consists of five component parts.

### ***FRAMEWORK:***

***1. Purpose/Mission Statement***

***2. Guiding Principles***

***3. Vision Statement***

***4. Goals***

***5. Action Plan***

## **PURPOSE / MISSION**

The expression of purpose, or mission, is the Department's reason for being, and describes both what the Department does and why. The mission is that for which all actions, commitments and resources are in service. It must be accurate, clear and comprehensive but short enough to be remembered and said in a single breath.

### ***MISSION OF THE ST. CHARLES FIRE DEPARTMENT:***

***To create and foster a safe and  
secure local community  
and deliver excellent emergency services,  
in order to safeguard and enhance lives,  
resources and community well-being.***

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles describe Department values that serve as guidelines for conduct and behavior, and apply to everyone at all times.

<i><b>Attitude</b></i>	Assumes trustworthiness and honorable intentions, bringing focus to the positive intentions of others.
<i><b>Climate of Trust</b></i>	A direct and open way of relating and communicating that creates a transparent, trusting environment.
<i><b>Compassion</b></i>	Demonstrates compassion for those in distress.
<i><b>Dedication and Commitment</b></i>	Dedication to the mission, commitment to service and each other.
<i><b>Excellence</b></i>	Meets a standard of excellence and professionalism in the performance of duties.
<i><b>Integrity</b></i>	Genuine and steadfast adherence to ethical conduct and behavior.
<i><b>Leadership</b></i>	Personal and group initiative, responsibility, accountability, critical thinking and resolution of conflict.
<i><b>Respect</b></i>	Mutual respect for diverse perspectives and approaches, openness to sharing new ideas and learning new things, and commitment to fostering understanding.
<i><b>Empowerment</b></i>	Our department atmosphere is conducive to feeling ownership and taking initiative in service to the whole organization.

## VISION FOR 2016

*The St. Charles Fire Department exemplifies dedication, service, preparedness, outstanding performance, organizational integrity and partnership with others.*

### GOALS

#### **UNITY**

1. *Unity: Elevate the quality, character and sense of unity in all aspects of the Department.*

#### **EXCELLENCE**

2. *Model Department: Exemplify the model fire department, valued and respected by all.*

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

3. *Communication: Create and follow efficient, effective and well-defined communication approaches and processes.*

#### **TRAINING**

4. *Training and Education: Establish a vigorous training and education program that facilitates individual and department-wide competency development.*

#### **PREVENTION**

5. *Fire Prevention and Education: Broaden the reach of fire prevention / education programs.*



# ACTION STEPS TOWARDS VISION AND GOAL ATTAINMENT

## Goal 1

*Unity: Elevate the quality, character, dedication and sense of unity in all aspects of the Department.*

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1. Commit to positive labor/management relations.
  - a. Embrace a common vision and goals that are aligned with shared values and commitments, and focus on solutions.
  - b. Increase understanding and use empathy and deep listening to the other party's point of view.
  - c. Communicate in clear, authentic and direct ways.
  - d. Focus on real issues; notice and name unnecessary conflicts.
  - e. Know the policies and commit to collaborative issue resolution.
  
2. Host activities, meetings and functions that foster teamwork and create a Departmental character and function that works for all.
  - a. Promote department wide activities (across all ranks).
  - b. Revive Department wide social functions.
  - c. Participate in social/charitable/community functions.
  - d. Train together.
  
3. Promote opportunities for ownership through delegation and shared responsibility.
  - a. Assess and identify supplemental duty assignments.
  - b. Strengthen accountability.
  - c. Cultivate initiative.

## Goal 2

*Model Department: Exemplify the model fire department, valued and respected by all.*

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1. Know, understand and commit to the Department's mission and vision.
  - a. Be clear and contribute to the Department's direction.
  - b. Be poised and prepared for the future and unforeseen events.
  
2. Inspire individual and group commitment, desire and dedication to the mission, vision, the Department itself and each other.
  - a. Create a climate of high morale, enjoyment and positive focus.
  - b. Choose to create and own the ideal Fire Department.
  - c. Hold respect for all positions and viewpoints.
  - d. Implement development programs: probationary, promotional, in rank
  - e. Do what's in the best interest of the Department and the community.
  - f. Foster an environment conducive to self-motivation.
  
3. Maintain high performance standards that represent our aspiration to excellence.
  - a. Encourage innovation and creativity.
  - b. Evaluate proficiencies to ensure internal competence in performance of duties.
  - c. Share knowledge and resources.
  - d. Employ modern, state of the art equipment and practices.
  - e. Become an accredited organization.
  
4. Heighten the importance of relationships with stakeholders.
  - a. Increase community involvement and interaction.
  - b. Honor the contributions and service commitments of others.

- c. Improve relationship with neighbors.
  - d. Enhance collaboration with city government.
- 5. Operate with fiscal discipline.
- 6. Let our success and value speak for itself.
  - a. Lead by example.
  - b. Practice unity, pride, respect and value for all employees and the Department.
  - c. Find enjoyment in participation.

## Goal 3

### *Communication: Create and follow efficient, effective and well-defined communication approaches and processes.*

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1. Design and implement clear and simple mechanisms of communication.
  - a. Identify communication needs and perceived deficiencies to increase understanding.
  - b. Provide for multi-directional internal communication.
  - c. Provide for greater interaction with all City departments and other fire agencies.
2. Practice and uphold guiding principles in all communications with all stakeholders.
3. Involve and engage the whole organization to foster common ground and organizational alignment.
  - a. Make possible open, unrestricted communication.
  - b. Host Department-wide meetings, open forums.
4. Focus on listening and inquiry.
  - a. Train and educate to support and improve communication.
  - b. Create internal training/information exchange with other city departments.

## Goal 4

### *Training and Education: Establish a vigorous training and education program that facilitates individual and department-wide competency development.*

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1. Design and conduct training toward priority goals and objectives.
  - a. Develop and adopt priority training goals and objectives.
    - i. Obtain input from all ranks.
    - ii. Assure appropriateness to the mission, department, jobs and tasks.
  - b. Initiate standard outlines.
  - c. Distribute topic/outline in timely fashion.
  - d. Increase innovation to make training more interesting.
  
2. Structure training delivery to optimize its value to both the Department and the individual.
  - a. Establish the feasibility of a daytime training officer.
  - b. Determine optimal trainee group composition: multi-company (within shift), department wide training, special teams, multi-department, auto or M/A training.
  - c. Bring external training opportunities in-house.
  
3. Utilize facilities fully.
  - a. Invite outside classes.

## Goal 5

### *Fire Prevention/Education Program: Broaden the reach of fire prevention/education programs.*

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1. Enliven our public education initiatives.
  - a. Cultivate employee interest and participation.
  - b. Increase internal fire prevention and public education training.
  
2. Develop creative curricula and solutions.
  - a. Revitalize the Website Committee.
  - b. Improve internet/website utilization.
  - c. Improve public education programs.
  
3. Utilize data and findings from Accreditation process.
  - a. Develop programs for businesses.
  - b. Age-appropriate public education (pre-school-seniors)
  - c. Community service clubs
  - d. Target special hazards/groups
  
4. Cultivate community support.
  - a. Utilize media, including social media.
  - b. Follow-up with the neighborhood/community during/after calls.
  
5. Increase community, school and business involvement and partnership
  - a. Foster public/private co-sponsorships to help finance public education costs.
  - b. Consider creating a Citizen Fire Academy.

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Battalion Chief Jeff Swanson

Battalion Chief Scott Swanson

Firefighter Jeremy Mauthe

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Fire Chief Patrick Mullen

## APPENDIX

### St. Charles Fire Department Implementation Plan for 2012-2016

STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTATION	TARGET YEAR
<i>Goal 1 Unity: Elevate the quality, character, dedication and sense of unity in all aspects of the Department.</i>		
1.1 Commit to positive labor/management relations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace a common vision and goals that are aligned with shared values and commitments, and focus on solutions.</li> <li>• Increase understanding and use empathy and deep listening to the other party's point of view.</li> <li>• Communicate in clear, authentic and direct ways.</li> <li>• Focus on real issues; notice and name unnecessary conflicts.</li> <li>• Know the policies and commit to collaborative issue resolution.</li> </ul>	1.1.1 Evaluate interest-based bargaining.	2012
	1.1.2 Clean up misinformation.	2012
1.2 Host activities, meetings and functions that foster teamwork and create a Departmental character and function that works for all. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote department wide activities (across all ranks).</li> <li>• Revive Department wide social functions.</li> <li>• Participate in social/charitable/community functions.</li> <li>• Train together.</li> </ul>	1.2.1 Fire Department sponsor and convene annual department-wide meetings.	2012
	1.2.2 Sponsor department-wide social functions. Be inclusive as a department.	2012
1.3 Promote opportunities for ownership through delegation and shared responsibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess and identify supplemental duty assignments.</li> <li>• Strengthen reporting and accountability.</li> <li>• Cultivate initiative.</li> </ul>	1.3.1 Expand and detail the list of responsibilities, invite participation and mentor.	2012



## St. Charles Fire Department Implementation Plan for 2012-2016

STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTATION	TARGET YEAR
<i>Goal 2 Model Department: Exemplify the model fire department, valued and respected by all.</i>		
2.1 Know, understand and commit to the Department's mission and vision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be clear and contribute to the Department's direction.</li> <li>• Be poised and prepared for the future and unforeseen events.</li> </ul>	2.1.1 Keep mission, vision and strategic plan in front of all; consult these at project initiation.	2012
2.2 Inspire individual and group commitment, desire and dedication to the mission, vision, the Department itself and each other. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a climate of high morale, enjoyment and positive focus.</li> <li>• Choose to create and own the ideal Fire Department.</li> <li>• Hold respect for all positions and viewpoints.</li> <li>• Implement development programs: probationary, promotional, in rank</li> <li>• Do what's in the best interest of the Department and community.</li> <li>• Foster an environment conducive to self-motivation.</li> </ul>	2.2.1 Battalion Chiefs foster and cultivate development and growth in officers and provide explicit performance expectations.	2012
	2.2.2 Explore the sources of apathy and design strategies to increase ownership.	2013 →
2.3 Maintain high performance standards that represent our aspiration to excellence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage innovation and creativity.</li> <li>• Evaluate proficiencies to ensure internal competence in performance of duties.</li> <li>• Share knowledge and resources.</li> <li>• Employ modern, state of the art equipment and practices.</li> </ul>	2.3.1 Advance the accreditation process.	2012
	2.3.2 Validate performance through practical exercises and training.	2012
	2.3.3 Check company competencies with spot check skills verification.	2013 →

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become an accredited organization.</li> </ul>		
<p>2.4 Heighten the importance of relationships with stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community involvement and interaction.</li> <li>• Honor the contributions and service commitments of others.</li> <li>• Improve relationship with neighbors.</li> <li>• Enhance collaboration with city government.</li> </ul>	2.4.1 Make the Fire Department the core unit.	2012
	2.4.2 Initiate relationship improvement w/ City Manager in small group meeting.	2012
	2.4.3 Increase participation in Citywide initiatives.	2013 →
	2.4.4 Sponsor an experiential for city stakeholders (administration, elected officials and city personnel).	2013 →

## St. Charles Fire Department Implementation Plan for 2012-2016

STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTATION	TARGET YEAR
<i>Goal 3 Communication: Create and follow efficient, effective and well-defined communication approaches and processes.</i>		
3.1 Design and implement clear and simple mechanisms of communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify communication needs and perceived deficiencies to increase understanding.</li> <li>• Provide for multi-directional internal communication.</li> <li>• Provide for greater interaction with all City departments and other fire agencies.</li> </ul>	3.1.1 Publish the minutes of officer meetings and labor/management meetings.	2012
	3.1.2 Create a suggestion box-type of inquiry/response system published in General Alarm.	2012
3.2 Practice and uphold guiding principles in all communications with all stakeholders.	3.2.1 Determine a way to post the Department's guiding principles so they can be viewed regularly by all personnel.	2012
3.3 Involve and engage the whole organization to foster common ground and organizational alignment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make possible open, unrestricted communication.</li> <li>• Host Department-wide meetings, open forums.</li> </ul>	3.3.1 Explore ways of fostering organizational alignment.	2013 →
3.4 Focus on listening and inquiry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train and educate to support and improve communication.</li> <li>• Create internal training/information exchange with other city departments.</li> </ul>	3.4.1 Meet w/other city departments to understand mutual and differing needs – in forums and for training.	2012

## St. Charles Fire Department Implementation Plan for 2012-2016

STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTATION	TARGET YEAR
<i>Goal 4 Training and Education: Establish a vigorous training and education program that facilitates individual and department-wide competency development.</i>		
4.1 Design and conduct training toward priority goals and objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and adopt priority training goals and objectives.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Obtain input from all ranks.</li> <li>○ Assure appropriateness to the mission, department, jobs and tasks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Initiate standard outlines.</li> <li>• Distribute topic/outline in timely fashion.</li> <li>• Increase innovation to make training more interesting.</li> </ul>	4.1.1 Officers develop, train and mentor subordinates.	2012
	4.1.2 Expand EMS training.	2012
	4.1.3 Develop a program for individual training plans to further personal commitment.	2013 →
	4.1.4 Enhance continuing education for officers and acting officers.	2013 →
4.2 Structure training delivery to optimize its value to both the Department and the individual. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the feasibility of a daytime training officer.</li> <li>• Determine optimal trainee group composition: multi-company (within shift), department wide training, special teams, multi-department, auto or M/A training.</li> <li>• Bring external training opportunities in-house.</li> </ul>	4.2.1 Train with other departments.	2012
4.3 Utilize facilities fully. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite outside classes.</li> </ul>	4.3.1 Explore feasibility of hosting IFSI class on the premises.	2013 →

## St. Charles Fire Department Implementation Plan for 2012-2016

STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTATION	TARGET YEAR
<i>Goal 5 Fire Prevention/Education Program: Broaden the reach of fire prevention/ education programs.</i>		
5.1 Enliven our public education initiatives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate employee interest and participation.</li> <li>• Increase internal fire prevention and public education training.</li> </ul>	5.1.1 Develop a business plan for public education.	2012
	5.1.2 Solicit ideas and programs from personnel.	2012
	5.1.3 Schedule training for fire companies and shifts.	2012
	5.1.4 Offer a vehicle to answer questions internally and for the public.	2013 →
5.2 Develop creative curricula and solutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revitalize the Website Committee.</li> <li>• Improve internet/website utilization.</li> <li>• Improve public education programs.</li> </ul>	5.2.1 Form a committee to add appropriate content to the website.	2012
5.3 Utilize data and findings from Accreditation process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop programs for businesses.</li> <li>• Age-appropriate public education (pre-school-seniors)</li> <li>• Community service clubs</li> <li>• Target special hazards/groups</li> </ul>	5.3.1 Implement healthcare provider CPR class.	2012
	5.3.2 Develop age-appropriate group tour outlines.	2012
	5.3.3 Enhance and refine fire extinguisher training.	2013 →
	5.3.4 Investigate fees for providing industrial CPR program.	2013 →
5.4 Cultivate community support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize media, including social media.</li> <li>• Follow-up with the neighborhood/community during/after calls.</li> </ul>	5.4.1 Identify a website development manager and committee.	2012
	5.4.2 Explore the use of social media.	2013 →
5.5 Increase community, school and business involvement and partnership.	5.5.1 Collaborate with schools to revitalize public education programs.	2012

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foster public/private co-sponsorships to help finance public education costs.</li></ul>	5.5.2 Utilize business plan recommendations to identify business partnership opportunities.	2013 →
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider creating a Citizen Fire Academy.</li></ul>	5.5.3 Initiate programs for business.	2013 →