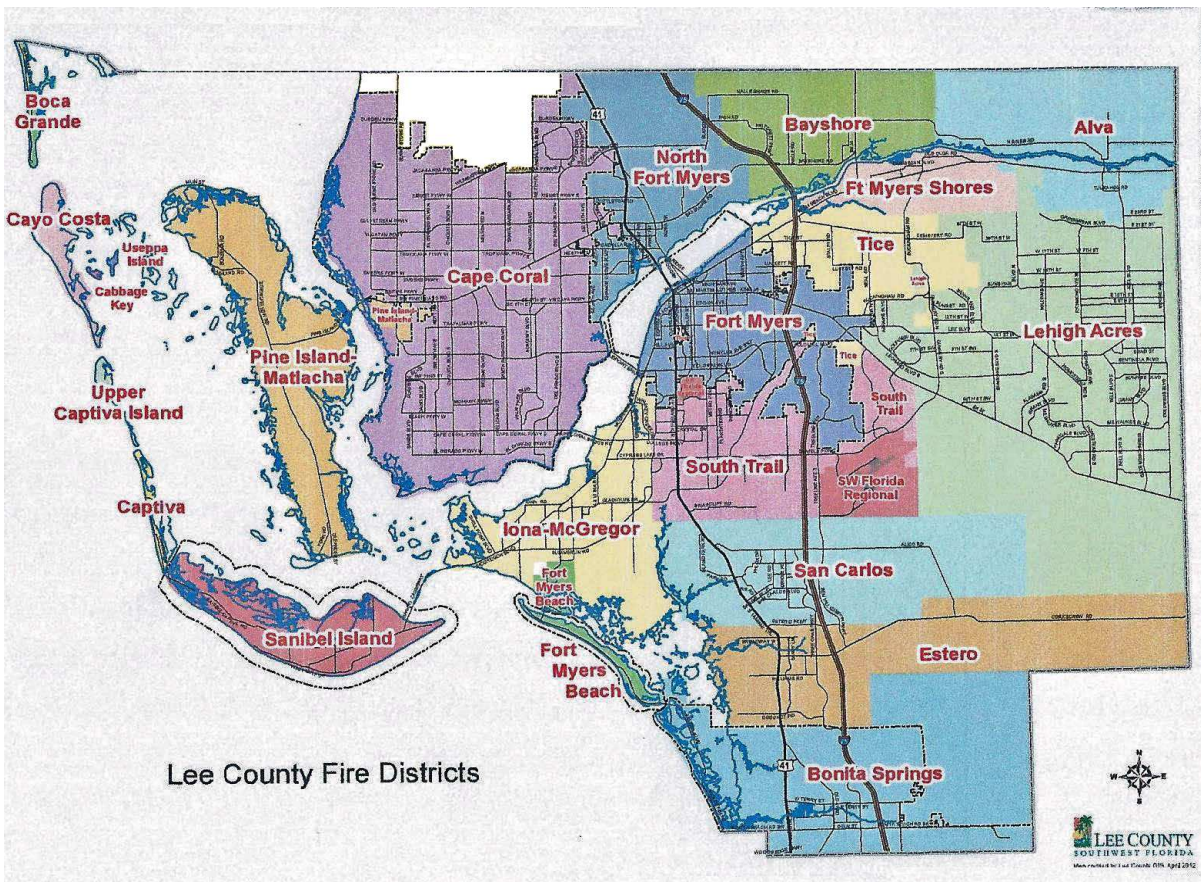


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FIRE CONSOLIDATION REALITIES REPORT A REVIEW OF THE FACTS

-SEVENTH EDITION-

BY
BRIAN R. JUNTIKKA
JANUARY 1, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Homeowners have two fire protection costs. They are:

- (1.) – Taxes paid to support a fire department, and**
- (2.) - Fire insurance premiums**

Both subjects are closely related because the quality of fire protection provided dictates the cost of buying a fire insurance policy. In effect, better fire protection results in lower and better insurance rates for the homeowner. The Insurance Services Office – or I.S.O. is a non-political independent organization that serves the insurance industry. They are the agency that actually sends inspectors to each community to rate the level of fire protection – both here in Florida and in forty-four other states as well. Fire insurance companies use these ratings to determine how much to charge their customers.

There are twenty communities in Lee County and each of them own and operate a fire & rescue department. Long ago, the citizens of these communities organized their own volunteer fire companies, beginning with the Town of Fort Myers in 1901. Starting out with absolutely nothing except the community need for fire protection, these volunteer fire companies have improved, expanded and evolved into modern tax supported fire departments and districts. Fourteen communities have urbanized to the extent that the local fire departments are no longer volunteer but are fully paid career departments. The other six are combination part paid/part volunteer departments.

This report explains in plain English the cost and quality of fire protection we have here in Lee County – and especially within the independent community fire districts. You will learn their history – their tax levies and expenditures over the years – the services they provide, and their accountability to voters and taxpayers. You will also learn about the arguments to abolish them in favor of a large consolidated fire system. In addition, much the same information is included within this report with respect to independent fire districts in Collier and Manatee counties as well. And dollar for dollar, you'll be able to compare the fire districts with consolidated fire systems already in place here in Florida.

Nothing in this report is hypothetical. Real numbers are used – taxing rates, budgets, annual cost-per-station amounts, insurance ratings, actual expenditures, actual dollar amounts and similar information. The budgets and/or actual expenditures of the past forty fiscal years are included in this report where that information is available – not only for the fire districts and cities considered in this report but for the consolidated county fire systems in Broward County, Charlotte County, Miami-Dade, Sarasota County, Hillsborough County, Orange County and Palm Beach County as well. So are their insurance ratings and their tax levies where this information could be obtained.

I have been keeping track of this information for over forty years. In 1996, I prepared a similar report and updated the same in 1997, 1998, 2006, and 2007 and again in 2011.

The same fire protection agencies are considered in this writing as in the previous reports.

Copies are provided to The Governor of Florida, our local Legislative Delegation, Board of County Commissioners, Florida Association of Special Districts, Florida Association of County Commissioners, The Florida Department of Financial Services (formerly Office of Florida State Comptroller), The Florida Department of Community Affairs and to every city and independent fire control district governing board in Lee, Collier and Manatee Counties. In addition, this report is available online – courtesy of the Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – <http://ticefire.com/docs/downloads/>

My active involvement in the fire service ended in 1981 – nearly thirty-six years ago. I believe that I have the firsthand knowledge and expertise to compile this document and my qualifications to do so are as follows:

- (a.) - Volunteer firefighter at Iona-McGregor from 1971 to 1981.
- (b.) - Co-authored charters to create independent fire control districts in Iona-McGregor in 1975, Alva, Bayshore, Estero, Fort Myers Shores, San Carlos Park, South Trail and Tice in 1976 and several others in the Florida panhandle area in 1980. State legislators used these documents to write district enabling legislation.
- (c.) - Elected to Iona-McGregor fire district board of commissioners by the voters for a four-year term in 1977.
- (d.) - First president of the Florida Legislated Fire Districts, Incorporated in 1979 and again in 1980. This group merged with the Florida Special Districts Association in 1983.
- (e.) - Homeowner and taxpayer.

For the record, no one asked me to compile this report. It is a labor of love for which I had the time and the interest – and I give it to the voters and taxpayers to use as they see fit. Additionally, this report and its contents cost taxpayers zero dollars.

I am particularly grateful for the fact-finding efforts of Mr. Otis Smith of the Office of Florida State Comptroller/Department of Financial Services. Without his valuable assistance, this report could not have been completed. In addition to Mr. Smith, my sources included:

Retired Chief Dan Gourley - Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District
Broward County Fire And Rescue Department
Broward County Property Appraiser
Cape Coral City Budget Department
Charlotte County Fire & Rescue
Charlotte County Property Appraiser

Collier County Property Appraiser
Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue (formerly Metro-Dade Fire & Rescue)
Miami-Dade Property Appraiser
Fort Myers City Office Of Management & Budget
Fort Myers Fire Department
Fort Myers News-Press
Hillsborough County Fire & Rescue
Hillsborough County Office of Budget
Lee County Clerk of The Circuit Court
Lee County Law Library
Lee County Office of Manager (formerly County Administrator)
Lee County Property Appraiser
Lee County Supervisor of Elections
Lee County Tax Collector
Manatee County Property Appraiser
Orange County Fire & Rescue
Orange County Property Appraiser
Orlando Sentinel
Palm Beach County Fire & Rescue
Palm Beach County Property Appraiser
(Palm Beach) Sun Sentinel
Sarasota County Fire & Rescue
Sarasota County Property Appraiser
Former Chief Rick Fulwider of Cedar Hammock Fire Control District
Retired Chief Gerald Adema of Iona-McGregor Fire Protection & Rescue District
Retired Chief Tom Zepp of South Trail Fire Protection & Rescue Service District
Retired Chief Greg Bradley of Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District
Mr. Lee Evett, Town Manager of Jupiter
ISO – Insurance Services Office

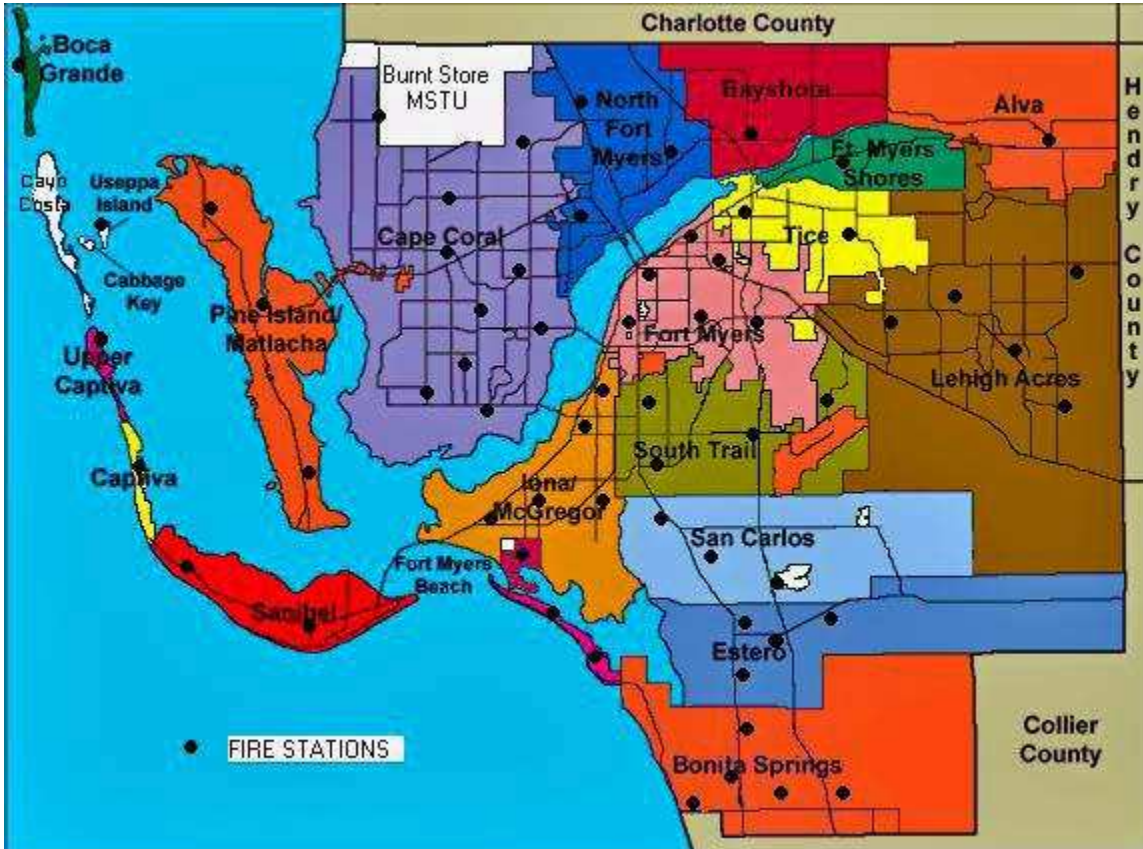
And finally, this document is not a “fire study,” – it is a report. I haven’t attempted to reinvent the wheel and the reader will find no promises or plans here. My summary is included at the end of this report.

Yours for good government,

Brian R. Juntikka

CHAPTER ONE

FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION IN LEE COUNTY



FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

Fire protection organization and structure in Lee County, Florida is typical of almost every area in The United States today when taking the following into account:

(a.) IT IS A COMMUNITY ORGANIZED, OWNED AND CONTROLLED FUNCTION

There are twenty separate communities in Lee County, Florida. Independent special taxing districts provide fire protection and rescue service to seventeen communities in Lee County while two city governments (Cape Coral and Fort Myers) provide these services within their corporate boundaries. A county MSTU funds the volunteer fire company on Useppa Island. Since the voters elect both fire district and city governing boards, the public has complete local control over their local fire department as well as funding. This situation is typical of fire department organization elsewhere in The United States where community fire protection is a service of the city, village, borough, township or fire district.

(b.) MOST FIRE DEPARTMENTS BEGAN AS DONATION SUPPORTED VOLUNTEER COMPANIES.

The first organized fire department in Lee County was the Town of Fort Myers Fire Department (now City of Fort Myers), which organized as a volunteer company in 1901. By the 1940's, volunteer fire companies were established by the citizens of Boca Grande as well as Fort Myers Beach and North Fort Myers. During the 1950's and early 1960's, the citizens of Matlacha and Pine Island, Bonita Springs, Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Cape Coral, Fort Myers Shores and Lehigh Acres organized additional volunteer fire companies.

After the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the federal government began to question the fire defense capabilities of the states in time of national emergency. Florida became one of eight pilot states in a federal program known as the Rural Fire Defense, or "RFD" program. Its purpose was to strengthen the fire defenses of existing rural fire departments and to assist in the organization of new volunteer fire companies in communities that had no protection. In Florida, the Florida Forest Service administered this program. That state agency assisted the citizens of Alva, Bayshore, Estero, Iona-McGregor, San Carlos Park and South Trail in organizing their own volunteer fire companies from 1964 through 1967.

From 1945 until 1971, Lee County paid the City of Fort Myers to provide county fire control service to unincorporated areas. The Tice Fire Department was organized as a county fire station in September of 1971 when disagreements over money between the

City of Fort Myers and Lee County caused the Fort Myers Fire Department to cease service to that community. (*see page 45*)

In 1976, the voters of Tice approved a special act of the Florida Legislature creating an independent special fire control district.

(c.) THERE IS AN OLDER CENTRAL-CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT SURROUNDED BY NEWER SUBURBAN FIRE DEPARTMENTS LOCATED IN COMMUNITIES AROUND THE OLDER CENTRAL CITY AREA.

As previously stated, the City of Fort Myers Fire Department is the oldest organized fire department in Lee County. As was the case in most of post World War Two America, suburban growth alone created the demand for better fire protection in these areas.

(d.) THE AREA FIRE DEPARTMENTS WORK TOGETHER UNDER MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS.

Realizing that no single fire department – here or anywhere else – is staffed or equipped to handle 100% of all emergencies that happen, the area fire departments are contracted together with mutual aid agreements. These inter-local agreements provide for assistance from other fire departments when needed in an emergency, without charge. In recent years, the concept of mutual aid has been greatly expanded to the end that all fire departments in Lee County can effectively operate as a single department when the need arises. In addition, new inter-local agreements provide for “Closest Unit Response” in emergencies – regardless of political boundary lines.

THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS

In The United States, fire protection is typically provided by the city, village, borough, - and town or township in the twenty-two states that use that form of local government. Additionally, 5,725 U.S. communities rely upon their local fire district government to provide that service. Seventeen of those communities are in Lee County.

Florida is divided by general law into sixty-seven counties. Any additional local governments exist by special acts of The Legislature and approval by the voters living within the boundaries of these governments. Special District governments are created to provide municipal and other specific purpose services to the citizens who live within their boundaries. Fire Control Districts are typical of this, however, there are two different types of special district governments in Florida:

(a.) **DEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS:** These are local units created and controlled by county government. The Board of County Commissioners are the governing body of a dependent district, however, the county commissioners may appoint an advisory board to assist the county in its oversight of district affairs and business. Local examples of dependent districts include the Lee County Port Authority and The Lee County Industrial Development Authority.

(b.) **INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS:** These are public municipal corporations created by special act of the Florida Legislature and a majority vote of the citizens who reside in the district. They are called *independent* districts because they exist and operate independently of county government. Instead of being controlled by county commissioners or an appointed county manager, an independent special district is governed by an elected board of commissioners - citizens who reside in the district. The fire control districts in Lee, Collier and Manatee Counties are independent special districts, with the exception of Myakka Fire Control District.

HISTORY

The independent special fire control districts in Lee County were created by individual special acts of The Florida Legislature. Previous to 1965, that was the only option available to an unincorporated community if taxing authority was needed to support a local fire department. The fire control districts created during that era were:

Boca Grande Fire Control District – Chapter 22372, Laws of Florida 1943
Fort Myers Beach Fire Control District – Chapter 27676, Laws of Florida 1951
North Ft. Myers Fire Control District – Chapter 30925, Laws of Florida 1955
Captiva Island Fire Control District – Chapter 30929, Laws of Florida 1955
Sanibel Island Fire Control District – Chapter 30930, Laws of Florida 1955
***Cape Coral Fire Control District** – Chapter 63-1537, Laws of Florida 1963
Lehigh Acres Fire Control District – Chapter 63-1546, Laws of Florida 1963
Mat'lacha-Pine Island Fire Control District – Chapter 63-1558, Laws of Florida 1963
Bonita Springs Fire Control District – Chapter 65-1828, Laws of Florida 1965.

*NOTE: The Cape Coral Fire Control District was abolished and its assets and liabilities transferred to the City of Cape Coral in 1971. This move was approved by the Florida Legislature in Chapter 71-736, Laws of Florida, approved by the board of commissioners of the fire district, approved by the Cape Coral city council and by a majority vote of fire district electors who decided the question at a special referendum election held for that purpose.

COUNTY HOME RULE – In 1965, the Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 65-1821, Laws of Florida, granting limited powers of local self-government to the Lee County Commissioners. This statute became known as the *Home Rule Law* and was approved by county voters at a referendum held later that year. Among other provisions, the new home rule law allowed county commissioners to create dependent special districts by simple county ordinance – with a referendum required if the district were to have taxing authority.

The only dependent special fire control district that ever existed in Lee County pursuant to this act was the former ***South Trail Fire Control And Rescue District Of Lee County*** – predecessor of the present-day independent South Trail Fire Protection And Rescue Service District. Created by county ordinance in 1970, this unit replaced the former South Trail Volunteer Fire Department. Voters in the South Trail community approved creation of the new district by referendum that year and the county commissioners appointed an advisory board to assist the county in the operation of the district.

Shortly afterward, the Lee County Tax Collector’s Office began to send regular tax disbursement checks to the South Trail advisory board. They, in turn, opened a bank account in the name of the district. When the Lee County Attorney found this out, the County Commissioners confiscated the money and closed the account forthwith. As a dependent district operating under county home-rule, the South Trail advisory board had no fiscal authority whatsoever and sending the tax disbursement checks to them was an error on the part of the Tax Collector’s Office. The county retained the disbursements after that.

Due to a restructuring of county government in 1972, the limited authority of the fire district advisory board was severely diluted. A newly created county Division of Protective Services assumed control of the South Trail department on October 1, 1972. Funded only by taxpayers in the South Trail community, the county began to send fire fighters and equipment to other areas of the county. These events fanned the flames of much political discontent at the community level, and prepared the way for additional independent fire control districts by mid-decade.

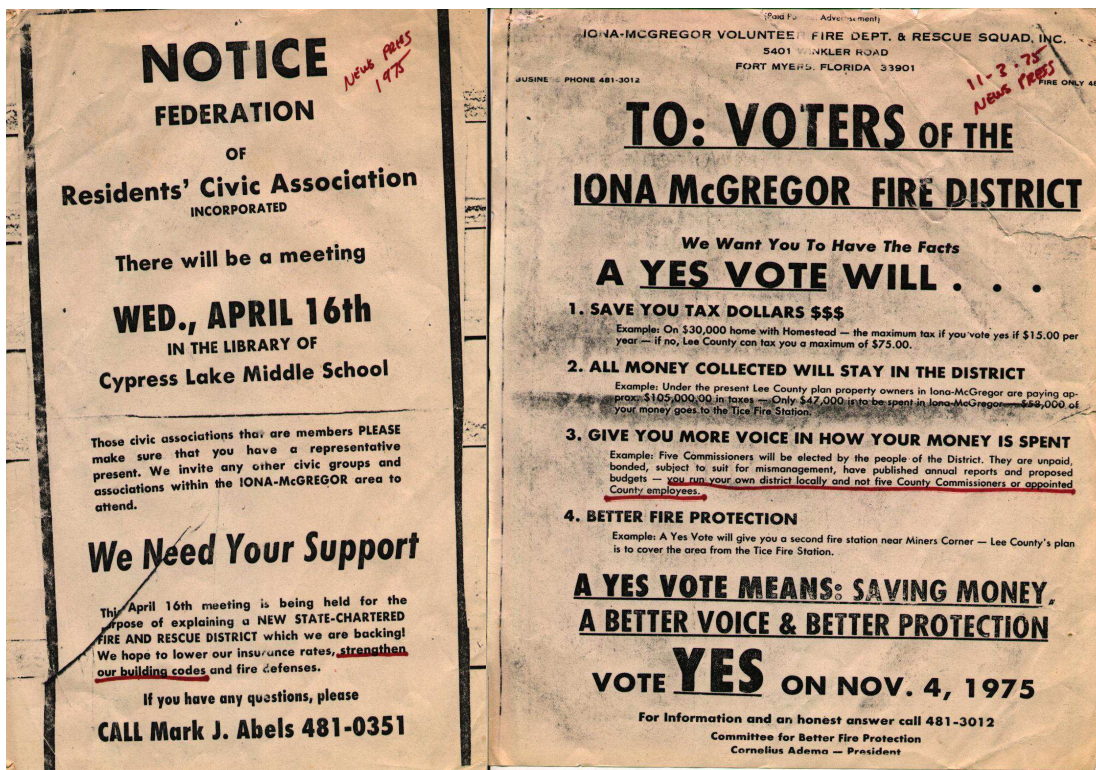
MOVEMENT TO CONSOLIDATE – In late 1972, The Lee County Administrator instructed the county Director of the Division of Protective Services to draft a plan for the consolidation of all fire departments in Lee County into a single county owned and operated agency - without the knowledge of any of the local fire departments. When the existence of the plan was discovered by area fire departments in the spring of 1973, a political firestorm erupted, causing the Division Director to resign his post. Not long afterward, the County Attorney learned that the county government had no authority over the independent special fire control districts whatsoever and the matter was dropped.

The 1974 Florida Legislature enacted a number of laws dealing with the issue of dual taxation – (*city residents paying for county services not used.*) These new laws permitted counties to create a new type of dependent special taxing district called a *Municipal Service Taxing Unit* or “MSTU” as these came to be known. But unlike dependent special districts, an MSTU can be created by county ordinance with taxing authority – without a referendum vote of the people affected. (*Chapter 74-191, Laws Of Florida*)

With a new Protective Services Division director, the county government used these new laws to create a fire protection MSTU to cover the volunteer fire areas of Alva, Bayshore, Fort Myers Shores, San Carlos Park, Estero and Iona-McGregor in 1975. Another fire protection MSTU was created to serve the community of Tice at the same time.

From the time the City of Fort Myers Fire Department discontinued service to the Tice area in October 1971, taxpayers countywide had been supporting the county fire station in Tice through general county taxes and surplus toll revenues from the Sanibel Causeway Administration.

IONA-McGREGOR – By March of 1975, the members of the Iona-McGregor Volunteer Fire Department and concerned civic leaders in that community saw the county fire protection MSTU as a threat to the local control of their fire department. Donation supported since its organization in 1965, the Iona-McGregor Volunteer Fire Department’s service area included some of the highest property values in suburban Fort Myers. It became clear to both fire and civic leaders that the community’s tax base was to be plundered by those in county government seeking to create a new county fire department. An independent special fire control district was the only solution, and by March 2, a charter had been drafted.



Fort Myers News-Press opposed it and threw its weight (and credibility) into an all-out effort to block it when two rogue county commissioners unsuccessfully attempted to get our local legislators to kill the proposal. Despite these efforts, the Florida Legislature enacted the fire district’s charter as Chapter 75-421, Laws of Florida in early June. As a last-ditch effort, the News-Press published the following article on October 5, 1975:

Controversy Rises Over Iona Fire District

The proposed creation of the Iona-McGregor Fire Protection and Rescue Service District has sparked a lively controversy that could heat up an otherwise dull general election Nov. 4.

On that date, voters in the fast-growing South Fort Myers area will decide if they want to have their own fire control district or stick with the county system.

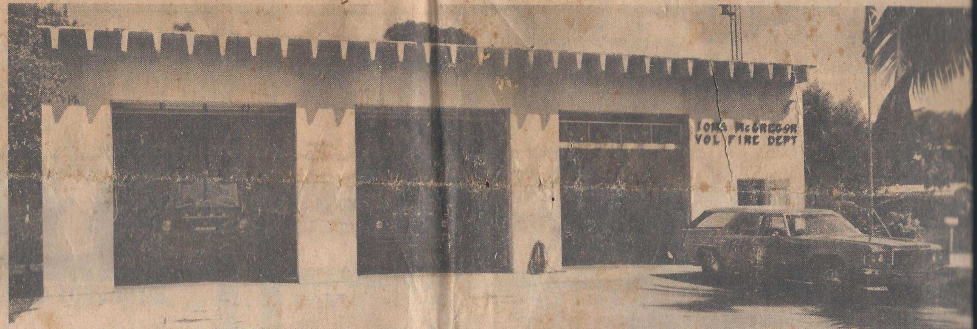
District supporters say it will give residents low-cost fire protection and more control over operation of their fire department.

But critics say it will have just the opposite effect. They fear residents will be at the mercy of five fire commissioners who will have broad powers to set a budget, promulgate rules, buy equipment and hire personnel — all without public hearing.

"The whole thing is a travesty," said Kenneth Moslander, a Tanglewood resident who is one of the sharpest critics of the proposed district. "We'd just be giving them (the fire commissioners) a blank check to do whatever they want."

Established in 1965, the Iona-McGregor Volunteer Fire Department — as it is now called — covers a huge area ranging from the Fort Myers city limits to the north, the Sanibel Causeway on the west and Fort Myers Beach on the south.

For years the fire department has survived on voluntary contributions



News-Press Photo By AL SPICE

Iona-McGregor Fire Department Is The Center Of Rapidly Growing Controversy

which last year put \$40,000 into its coffers — not enough, fire officials say, to run a department for such a fast-growing area.

In the 1975 session of the Florida Legislature, the volunteer company was successful in pushing through a bill calling for creation of the Iona-McGregor Fire Protection and Rescue Service District, subject to a Nov. 4 referendum.

The district would comprise 45

square miles including all of the area now served by the volunteer department plus two sections of land west of Hendry Creek. Within the boundaries of the district would lie some of Lee County's wealthiest areas as well as some of its poorest.

If the district is established Nov. 4, residents will return to the polls within 60 days to elect five fire commissioners.

The commissioners would have the

power to set an annual budget for the district, set rates for fire protection and borrow up to \$125,000.

The district would break precedent with every other special tax district in Lee County by abandoning the time honored practice of raising money through a millage levied against the value of a resident's property.

Instead residents would be assessed according to the type, not the

value, of property they have. For example, all single-family homes would be assessed a maximum of a year; trailer spaces, a maximum of \$5 per year; business and commercial buildings, a maximum of cents a square foot; and multi-story buildings, \$15 a year per unit plus extra per unit for each floor above the second floor.

"It's going to be a big headache," said one resident. **Turn To FIRE, Page 2B**

Voters in the Iona-McGregor community considered the facts, weighed both sides and then went to the polls on November 4th — settling the issue by an 8 to 1 landslide vote.

Fire District Passes; Graf Wins In Cape

By News-Press Staff Writers

Cape Coral residents elected political newcomer Donald J. Graf their new mayor Tuesday in a citywide election which drew 59 per cent of the registered voters to the polls.

Voters also elected two other newcomers to fill two council seats and returned one incumbent councilman to a third term.

Residents of the Iona - McGregor fire area overwhelmingly decided to exercise their local control option and accepted the creation of a fire district by a 2,649 to 301 vote, and Lee County has added a sewer and street

ballots out of 12,290 registered voters.

Mayor Herman Horton, the Cape's first elected mayor didn't seek reelection.

In the Dist. 1 Council race newcomer Donald L. Roberts, 40, a local pharmacist, defeated incumbent Alice Ballard. Roberts drew 4,451 votes while Mrs. Ballard, seeking a second term on the council, received 2,347.

Incumbent Councilman Preston H. Currier of Dist. 4 was beaten by **Turn To VOTERS, Page 2B**

Iona-McGregor Folk Put Faith In Selves

It's not surprising that another fire control district has been established in Southwest Florida. Yet the vote Tuesday authorizing the Iona-McGregor taxing unit in Lee County was an overwhelming 8-1 landslide (2,649 to 301).

Many communities in Charlotte, Collier and Lee have created neighborhood fire fighting agencies to provide fire and sometimes rescue departments. The Iona-McGregor situation was unique only in its creation after the county commission had discovered an old law enabling it to offer fire fighting facilities countywide.

In this case residents were aware that they had the option of accepting the county's aid to the existing local volunteer firemen. But residents rejected the county option by a lopsided score.

Iona-McGregor volunteers

have been among the leaders of opposition to county (or city) control of neighborhood fire fighting. While they are willing to cooperate in fighting fires, the volunteers wanted local control of their fire department.

In effect the Lee County Commission went along with this by not advocating a stronger role for county fire fighting as an alternative to the referendum.

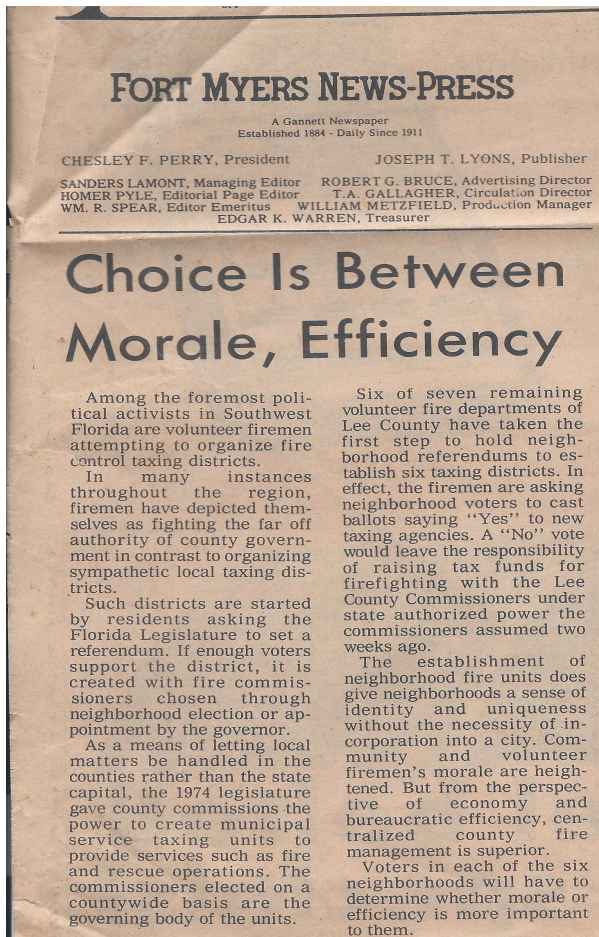
County residents will be interested in the development of fire fighting capabilities in areas directly under county control, such as Tice, and in areas being assisted by the county's tax powers, such as Fort Myers Shores and Bayshore.

Meanwhile, the Iona-McGregor fire district will be demonstrating whether local neighborhoods can do a better job of protecting their interests than officials at the county seat.

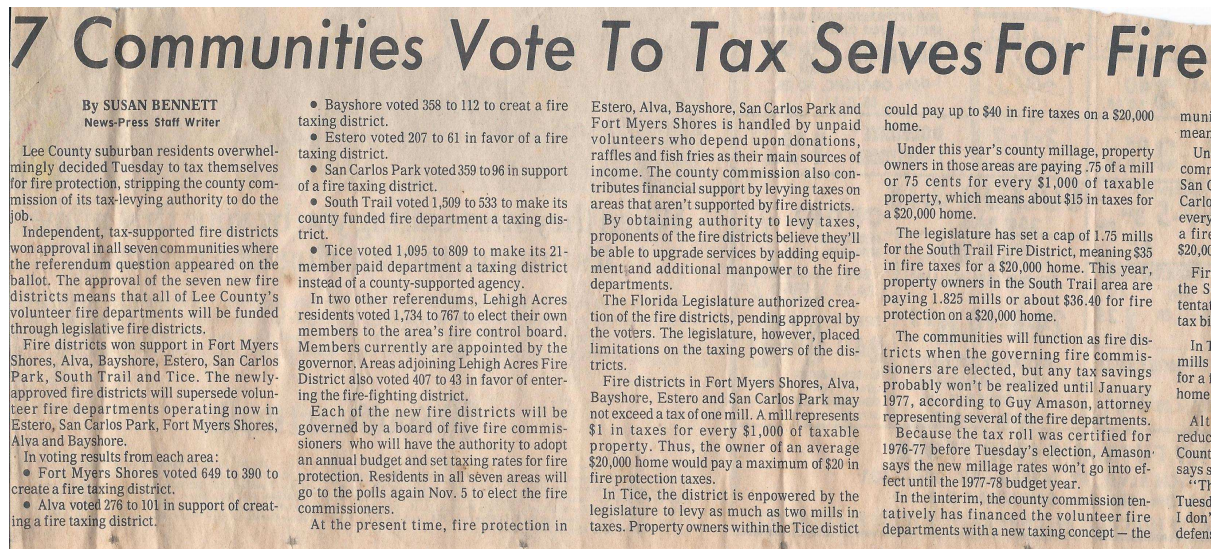
Local public support of the Iona-McGregor Volunteer Fire Department played a major role in the district's success in that referendum, but another major factor involved the county fire MSTU tax bill that arrived less than a week before the referendum was held. The county commissioners imposed a 0.75-mill fire tax on the community – without a referendum. In addition, of the \$109,000 that tax levy generated in the Iona-McGregor community, only \$47,000 was to be spent there. The remaining \$62,000 was taken to support the county fire station in Tice. This incensed Iona-McGregor taxpayers.

NEW DISTRICTS END COUNTY FIRE SYSTEM – Without the Iona-McGregor fire taxing base to support it, a county fire system was no longer possible without increasing the MSTU tax millage rate from 0.75 to 1.332 mills and in the Tice Fire MSTU, the millage rate rose to 3.38 mills.

In the spring of 1976, the remaining volunteer fire companies in Alva, Bayshore, Estero, Fort Myers Shores and San Carlos Park all petitioned the Florida Legislature for independent special fire control districts. When county commissioners learned of this, they decided to divest themselves of the two fire departments they owned and operated – South Trail and Tice. Legislation was soon drafted for these two communities as well. As was the case in Iona a year earlier, The News-Press took issue and opposed this:



In the September 1976 primary election, voters in those communities overwhelmingly approved the creation of independent special fire control districts:



Estero Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-408, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 207 “yes” to 61 “no” popular vote.

Ft. Myers Shores Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-409, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 649 “yes” to 390 “no” popular vote.

Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-410, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 1,095 “yes” to 809 “no” popular vote.

San Carlos Park Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-411, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 359 “yes” to 96 “no” popular vote.

South Trail Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-412, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 1,509 “yes” to 533 “no” popular vote.

Alva Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-413, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 276 “yes” to 101 “no” popular vote.

Bayshore Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-414, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 358 “yes” to 112 “no” popular vote.

Thus ended the Lee County Fire Control District for all practical purposes – its boundaries now reduced to a few offshore islands, the Yucca Pens near Burnt Store and the Maravilla unincorporated island of space in Fort Myers.

The independent special fire control districts created in the mid 1970s were intentionally created as such to keep control of both the local fire departments as well as fire tax monies in the hands of the voters and taxpayers in each community.

In 1990, the Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 90-397, Laws of Florida, creating the **Upper Captiva Island Fire Control District**, which was also approved by the voters living there later that year.

FIRE PROTECTION IN LEE COUNTY TODAY

In the forty years that have passed since the last populated areas of Lee County were incorporated into special fire districts, much has changed.

FULLY CAREER DEPARTMENTS: - The continuing urbanization of the Bonita Springs, Boca Grande, Captiva, Estero, San Carlos Park, Sanibel Island, South Trail, Iona-McGregor, Tice, Fort Myers Shores and North Fort Myers districts required the change from mostly volunteer to fully career status. The Fort Myers Beach and Lehigh Acres districts – and the Fort Myers and Cape Coral Fire Departments were already fully career departments by 1976. The districts of Alva, Bayshore, Matlacha-Pine Island and Upper Captiva Island are part-paid/part-volunteer departments.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SYSTEM: - Fort Myers Beach and Lehigh Acres districts provide a fully paramedic ALS (Advanced Life Support) ambulance service within their boundaries. Ambulance service in all other communities is provided by Lee County Emergency Medical Services. The city and fire district departments work with Lee County EMS in a number of ways:

- (1.) – Lee County EMS vehicles and personnel are routinely housed in fire stations – saving county taxpayers from the burden of having to build separate accommodations.
- (2.) – All fire district and city fire departments provide Rescue Service. This includes heavy rescue operations such as extrication from wrecked vehicles, emergency evacuation activities as coordinated with other fire districts, the county and the state, and varying degrees of emergency medical services to save lives and to assist the Lee County EMS.

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS) In Alva, Bayshore, Boca Grande, Fort Myers Shores, Matlacha-Pine Island, North Ft Myers, Tice and Upper Captiva Island, fire district Emergency Medical Technicians provide this service.

ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT (ALS) In Bonita Springs, Cape Coral, Captiva, Estero, Fort Myers, Fort Myers Beach, Iona-McGregor, Lehigh Acres, San Carlos Park, Sanibel and South Trail, fire district/fire department Paramedics provide this service. Fort Myers Beach and Lehigh Acres also provide ambulance service.

ENHANCED 911 EMERGENCY REPORTING: Forty years ago, dispatchers at the separate fire districts and departments handled emergency telephone calls. In 1986, Lee County, the cities and fire districts adopted the Enhanced 911 Emergency Telephone Number. While the concept of the 911 emergency reporting telephone number had been around since 1968, Lee County was one of the very first areas in The United States to have the Enhanced 911 system. With Enhanced 911, telephone company digital

switching equipment provides emergency dispatchers with vital information such as the caller's location, serving fire district and law enforcement agency and telephone number.

FIRE AND BUILDING CODES: The Lee County Commissioners enacted the first fire safety codes in 1974 but chose not to enforce them. The Florida Legislature authorized the fire control districts to enact fire safety rules and regulations – some of them with the same fire safety ordinances as those adopted by the county and to enforce the same by civil injunction. Although county commissioners initially authorized the fire districts to enforce the county's fire prevention codes in 1978, complaints from builders and developers caused the county commissioners to revoke this authorization in 1979. When that happened, a number of districts began to enact and enforce their own safety codes and regulations. A uniform fire prevention code was finally adopted by ordinance and by inter-local agreement between the fire districts and Lee County in 1984 and it has worked reasonably well ever since, using the uniform Florida State Fire Safety Code.

MASS PURCHASING: In a cooperative effort to save tax dollars, the fire districts organized a mass purchasing association in 1986 to receive quantity discount on major and minor purchases. The association also included the fire control districts in Collier County as well as the governments of Lee, Hendry and Collier counties themselves. This arrangement worked well for about 12 years until a better system replaced it. Today, fire districts obtain substantial cost reductions in purchasing by “piggybacking” these purchases with Federal, State and local bidding for the same products.

FLORIDA USAR TASK FORCE 6 (URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE):





FLORIDA USAR TASK FORCE 6 DEPLOY IN AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE CHARLEY – AUGUST 14, 2004.



FLORIDA USAR TASK FORCE 6 DEPLOY IN AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE CHARLEY – AUGUST 14, 2004.

The fire districts in Bonita Springs, Estero, Fort Myers Beach, San Carlos Park, South Trail, Iona-McGregor, North Collier and the Lee County Division of Public Safety created USAR TASK FORCE SIX – (FL-TF 6) - a unit of some 73 specially trained fire fighters, emergency medical technicians and paramedics to search for and rescue victims of natural or man made disasters. This includes rescue from collapsed structures, pre-hospital emergency care and treatment of disaster victims, rope rescue, swift water rescue, confined space rescue, trench rescue and similar situations.

It's first major local response was for Hurricane Charley in August of 2004 – searching for victims on the offshore islands three days before FEMA teams arrived in Lee County for the same purpose. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, USAR TASK FORCE SIX did not deploy but was the only USAR team available for emergency response and was on stand-by for the remainder of Florida as well as the states of Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama.

In as much as this function is a unique and a highly specialized one, it is not necessary that each area fire district or department participate in this operation. USAR Task Force Six will deploy whenever and wherever needed.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS (HAZ-MAT): - Just as USAR is a highly specialized function, so too is the handling of hazardous materials in emergencies. In Lee County, the more urbanized fire departments provide much of this service, and while they are assisted by the other area districts and departments, it is not necessary to duplicate this effort on a countywide basis.

DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PLANNING: - The duties and responsibilities of all U.S. fire departments were changed forever on September 11, 2001. In Florida, however, calamity struck in August of 1992 with Hurricane Andrew. The problems and mistakes made during and after the storm in Miami-Dade County have been studied with much scrutiny ever since so that they could be avoided in future major emergencies.

Starting with Hurricane Opal in 1995, the fire districts in Lee County began to deploy personnel and equipment to other Florida communities hit by hurricanes – so that actual “hands on” experience in these situations could be had. The Florida Fire Chief's Association coordinates the deployment of personnel and equipment. By the time Hurricane Charley hit Southwest Florida in August of 2004, these pre-planning efforts proved their worth. The fire districts were able to handle their duties during and after the storm without the need to call for assistance from other counties. The same was true a year later when Hurricane Wilma struck Southwest Florida.

As new district fire stations are added to accommodate growth, they are constructed to withstand hurricane force winds and to serve multiple emergency purposes.

FLORIDA FIRE JOBS: The growth in population and development in the more urbanized districts creates the need for additional fire stations and equipment. That growth and development also creates the need for additional fire fighters and paramedics. The fire districts of Bayshore, Bonita Springs, Estero, Fort Myers Beach, Iona-McGregor, Lehigh Acres, North Fort Myers, San Carlos Park, Sanibel and South Trail together with the City of Fort Myers Fire Department and the Lee County Port Authority operate The Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida - an applicant screening and testing program. By doing this, a better selection of candidates can be had to fill these positions as they become available.

NEW STATIONS & EQUIPMENT - In 1976, the fire districts in Lee County owned and operated 17 fire stations. By 1996, that number increased to 35 stations and today that number is 45 stations with more on the way as growth and development continues. These numbers do not include the City of Cape Coral's 10 fire stations and the City of Fort Myers, which owns and operates 6 stations. It also does not include the Lee County Port Authority Fire and Rescue stations at Page Field and Southwest International Airports.

New ISO rated fire apparatus and equipment have replaced the second hand and government surplus fire trucks, which served the public for many years. The cost of new fire engines and equipment is always high, however, it is worth the expense from the standpoint of fire fighter safety and reliability. It is also a requirement of the Insurance Services Office (ISO) in order to reap any benefits providing lower and better fire insurance rates to the public.

THE INSURANCE SERVICES OFFICE – (I.S.O.)

The I.S.O. is an independent and non-political organization that serves the insurance industry. This is the agency that actually inspects, audits and rates a community's fire defenses – here in Florida and in 44 other states as well. These ratings are called the “Public Protection Classification” or “PPC” for short, and insurance carriers use these ratings to determine risk and establish fair premiums for their customers.

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATINGS – Each community's fire defenses are graded using a point system to consider the following:

– **THE FIRE DEPARTMENT:** - A review of the fire department accounts for 50% of the total classification. ISO focuses on a fire department's first-alarm response and initial attack to minimize potential loss. Here, ISO reviews such items as engine companies, ladder or service companies, distribution of fire stations and fire companies, equipment carried on apparatus, pumping capacity, reserve apparatus, department staffing and personnel, and training.

(1.) - FIRE ALARM AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM:

A review of the fire alarm system accounts for 10% of the total classification. The review focuses on the community's facilities and support for handling and dispatching fire alarms.

(2.) – THE WATER SUPPLY: A review of the water-supply system accounts for 40% of the total classification. ISO reviews the water supply a community uses to determine the adequacy for fire-suppression purposes. They also consider hydrant size, type, and installation, as well as the inspection frequency and condition of fire hydrants.

Generally, residential property located within five road miles of a fire station and within 1,000 feet of an approved fire hydrant benefit by paying lower and better fire insurance premiums.

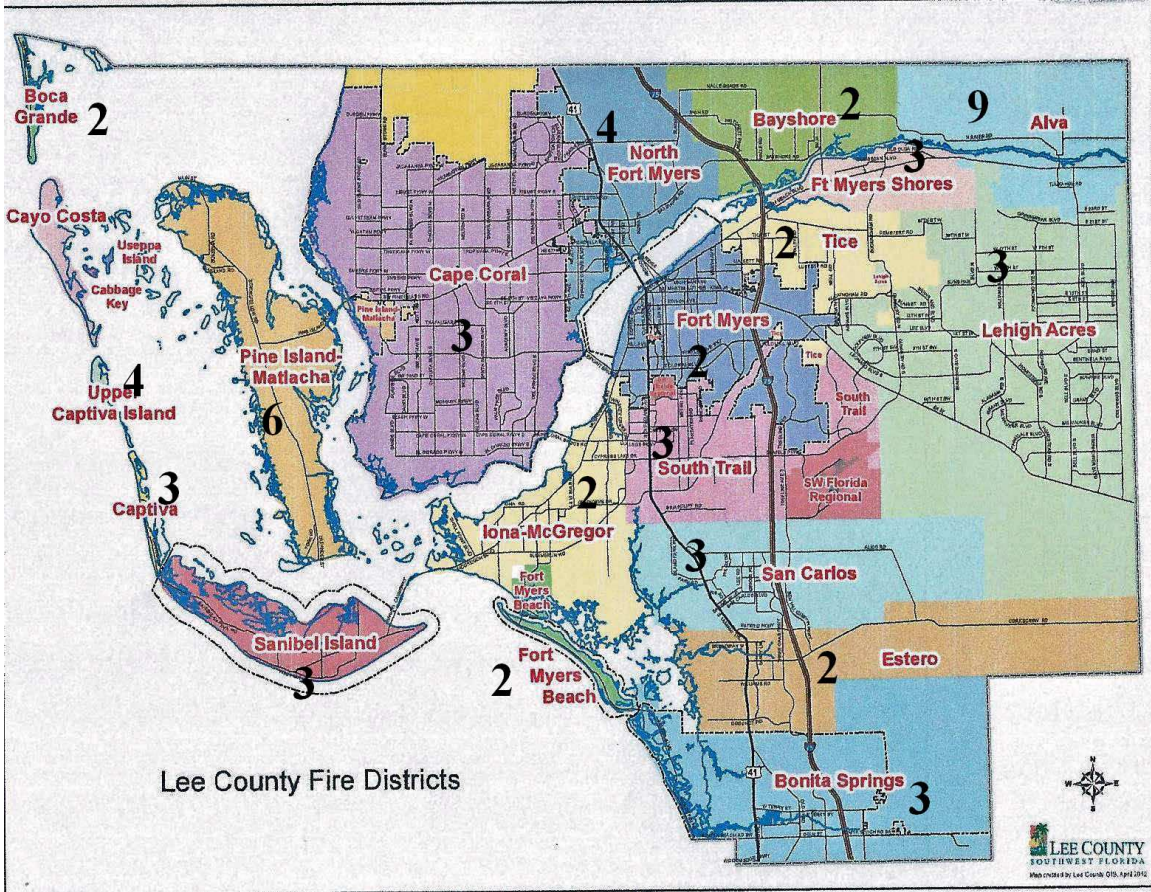
After a community's fire defenses are inspected by the I.S.O., the community is "rated" and assigned a Public Protection Classification number – ranging from Class 1 to Class 10. On a scale of 1 to 10, a Class 1 community has the best fire protection possible, while a Class 10 community has no fire protection at all. Therefore, a homeowner's insurance policy costs a lot more in a Class 10 community than the same policy would cost in a Class 1 community.

As a practical note, there are only 26 places in Florida with a class 1 rating – the nearest one being the North Port Fire District. Until recently, a class 9 rating was the best a community without an approved water system could obtain – even if the fire department otherwise qualified for a better rating. The I.S.O. has amended these guidelines somewhat to allow credit to rural fire departments with access to alternate sources of water to fight fires.

As Lee County and its communities have grown, the local fire departments have grown and expanded accordingly – making the necessary improvements in service to earn PPC insurance ratings that are lower and better than most of the rest of urbanized Florida.

This represents 40 years of improvements that have included:

- (1.) Full-time career staffing of fire stations
- (2.) Additional fire stations and equipment
- (3.) Automatic mutual aid and closest-unit-response inter-local agreements
- (4.) Enhanced 9-1-1 emergency telephone number + computer aided dispatching
- (5.) Improvements and expansion of public water system
- (6.) Fire code enforcement.



PLACE	ISO 1976	ISO 1996	ISO 2006	ISO 2016
Alva	Class 10	Class 9	Class 9	Class 9
Bayshore	Class 10	Class 4/9	Class 4	Class 2
Boca Grande	Class 8	Class 5/9	Class 5	Class 2
Bonita Springs	Class 10	Class 4/9	Class 4	Class 3
Cape Coral	Class 8	Class 6	Class 4	Class 3
Captiva Island	Class 10	Class 5	Class 5	Class 3
Estero	Class 10	Class 6/9	Class 4	Class 2
Fort Myers	Class 6	Class 4/9	Class 3/9	Class 2
Fort Myers Beach	Class 8	Class 4	Class 4	Class 2
Fort Myers Shores	Class 10	Class 4/9	Class 4/9	Class 3
Iona-McGregor	Class 9	Class 4/9	Class 4	Class 2
Lehigh Acres	Class 8	Class 5/9	Class 4/9	Class 3/3Y
Matlacha-Pine Island	Class 10	Class 6/9	Class 6/9	Class 6/9
North Fort Myers	Class 8	Class 6/9	Class 6/9	Class 4/4Y
San Carlos Park	Class 10	Class 4/9	Class 3	Class 3
Sanibel Island	Class 10	Class 6	Class 6	Class 3
South Trail	Class 8	Class 4/9	Class 4	Class 3
Tice	Class 8	Class 4/9	Class 4	Class 2
Upper Captiva	Un-rated	Class 8/9	Class 8	Class 4

Chapter Two

“SHOW ME THE MONEY”

A complete review of actual services provided, taxing rates and assessments, relative annual cost-per-station amounts, ISO community fire insurance ratings and budget/expenditure growth over the past 40 fiscal years. The summary of this chapter begins on page 75.

BUDGET GROWTH

In this chapter, the taxing rates, budgets and/or actual expenditures, annual cost-per-station analysis and I.S.O. fire insurance ratings will be examined. The fire and rescue departments included within this report are as follows:

- Lee County – district and city fire departments – page 23 through 46.**
- Broward County Fire & Rescue – pages 47 and 48**
- Charlotte County Fire & Rescue – pages 49 and 50**
- Hillsborough County Fire & Rescue – pages 51 & 52**
- Collier County – district, city and county fire depts. – 62 through 66**
- Manatee County – district fire departments – 67 through 74**
- Miami-Dade Fire & Rescue (formerly Metro Dade Fire & Rescue) – pages 53 & 54**
- Orange County Fire & Rescue – pages 55 & 56**
- Palm Beach County Fire & Rescue – pages 57 & 58**
- Sarasota County Fire & Rescue – pages 59 through 61**

TAXING RATES – there are two different types of fire protection and EMS taxing systems used in this report:

- (1.) – **TAX MILLAGE:** An ad valorem millage levy based upon the **VALUE** of property. One mill equals \$1.00 of tax for every \$1,000 of value.
- (2.) – **SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS:** A flat-fee levy based upon the **TYPE** of property. Usually this is calculated by residence, square foot or by acre.

Tax millages apply for fire protection in Collier, Hillsborough, Orange, Dade, Palm Beach and most fire control districts in Lee counties - and for EMS in Broward and Sarasota counties. Special assessments apply for fire protection in Broward, Charlotte, Manatee and Sarasota counties. Some jurisdictions use both types of levies. Beginning in fiscal year 2015-2016, the District of Lehigh Acres also uses special assessments. In addition, the cities of Cape Coral, Fort Myers and the district of Upper Captiva use special assessments to supplement their fire protection costs in addition to millage taxes.

BUDGETS AND/OR EXPENDITURES – A review of all available figures for the past thirty fiscal years. Most figures from the Florida Department of Financial Services/Office of Florida State Comptroller, which show monies actually spent.

COST-PER-STATION ANALYSIS – Annual cost-per-station figures consider the entire fire-rescue annual budget or tax levy and divide this amount by the number of fire stations actually delivering service to the public.

LEE COUNTY

Lee County is the most urbanized county in Southwest Florida. The United States Census Bureau estimates county total population at 701,982 as of July 1, 2015. A total of twenty municipal fire and rescue departments serve and protect the citizens and visitors in the following cities, town, village and CDPs (Census Designated Places):

Alva Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – including Alva CDP and Charleston Park CDP

Bayshore Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – community of Bayshore

Boca Grande Fire Control District – including Boca Grande CDP

Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District – including Bonita Springs city + adjacent unincorporated areas.

Cape Coral city – including Burnt Store Marina CDP via MSTU by contract

Captiva Island Fire Control District – including Captiva CDP

Estero Fire Rescue District – includes Estero village + adjacent unincorporated areas

Fort Myers city – including Maravilla Fire MSTU by contract. Also includes former Dunbar Heights CDP, former East Dunbar CDP and part of the former Tanglewood CDP locally known as “Toadtown.”

Fort Myers Beach Fire Control & Rescue District – including Fort Myers Beach town + unincorporated portion of the community of Fort Myers Beach located on San Carlos Island and on the mainland.

Fort Myers Shores Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – including Fort Myers Shores CDP and Olga CDP

Iona-McGregor Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – including Cypress Lake CDP, Harlem Heights CDP, Iona CDP, McGregor CDP, Punta Rassa CDP and Whiskey Creek CDP

Lehigh Acres Fire Control & Rescue District – including Lehigh Acres CDP

Matlacha-Pine Island Fire Control District – including Bokeelia CDP, Matlacha CDP, Matlacha Isles CDP, Pine Island Center CDP, Pineland CDP and St. James City CDP

North Fort Myers Fire Control & Rescue District – including Lochmoor Waterway Estates CDP, North Fort Myers CDP, Palmona Park CDP and Suncoast Estates CDP.

San Carlos Park Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – including San Carlos Park CDP, Three Oaks CDP, and part of Estero village.

Sanibel Island Fire Control District – including Sanibel city + unincorporated area of The Sanibel Causeway to the Iona-McGregor district limits.

South Trail Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – including Page Park CDP, Pine Manor CDP, Villas CDP, Gateway CDP and the area locally known as “South Fort Myers.”

Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – including Buckingham CDP and Tice CDP.

Upper Captiva Island Fire Protection & Rescue Service District.

Useppa Island Fire MSTU (funding through county government)

ALVA FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized by the people of Alva as a volunteer fire department (incorporated on June 2, 1964) and incorporated as an independent special fire district by referendum in that community in 1976. Provides a fire suppression and control service, code enforcement, plans review, development review as well as non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) service. Part paid career and part volunteer department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: Real – 415,637,634
 +Tangible - 36,345,568
 451,983,202 x 3 mills == \$1,355,949

MILLAGE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0
 NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1
 RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,355,949
 I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 9 (no water system)

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY			
1976-1977	N/A	All amounts from Lee County Property Appraiser except		
1977-1978	22,310	where noted otherwise.		
1978-1979	27,402	2000-2001	268,610	COMPTRROLLER
1979-1980	28,109	2001-2002	493,204	COMPTRROLLER
1980-1981	35,288	2002-2003	378,521	COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	44,355	2003-2004	568,581	COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	62,805	2004-2005	632,286	COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	64,256	2005-2006	940,530	
1984-1985	140,461	2006-2007	1,030,494	COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	146,195	2007-2008	1,093,262	COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	155,405	2008-2009	1,206,235	COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	174,340	2009-2010	1,025,689	COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	191,138	2010-2011	914,649	COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	194,475	2011-2012	846,589	COMPTRROLLER
1990-1991	224,722	2012-2013	785,041	COMPTRROLLER
1991-1992	243,770	2013-2014	810,969	COMPTRROLLER
1992-1993	228,950	2014-2015	834,287	COMPTRROLLER
1993-1994	230,006	2015-2016		
1994-1995	231,388	2016-2017	1,355,949	LEVY
1995-1996	235,200			
1996-1997	239,477	COMPTRROLLER		
1997-1998	230,641	COMPTRROLLER		
1998-1999	256,778	COMPTRROLLER		
1999-2000	262,332	COMPTRROLLER		

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized by the people of Bayshore as a volunteer fire department (incorporated December 11, 1967) and incorporated as an independent special fire district by referendum in that community in 1976. Provides fire suppression and control services, code enforcement, plans review, development review as well as a non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Part paid career and part volunteer department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: real: \$449,131,276
 +tangible: 50,759,731
 \$499,891,007 x 3.5 mills = \$1,749,618

2016-2017 TAXING RATE: 3.5 mils
 2016-2017 BUDGET: \$2,003,771
 TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.5
 NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1
 RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,749,618
 I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 2

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY			
1976-1977	N/A	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless		
1977-1978	20,727	noted otherwise.		
1978-1979	29,269			
1979-1980	30,104			
1980-1981	39,349	2004-2005	917,244	COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	80,652	2005-2006	1,134,272	COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	114,199	2006-2007	1,313,696	COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	115,938	2007-2008	2,029,098	COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	114,263	2008-2009	1,699,309	COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	139,324	2009-2010	1,447,609	COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	149,621	2010-2011	1,427,034	COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	165,911	2011-2012	1,464,643	COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	298,346	2012-2013	1,496,545	COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	344,350	2013-2014	1,520,721	COMPTRROLLER
1990-1991	366,773	2014-2015	1,344,000	COMPTRROLLER
1991-1992	376,819	2015-2016		
1992-1993	380,615	2016-2017	1,749,618	LEVY
1993-1994	394,027			
1994-1995	412,820			
1995-1996	421,425			
1996-1997	721,268			COMPTRROLLER
1997-1998	597,423			COMPTRROLLER
1998-1999	735,165			COMPTRROLLER
1999-2000	534,844			COMPTRROLLER
2000-2001	NO REPORT			
2001-2002	563,676			COMPTRROLLER
2002-2003	536,277			COMPTRROLLER
2003-2004	745,038			COMPTRROLLER

BOCA GRANDE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Boca Grande and incorporated as an independent special fire district by referendum in that community in 1943.

Provides fire suppression and control service, code enforcement, plans review, development review as well as a non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: Real \$2,201,457,622
 +Tangible 8,194,961
 \$2,209,652,583 x 1.387 mills = \$3,027,224

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,027,224

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 2

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	53,248	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless		
1977-1978	35,523	noted otherwise.		
1978-1979	46,140			
1979-1980	48,164	2005-2006	1,367,968	LEVY
1980-1981	53,741	2006-2007	1,909,547	COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	59,383	2007-2008	2,028,233	COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	66,810	2008-2009	2,550,269	COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	49,334	2009-2010	2,087,362	COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	48,064	2010-2011	2,235,325	COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	58,985	2011-2012	no report	
1986-1987	55,467	2012-2013	2,346,101	COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	51,873	2013-2014	2,451,218	COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	49,597	2014-2015	no report	
1989-1990	78,352	2015-2016		
1990-1991	75,000	2016-2017	3,027,224	LEVY
1991-1992	87,850			
1992-1993	86,651			
1993-1994	86,358			
1994-1995	102,093			COMPTRROLLER
1995-1996	121,786			COMPTRROLLER
1996-1997	417,111			COMPTRROLLER
1997-1998	196,269			COMPTRROLLER
1998-1999	286,360			COMPTRROLLER
1999-2000	385,519			COMPTRROLLER
2000-2001	557,527			COMPTRROLLER
2001-2002	1,079,241			COMPTRROLLER
2002-2003	2,083,966			COMPTRROLLER
2003-2004	3,104,523			COMPTRROLLER
2004-2005	1,511,596			COMPTRROLLER

BONITA SPRINGS FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Bonita Springs and incorporated as an independent special fire district by referendum in that community in 1965. Provides fire suppression, fire prevention, plans review, code enforcement, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Co-operative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$11,312,439,409 (real)

+Tangible: 216,651,794

\$11,529,091,203 x 2.350 mills = \$27,093,364

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$5,418,672

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.		
1976-1977	85,715			
1977-1978	99,808			
1978-1979	106,054	2004-2005	15,898,746	COMPTRROLLER
1979-1980	143,650	2005-2006	17,874,110	LEVY
1980-1981	167,791	2006-2007	22,103,860	COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	297,554	2007-2008	18,898,460	COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	340,899	2008-2009	20,879,219	COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	429,453	2009-2010	20,129,126	COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	477,003	2010-2011	19,681,875	COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	624,968	2011-2012	22,259,883	COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	855,750	2012-2013	21,714,321	COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	1,343,640	2013-2014	20,182,861	COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	1,474,364	2014-2015	21,848,520	COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	1,847,866	2015-2016		
1990-1991	2,228,465	2016-2017	27,093,364	LEVY
1991-1992	2,533,949			
1992-1993	2,824,169			
1993-1994	3,126,488			
1994-1995	3,577,156			
1995-1996	3,752,868			
1996-1997	4,295,175			COMPTRROLLER
1997-1998	4,607,313			COMPTRROLLER
1998-1999	4,941,419			COMPTRROLLER
1999-2000	5,071,214			COMPTRROLLER
2000-2001	7,648,651			COMPTRROLLER
2001-2002	9,387,860			COMPTRROLLER
2002-2003	10,302,063			COMPTRROLLER
2003-2004	16,540,255			COMPTRROLLER

ESTERO FIRE RESCUE

Organized by the people of Estero (The Estero Precinct 12 Volunteer Fire Company Number One, Inc. on November 6, 1964) and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1976 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, development review, code enforcement, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career dept.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$7,282,189,458 (real)

+Tangible 156,407,100

\$7,438,596,558 x 2.150 mills = \$15,992,982

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.5 mills

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 4

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,998,245

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 2

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	N/A	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.		
1977-1978	13,931			
1978-1979	19,144	2004-2005	9,335,043	COMPTRROLLER
1979-1980	19,519	2005-2006	8,403,411	LEVY
1980-1981	21,980	2006-2007	10,160,008	COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	45,428	2007-2008	15,283,272	COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	48,250	2008-2009	11,348,853	COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	174,063	2009-2010	10,849,403	COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	152,903	2010-2011	10,691,101	COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	211,706	2011-2012	11,249,823	COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	265,827	2012-2013	12,220,960	COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	281,729	2013-2014	11,795,360	COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	323,691	2014-2015	no report	
1989-1990	448,485	2015-2016		
1990-1991	580,786	2016-2017	15,992,982	LEVY
1991-1992	637,070			
1992-1993	640,856			
1993-1994	669,503			
1994-1995	693,153			
1995-1996	789,635			
1996-1997	1,125,259			COMPTRROLLER
1997-1998	728,108			COMPTRROLLER
1998-1999	1,828,390			COMPTRROLLER
1999-2000	2,514,023			COMPTRROLLER
2000-2001	5,131,037			COMPTRROLLER
2001-2002	9,470,384			COMPTRROLLER
2002-2003	6,753,018			COMPTRROLLER
2003-2004	6,028,376			COMPTRROLLER

FORT MYERS BEACH FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Fort Myers Beach in 1949 and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1951 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, development review, code enforcement, transporting ALS rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fire-Rescue boat. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$4,347,952,557 (Real)

+Tangible: 70,254,568

\$4,418,207,125 x 2.58 mills = \$11,398,974

MILLAGE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,799,658

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 2

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	311,581	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.		
1977-1978	367,124			
1978-1979	472,215			
1979-1980	551,577		2004-2005	7,407,535 COMPTRROLLER
1980-1981	707,355		2005-2006	9,538,396 LEVY
1981-1982	1,096,431		2006-2007	12,985,607 COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	1,425,493		2007-2008	14,415,403 COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	904,964		2008-2009	12,012,726 COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	1,767,572		2009-2010	9,305,955 COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	1,885,426		2010-2011	8,580,319 COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	1,774,702		2011-2012	8,093,336 COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	2,078,305		2012-2013	9,247,944 COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	2,453,032		2013-2014	8,171,561 COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	2,331,588		2014-2015	8,904,072 COMPTRROLLER
1990-1991	2,887,294		2015-2016	
1991-1992	3,055,892		2016-2017	11,398,974 LEVY
1992-1993	3,167,768			
1993-1994	3,340,043			
1994-1995	3,572,080			
1995-1996	3,680,868			
1996-1997	3,877,833	COMPTRROLLER		
1997-1998	4,496,076	COMPTRROLLER		
1998-1999	3,964,963	COMPTRROLLER		
1999-2000	4,064,626	COMPTRROLLER		
2000-2001	4,718,576	COMPTRROLLER		
2001-2002	5,646,447	COMPTRROLLER		
2002-2003	6,195,420	COMPTRROLLER		
2003-2004	6,402,021	COMPTRROLLER		

FORT MYERS SHORES FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized by the people of Fort Myers Shores and Olga and incorporated on October 18, 1961 as “Fort Myers Shores Volunteer Fire Company Number 1 of The Fort Myers Shores Fire Department, Inc.” and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1976 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review and non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Fire-Rescue boat. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$1,119,669,761 (Real)
 + Tangible: 645,500,039
 \$1,765,169,800 x 2.0 mills = \$3,530,339

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes - by referendum. Maximum is 2.0
 NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1
 RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,530,339
 I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY			
1976-1977	N/A	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.		
1977-1978	117,612			
1978-1979	127,656			
1979-1980	137,289	2004-2005	1,437,094	COMPTRROLLER
1980-1981	156,197	2005-2006	2,160,302	LEVY
1981-1982	172,849	2006-2007	2,839,188	COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	202,574	2007-2008	2,290,030	COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	208,475	2008-2009	2,349,391	COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	217,973	2009-2010	2,546,362	COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	243,731	2010-2011	1,915,284	COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	254,026	2011-2012	2,076,195	COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	268,865	2012-2013	2,225,328	COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	229,695	2013-2014	2,456,852	COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	246,551	2014-2015	NO REPORT	
1990-1991	259,082	2015-2016		
1991-1992	556,707	2016-2017	3,530,339	LEVY
1992-1993	578,052			
1993-1994	599,506			
1994-1995	623,573			
1995-1996	622,414			
1996-1997	NO REPORT			
1997-1998	702,079	COMPTRROLLER		
1998-1999	697,825	COMPTRROLLER		
1999-2000	731,307	COMPTRROLLER		
2000-2001	721,700	COMPTRROLLER		
2001-2002	772,305	COMPTRROLLER		
2002-2003	1,102,066	COMPTRROLLER		
2003-2004	1,335,678	COMPTRROLLER		

IONA-McGREGOR FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the communities of Iona and McGregor on April 28, 1965 (Incorporated September 20, 1965) and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1975 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, development review, code enforcement, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fire-Rescue boat. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$9,172,738,404 (Real)

+ Tangible: 206,185,279

\$9,378,923,683 x 2.5 mills = \$23,447,309

2016-2017 TAXING RATE: 2.5 Mills

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.5

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$4,689,461

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 2

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY				
1976-1977	unknown				
1977-1978	unknown				
1978-1979	unknown	2004-2005	11,816,060	COMPTROLLER	
1979-1980	unknown	2005-2006	13,703,695	LEVY	
1980-1981	321,099	COMPTROLLER	2006-2007	15,844,029	COMPTROLLER
1981-1982	398,418	COMPTROLLER	2007-2008	16,665,015	COMPTROLLER
1982-1983	456,746	COMPTROLLER	2008-2009	21,464,358	COMPTROLLER
1983-1984	634,706	COMPTROLLER	2009-2010	17,164,373	COMPTROLLER
1984-1985	1,437,276		2010-2011	15,030,113	COMPTROLLER
1985-1986	1,919,533		2011-2012	14,802,102	COMPTROLLER
1986-1987	2,117,046		2012-2013	17,303,018	COMPTROLLER
1987-1988	2,705,258		2013-2014	15,317,797	COMPTROLLER
1988-1989	2,685,740		2014-2015	17,952,291	COMPTROLLER
1989-1990	2,981,447		2015-2016	no info yet	
1990-1991	3,367,237		2016-2017	23,447,309	LEVY
1991-1992	3,585,885				
1992-1993	3,664,283				
1993-1994	3,729,969				
1994-1995	3,804,093				
1995-1996	3,948,078				
1996-1997	3,864,396	COMPTROLLER			
1997-1998	4,318,096	COMPTROLLER			
1998-1999	4,694,244	COMPTROLLER			
1999-2000	4,996,196	COMPTROLLER			
2000-2001	5,235,172	COMPTROLLER			
2001-2002	6,229,538	COMPTROLLER			
2002-2003	8,193,863	COMPTROLLER			
2003-2004	11,911,546	COMPTROLLER			

LEHIGH ACRES FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Lehigh Acres and incorporated on January 4, 1962. Incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1965 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, code enforcement, development review, transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE – REAL: \$4,489,077,484
 + Tangible: 139,848,060
 \$4,628,925,544

2016-2017 BUDGET: 26,786,486

2016-2017 ASSESSMENT LEVY: 12,337,998 of budget

2016-2017 RATES OF ASSESSMENTS: fire = \$239 per residence + rescue = \$53.00 per residence for total of \$292.00 per residence + other assessments.

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$5,357,297

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 3/3Y

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY	\$4,489,077,484		
1976-1977	unknown			
1977-1978	unknown			
1978-1979	unknown			
1979-1980	unknown		2004-2005	8,767,070
1980-1981	402,140		2005-2006	12,248,783 LEVY
1981-1982	575,393		2006-2007	23,489,637
1982-1983	754,376		2007-2008	26,465,608
1983-1984	1,117,974		2008-2009	16,824,065
1984-1985	1,093,623		2009-2010	12,106,128 COMPTROLLER
1985-1986	1,247,491		2010-2011	13,493,778 COMPTROLLER
1986-1987	1,578,955		2011-2012	12,969,098 COMPTROLLER
1987-1988	2,023,258		2012-2013	13,156,128 COMPTROLLER
1988-1989	2,135,459		2013-2014	13,674,327 COMPTROLLER
1989-1990	2,293,138		2014-2015	12,896,230 COMPTROLLER
1990-1991	2,729,152		2015-2016	
1991-1992	2,610,820		2016-2017	26,786,486 BUDGET
1992-1993	3,004,414			
1993-1994	3,056,658			
1994-1995	3,340,642			
1995-1996	3,384,115			
1996-1997	3,647,103			
1997-1998	4,483,967			
1998-1999	5,043,992			
1999-2000	4,814,637			
2000-2001	6,677,697			
2001-2002	5,273,149			
2002-2003	6,815,569			
2003-2004	6,905,167			

MATLACHA – PINE ISLAND FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Incorporated as a volunteer fire department by the people of Matlacha and the communities of Bokeelia, St. James and Pine Island Center on January 18, 1962 and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1963 by referendum held in these communities. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, development review, code enforcement, non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Part paid career and part volunteer department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$1,690,972,877 (Real)

+ Tangible: 139,848,060

\$1,830,820,937 x 3.750 mills = \$6,865,578

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.75

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,288,526

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 6/9

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	116,634	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless	
1977-1978	111,124	noted otherwise.	
1978-1979	120,508		
1979-1980	166,679	2004-2005	3,068,050 COMPTRROLLER
1980-1981	238,517	2005-2006	3,408,700 COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	263,030	2006-2007	4,297,044 COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	303,412	2007-2008	6,361,544 COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	292,728	2008-2009	5,077,075 COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	261,677	2009-2010	4,031,763 COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	324,547	2010-2011	3,931,927 COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	373,555	2011-2012	3,818,009 COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	336,392	2012-2013	3,883,921 COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	606,713	2013-2014	3,937,875 COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	705,729	2014-2015	3,775,450 COMPTRROLLER
1990-1991	838,888	2015-2016	no info yet
1991-1992	985,609	2016-2017	6,865,578 LEVY
1992-1993	1,070,743		
1993-1994	1,100,367		
1994-1995	1,129,058		
1995-1996	1,148,725		
1996-1997	1,157,643	COMPTRROLLER	
1997-1998	1,218,909	COMPTRROLLER	
1998-1999	1,301,247	COMPTRROLLER	
1999-2000	1,282,025	COMPTRROLLER	
2000-2001	2,115,596	COMPTRROLLER	
2001-2002	1,824,040	COMPTRROLLER	
2002-2003	NO REPORT		
2003-2004	2,421,985	COMPTRROLLER	

NORTH FORT MYERS FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of North Fort Myers in 1948 and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1955 by referendum in that community. Fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review and non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$3,119,650,630 (Real)

+ Tangible: 145,525,006

\$3,265,175,636 x 2.5 mills = \$8,162,939

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.5

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,720,979

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4/4Y

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1876-1977	225,191	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless	
1977-1978	188,762	noted otherwise.	
1978-1979	381,390		
1979-1980	406,799	2004-2005	5,076,327 COMPTRROLLER
1980-1981	508,760	2005-2006	6,323,502 LEVY
1981-1982	721,818	2006-2007	6,844,958 COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	924,767	2007-2008	7,523,790 COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	1,010,887	2008-2009	8,779,288 COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	1,076,616	2009-2010	6,553,548 COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	1,250,317	2010-2011	5,890,017 COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	1,338,786	2011-2012	5,695,689 COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	1,903,884	2012-2013	5,589,574 COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	2,031,216	2013-2014	5,590,539 COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	2,214,366	2014-2015	5,469,733 COMPTRROLLER
1990-1991	2,383,069	2015-2016	no info yet
1991-1992	2,585,743	2016-2017	8,162,939 LEVY
1992-1993	2,605,560		
1993-1994	2,722,632		
1994-1995	2,849,247		
1995-1996	2,872,512		
1996-1997	2,828,147	COMPTRROLLER	
1997-1998	3,038,069	COMPTRROLLER	
1998-1999	3,150,653	COMPTRROLLER	
1999-2000	3,270,381	COMPTRROLLER	
2000-2001	3,293,468	COMPTRROLLER	
2001-2002	3,877,109	COMPTRROLLER	
2002-2003	3,492,418	COMPTRROLLER	
2003-2004	4,827,607	COMPTRROLLER	

SAN CARLOS PARK FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

San Carlos Park Volunteer Fire Company #1 was incorporated July 2, 1964 and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1976 by referendum held in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$4,123,735,999 (Real)

+ Tangible: 157,832,715

\$4,281,568,714 x 2.950mills = \$12,630,627

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$4,210,209

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

FISCAL YEAR	TAX LEVY			
1976-1977	N/A	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless		
1977-1978	30,774	noted otherwise.		
1978-1979	42,591			
1979-1980	48,001	2004-2005	5,491,523	COMPTRROLLER
1980-1981	69,824	2005-2006	6,556,189	COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	199,499	2006-2007	8,297,541	COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	290,271	2007-2008	10,691,617	COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	394,267	2008-2009	9,353,255	COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	468,728	2009-2010	10,624,409	COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	653,499	2010-2011	8,544,655	COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	747,163	2011-2012	8,121,663	COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	894,483	2012-2013	8,679,466	COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	985,923	2013-2014	8,335,074	COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	1,205,751	2014-2015		
1991-1992	1,349,629	2015-2016	no info yet	
1992-1993	1,593,717	2016-2017	12,630,627	LEVY
1993-1994	1,674,654			
1994-1995	1,758,333			
1995-1996	1,926,349			
1996-1997	2,259,126			COMPTRROLLER
1997-1998	2,270,439			COMPTRROLLER
1998-1999	2,566,661			COMPTRROLLER
1999-2000	2,839,711			COMPTRROLLER
2000-2001	3,313,527			COMPTRROLLER
2001-2002	3,921,449			COMPTRROLLER
2002-2003	7,061,618			COMPTRROLLER
2003-2004	4,994,498			COMPTRROLLER

SANIBEL FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Sanibel Island and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1955 by referendum held in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, Advanced Water Rescue – Fire-Rescue boat. Part paid/career and part volunteer department. (28 career and 12 volunteer)

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$5,556,071,121 (Real)

+ Tangible: 49,392,668

\$5,605,463,789 x 1.1089 mills = \$6,215,898

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 10 .0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 2

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,107,949

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	414,838	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless	
1977-1978	161,865	noted otherwise.	
1978-1979	339,262		
1979-1980	387,179	2004-2005	6,345,513 COMPTRROLLER
1980-1981	378,746	2005-2006	3,996,784 COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	384,722	2006-2007	4,004,145 COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	505,853	2007-2008	3,991,713 COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	502,333	2008-2009	3,610,531 ANNUAL AUDIT
1984-1985	525,727	2009-2010	4,213,061 COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	578,366	2010-2011	4,002,209 COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	595,069	2011-2012	3,853,339 COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	608,435	2012-2013	6,481,817 COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	607,391	2013-2014	4,245,213 COMPTRROLLER
1989-1990	653,426	2014-2015	4,396,744 COMPTRROLLER
1990-1991	728,964	2015-2016	no info yet
1991-1992	918,583	2016-2017	6,215,898 LEVY
1992-1993	1,126,587		
1993-1994	1,242,576		
1994-1995	1,399,159		
1995-1996	1,502,735		
1996-1997	1,487,114		COMPTRROLLER
1997-1998	1,592,414		COMPTRROLLER
1998-1999	1,759,514		COMPTRROLLER
1999-2000	1,910,175		COMPTRROLLER
2000-2001	2,193,986		COMPTRROLLER
2001-2002	2,427,235		COMPTRROLLER
2002-2003	3,268,656		COMPTRROLLER
2003-2004	4,581,159		COMPTRROLLER

SOUTH TRAIL FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized by the people of South Fort Myers and incorporated as the South Trail Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad Of Lee County on November 23, 1965. Incorporated as a county-dependent special district by referendum in 1970 and re-incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1976 by referendum held in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$6,793,910,710 (Real)
 + Tangible: 377,242,871
 \$7,171,153,581 x 2.50 mills = \$17,927,884

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.5
 NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 4
 RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$4,481,971
 I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY				
1976-1977	186,468	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless			
1977-1978	208,862	noted otherwise.			
1978-1979	263,969				
1979-1980	332,648	2004-2005	8,357,514	COMPTRROLLER	
1980-1981	456,910	2005-2006	9,415,359	COMPTRROLLER	
1981-1982	751,723	2006-2007	11,703,189	COMPTRROLLER	
1982-1983	824,522	2007-2008	11,974,151	COMPTRROLLER	
1983-1984	985,630	2008-2009	12,563,540	COMPTRROLLER	
1984-1985	1,105,843	2009-2010	13,122,152	COMPTRROLLER	
1985-1986	1,391,944	2010-2011	13,539,406	COMPTRROLLER	
1986-1987	1,603,219	2011-2012	10,899,949	COMPTRROLLER	
1987-1988	1,887,850	2012-2013	10,827,673	COMPTRROLLER	
1988-1989	2,113,085	2013-2014	10,682,736	COMPTRROLLER	
1989-1990	2,778,991	2014-2015	11,390,589	COMPTRROLLER	
1990-1991	3,138,342	2015-2016	no info yet		
1991-1992	3,445,772	2016-2017	17,927,884	LEVY	
1992-1993	3,537,044				
1993-1994	3,664,204				
1994-1995	3,730,445				
1995-1996	3,874,577	COMPTRROLLER			
1996-1997	4,710,640	COMPTRROLLER			
1997-1998	4,572,205	COMPTRROLLER			
1998-1999	5,018,950	COMPTRROLLER			
1999-2000	4,877,108	COMPTRROLLER			
2000-2001	6,088,323	COMPTRROLLER			
2001-2002	6,844,403	COMPTRROLLER			
2002-2003	7,813,995	COMPTRROLLER			
2003-2004	7,489,771	COMPTRROLLER			

TICE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

This fire department was originally created by the Lee County Commissioners as “Lee County Fire Control Operations Center” in October of 1971. Through the general revenue fund of the county plus surplus funds from the Sanibel Causeway Administration, all county taxpayers funded it until an MSTU (municipal service taxing unit) was created for the Tice community in 1975. Voters in Tice approved the incorporation of the Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District at a referendum held in September of 1976. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, non-transporting BLS rescue service. Fully paid career department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$1,143,352,181 (Real)
 + Tangible: 143,426,344
 \$1,286,778,525 x 3.50 mills = \$4,503,725

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.5
 NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 2
 RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,251,862
 I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 2

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	169,317	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.			
1977-1978	209,295				
1978-1979	261,268		2004-2005	2,852,148	COMPTRROLLER
1979-1980	269,968		2005-2006	3,599,012	COMPTRROLLER
1980-1981	329,392		2006-2007	3,632,815	COMPTRROLLER
1981-1982	505,236		2007-2008	3,853,867	COMPTRROLLER
1982-1983	552,566		2008-2009	3,707,543	COMPTRROLLER
1983-1984	592,234		2009-2010	3,256,377	COMPTRROLLER
1984-1985	636,297		2010-2011	2,826,412	COMPTRROLLER
1985-1986	686,628		2011-2012	3,140,991	COMPTRROLLER
1986-1987	836,870		2012-2013	3,149,202	COMPTRROLLER
1987-1988	945,909		2013-2014	2,927,871	COMPTRROLLER
1988-1989	1,022,893		2014-2015	No Report	
1989-1990	1,148,816		2015-2016	no info yet	
1990-1991	977,970		2016-2017	4,503,725	LEVY
1991-1992	1,005,831				
1992-1993	1,031,799				
1993-1994	1,055,727				
1994-1995	1,336,612				
1995-1996	1,420,663				
1996-1997	1,578,792	COMPTRROLLER			
1997-1998	1,517,325	COMPTRROLLER			
1998-1999	1,646,467	COMPTRROLLER			
1999-2000	1,667,563	COMPTRROLLER			
2000-2001	1,719,313	COMPTRROLLER			
2001-2002	2,075,069	COMPTRROLLER			
2002-2003	2,357,882	COMPTRROLLER			
2003-2004	2,310,316	COMPTRROLLER			

UPPER CAPTIVA FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

This independent special fire district was created by a vote of the people of Upper Captiva Island in a referendum in 1990. Provides fire suppression and non-transporting BLS rescue service. Volunteer fire department.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$198,129,813 (Real)
+ Tangible: 686,987
 \$198,816,800 x 3.750 mills = \$745,563
+ Special Assessments = \$447,400
 \$1,192,963

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. 3.75 is maximum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,192,963

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 10

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY	
1992-1993	97,297	LEE CO PROPERTY APPRAISER
1993-1994	100,484	LEE CO PROPERTY APPRAISER
1994-1995	118,463	LEE CO PROPERTY APPRAISER
1995-1996	492,961	COMPTRROLLER
1996-1997	138,766	COMPTRROLLER
1997-1998	153,047	COMPTRROLLER
1998-1999	181,138	COMPTRROLLER
1999-2000	183,227	COMPTRROLLER
2000-2001	211,299	COMPTRROLLER
2001-2002	269,557	COMPTRROLLER
2002-2003	280,146	COMPTRROLLER
2003-2004	526,917	COMPTRROLLER
2004-2005	413,408	COMPTRROLLER
2005-2006	403,602	COMPTRROLLER
2006-2007	524,279	COMPTRROLLER
2007-2008	560,917	COMPTRROLLER
2008-2009	529,607	COMPTRROLLER
2009-2010	581,537	COMPTRROLLER
2010-2011	675,402	COMPTRROLLER
2011-2012	634,410	COMPTRROLLER
2012-2013	712,735	COMPTRROLLER
2013-2014	621,373	COMPTRROLLER
2014-2015	1,165,723	COMPTRROLLER
2015-2016	no info yet	
2016-2017	1,192,63	COMBINED LEVIES

CITY OF FORT MYERS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Fort Myers in 1901. Became a fully paid career department in 1963. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, Hazardous Materials program (HAZ-MAT), non-transporting ALS rescue service. Fire-Rescue boat. Current budget is \$21,144,000 including capital improvement spending

Starting in fiscal year 2015-2016, the City of Fort Myers began to levy special assessments to help offset the cost of providing fire protection in the city. These assessments did not (and do not) fund the entire fire department budget. In the current fiscal year, the assessment rates are as follows:

\$77.91 per residence

\$00.51 per square foot for business & commercial properties

\$00.14 per square foot for industrial properties

\$00.119 per square foot for government & institutional properties.

The above rates to generate a total of \$3,620,000 and reducing the city property tax (millage) portion of the fire budget to \$17,524,000. Using these numbers, if the city's tax millage portion of the Fort Myers Fire Department's budget were supported by a separate non-homestead tax millage levy, that millage would be 2.325. * see below

BUDGET DIVIDED BY ASSESSED VALUE

*2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY:	\$7,543,357,742 x 2.325 =	\$17,524,000
	+ Special assessments =	3,620,000
	Total -	\$21,144,000

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – Within 10 mill city tax cap

SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS APPROVED BY VOTERS? No.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 6

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,524,000

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 2

Growth in the City of Fort Myers budget and/or expenditures over the past forty years involve new fire station construction and the required additional firefighters, paramedics and equipment.

ANNEXATIONS: - Prior to 1988, unincorporated area annexed to the City of Fort Myers continued to be served (and taxed) by the original serving fire district in the area. A special act of The Legislature in 1988 ended fire district taxing and service to annexed properties. As a result, budgeted expenditures of the Fort Myers Fire Department have increased accordingly to serve the annexed areas

FISCAL YEAR

1976-1977	997,769	
1977-1978	1,372,335	
1978-1979	1,316,413	
1979-1980	1,557,156	
1980-1981	1,772,105	
1981-1982	2,013,637	
1982-1983	2,688,066	
1983-1984	3,096,275	
1984-1985	3,276,259	
1985-1986	3,317,648	
1986-1987	3,484,139	
1987-1988	3,884,314	
1988-1989	3,982,430	
1989-1990	4,074,694	
1990-1991	4,931,947	
1991-1992	5,420,222	
1992-1993	5,189,408	
1993-1994	5,483,984	
1994-1995	5,485,071	
1995-1996	5,849,540	
1996-1997	6,033,562	
1997-1998	6,265,737	
1998-1999	7,833,758	
1999-2000	7,663,997	
2000-2001	7,892,182	
2001-2002	8,624,904	
2002-2003	9,206,769	
2003-2004	10,403,283	
2004-2005	12,319,295	
2005-2006	15,841,720	
2006-2007	18,349,380	
2007-2008	19,817,794	
2008-2009	22,550,833	
2009-2010	16,448,332	
2010-2011	20,222,734	
2011-2012	19,497,433	
2012-2013	21,086,633	
2013-2014	20,546,202	
2014-2015	18,257,000***	
2015-2016	19,257,000***	
2016-2017	21,144,000***	*** - Budget Dept

CAPE CORAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Cape Coral in 1961 and incorporated as an independent special district in 1963. The people of Cape Coral voted to incorporate their community as a city in 1970, and the following year, residents of the district voted to abolish the fire district and transfer its assets and liabilities to the newly incorporated City of Cape Coral. Includes ten fire stations, fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, non-transporting ALS rescue service. Fire-Rescue boat. Current 2016-2017 budget is \$26,651,686

In 2014, the City of Cape Coral adopted an ordinance setting and establishing special assessment rates to help offset the cost of providing fire protection within the city. This ordinance was subject to a legal challenge and was upheld by the courts on May 7, 2015. The special assessments are budgeted to fund 64% of the fire department budget in the current fiscal year.

The formula used for the fire special assessments are as follows:

\$122.60 per parcel, plus a graduated EBU (Equivalent Benefit Unit) rate which is based upon the value of the property.

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$18,019,440,417

2016-2017 ASSESSMENT LEVY: \$122.60 per parcel + graduated EBU Unit)

Using the above information, it appears that the special fire assessments will generate a total of \$17,057,079 which is 64% of the total fire department budget, while general city millage will generate the remaining 36% of the budget at \$9,594,607. Thus, if the remaining 36% of the fire budget were supported by a separate non-homestead tax millage, that rate would be 0.53245.

2016-2017 BUDGET: \$26,651,686

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? No - Within 10 mill city tax cap

ASSESSMENT RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? No.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 10

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,651,686

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

No incorporated municipality on Florida's west coast has experienced the tremendous growth Cape Coral has over the past thirty years. That growth is well documented by The U.S. Census Bureau, however, the Cape Coral Fire Department has grown from two stations in 1976 to ten stations by 2016. With over 150,000 residents as of the last U.S. Census, Cape Coral is the third largest city on Florida's gulf coast.

FISCAL YEAR

1976-1977	337,701
1977-1978	410,631
1978-1979	457,382
1979-1980	758,403
1980-1981	738,882
1981-1982	1,095,383
1982-1983	915,469
1983-1984	1,234,499
1984-1985	1,326,282
1985-1986	1,949,674
1986-1987	2,342,048
1987-1988	2,990,104
1988-1989	3,866,081
1989-1990	4,065,719
1990-1991	5,355,198
1991-1992	5,951,618
1992-1993	6,124,667
1993-1994	6,403,901
1994-1995	6,417,686
1995-1996	7,916,249

FISCAL YEAR

1996-1997	9,724,130
1997-1998	9,186,257
1998-1999	10,608,414
1999-2000	10,102,689
2000-2001	11,513,872
2001-2002	11,559,442
2002-2003	12,776,439
2003-2004	15,447,730
2004-2005	22,181,690
2005-2006	30,557,754
2006-2007	29,569,250
2007-2008	29,776,584
2008-2009	27,784,758
2009-2010	25,244,839
2010-2011	27,328,403
2011-2012	28,733,017
2012-2013	30,076,332
2013-2014	25,111,607
2014-2015	23,345,985****
2015-2016	25,934,200****

****City of Cape Coral Finance Dept.

LEE COUNTY FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

This budgetary category has had several different meanings over the years.

The 1945 Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 23383, Laws of Florida, creating the “Lee County Fire Control District.” Its boundaries included all of Lee County except for territory within the City of Fort Myers and within the Boca Grande Fire Control District – the only two communities in the county to have their own fire departments in 1945. The Board of County Commissioners was the governing body of the district and was authorized - but not mandated – to create a county fire department. The act also permitted Lee County to pay the City of Fort Myers to provide county fire control services if the County Commissioners chose not to create its own fire department. This district had no taxing authority, however.

The latter happened, and Lee County began to make annual payments to the City of Fort Myers in the amount of \$15,000.00 for county fire control. In 1957, the annual payment was increased to \$25,000 and increased again to \$67,460 in 1962. By 1968, the figure rose to \$98,425.00. When the City Council requested the payment be increased to \$131,565.00 in 1971, the County Commissioners balked and voted to create a county fire department in Tice instead. By then, sixteen additional Lee County communities had organized their own fire departments. As new fire control districts were incorporated, the territorial boundaries of the Lee County Fire Control District were reduced accordingly to the end that it includes a very limited area today.

From 1971 to 1975, \$686,739.00 in surplus funds from the Sanibel Causeway Administration funded the county fire control station in Tice. An MSTU (Municipal Service Taxing Unit) was created by the County Commissioners for the Tice community in 1975. At the same time, another MSTU was created to fund the volunteer fire companies in Alva, Bayshore, Fort Myers Shores, Estero, San Carlos Park, and Iona-McGregor.

In Fiscal Year 1976-1977, it was used to fund volunteer fire departments in Alva, Bayshore, Estero, Fort Myers Shores and San Carlos Park just before voters in those communities approved creation of independent fire districts. County MSTU taxing units were used to fund the now defunct Alico Fire MSTU prior to that community voting to be annexed into the South Trail Fire Protection & Rescue Service District. For the past 40 years or so, this category has represented three county fire MSTU taxing units, namely – Maravilla Fire MSTU, Burnt Store Fire MSTU and Useppa Island Fire MSTU.

The Maravilla Fire MSTU is used to buy fire protection from the City of Fort Myers Fire Department. Maravilla is a very small unincorporated area completely surrounded by the city. The Burnt Store Fire MSTU serves a similar purpose in that it is used to buy fire protection from the City of Cape Coral Fire Department in the Burnt Store Marina community. The Useppa Island Fire MSTU funds the volunteer fire department there. The Lee County Commissioners set the taxing rates for the following fire MSTUs:

Burnt Store Fire MSTU 2016-2017 Taxing Rate: 2,8588 mills
Maravilla Fire MSTU 2016-2017 Taxing Rate: 4.0000 mills
Useppa Island Fire MSTU 2016-2017 Taxing Rate: 2.6424 mills

LEE COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

Previous to 1969, ambulance service in Lee County was provided by several volunteer fire departments and funeral homes. There were no emergency medical technicians or paramedics at that time and it was considered sufficient that those who operated an ambulance have basic first aid training. That year, the Lee County Commissioners contracted with Southern Ambulance Service – a firm owned by a Mr. Ray Dean. Three years later, the county bought Mr. Dean’s business and the Lee County Ambulance Service came into being. By 1975, the name was changed to Lee County Emergency Medical Services. Today, Lee County EMS operates 37 ALS ambulances, the Lee Flight helicopters, two ALS non-transport units and on-call bicycle paramedics.

In 1987, The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians selected Lee County EMS for the “ALS Service Of The Year” award.

COMPARING APPLES TO APPLES

BROWARD COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE

ORGANIZATION: County owned and operated fire/rescue department that serves a limited area of unincorporated Broward County and six incorporated places by inter-local agreement. Incorporated areas include the cities of Cooper City, Dania Beach, Sea Ranch Lakes, Pembroke Park, Lauderdale Lakes and Deerfield Beach. The remaining 22 incorporated municipalities in Broward County own and operate their own fire departments or buy this service from adjacent municipalities.

Broward County is different than most other areas in that the overwhelming majority of county residents live within the boundaries of a city or town.

Prior to fiscal year 1977-1978, fire protection in the urbanized unincorporated area of Broward County was provided by numerous volunteer fire departments – all funded through a single independent special district known as Broward Fire Control. The Florida Legislature abolished the district in 1978 and transferred its assets and liabilities to the government of Broward County. On October 1, 2003, the County Commission turned Broward Fire & Rescue over to the Broward County Sheriff's Office and it has been operated as a division of that entity ever since.

Broward Fire Rescue is a fully paid career department.

2016-2017 BUDGET 112,614,110

2016-2017 FIRE-RESCUE MSTU: 2.6191 1,891.948

2016-2017 FIRE ASSESSMENT – \$217.00 unincorporated area + other rates

SOURCES OF FUNDING:

8,486,230 from city of Lauderdale Lakes

6,120,120 from West Park/Pembroke Park

10,653,780 from City of Dania Beach

24,996,030 from City of Deerfield Beach

9,470,780 from Port Everglades

53,093,140 from other revenues (assessments, fees and taxes)

Note: The City of Weston owns and funds its own fire-rescue department and contracts with Broward County Fire-Rescue for ambulance service. (Weston's current residential fire assessment is \$426.90.)

ASSESSMENTS APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by County Commission.
 TAX LEVY APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by County Commission
 NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 9
 COST PER STATION: \$5,206,485
 ISO RATING: Protection Class 3 with hydrants on approved water system.

FISCAL YEAR	FIRE	EMS	
1976-1977	445,297	1,790,205	
1977-1978	597,008	unknown	
MERGER - FIRE DISTRICT ABOLISHED			
1978-1979	1,929,201	4,502,564	*Note: These figures do not include amounts spent on countywide fire and rescue associated services. These include logistics, air rescue, specialized services administration (Haz-Mat, etc) and communications.
1979-1980	3,761,916	4,914,545	
1980-1981	2,472,531	7,326,870	
1981-1982	2,735,702	7,801,746	
1982-1983	3,445,000	8,767,000	
1983-1984	4,973,000	10,716,000	
1984-1985	6,006,000	12,498,000	
1985-1986	6,645,000	13,427,000	
1986-1987	8,444,000	14,296,000	
1987-1988	10,024,000	17,055,000	
1988-1989	9,694,000	15,506,000	
1989-1990	8,978,000	20,939,000	
1990-1991	10,144,000	22,642,000	
1991-1992	13,925,000	unknown	
1992-1993	11,284,000	24,413,000	
1993-1994	12,298,000	27,423,000	
1994-1995	13,588,000	30,367,000	
1995-1996	14,081,000	33,250,000	
1996-1997	17,323,000	27,279,000	
1997-1998	15,439,000	26,430,000	
1998-1999	17,213,000	28,101,000	
1999-2000	20,072,000	28,809,000	
2000-2001	20,217,000	28,119,000	
2001-2002	20,311,000	30,388,000	
2002-2003	21,647,000	34,529,000	
2003-2004	50,567,610	FIRE & EMS COMBINED**	
2004-2005	47,555,780	FIRE & EMS COMBINED**	
2005-2006	55,104,000	FIRE & EMS COMBINED**	
2006-2007	58,896,860	FIRE & EMS COMBINED Broward Co Budget Dept	
2007-2008	104,028,000		
2008-2009	87,550,000		
2009-2010	82,112,000	FIRE-EMS COMPTROLLER	
2010-2011	85,813,000	FIRE-EMS COMPTROLLER	
2011-2012	104,576,000	FIRE –EMS COMPTROLLER	
2012-2013	106,191,000	FIRE-EMS COMPTROLLER	
2013-2014	110,583,000	FIRE-EMS COMPTROLLER	
2014-2015	99,894,300	County Budget	
2015-2016	105,076,070	County Budget	
2016-2017	112,614,110	County Budget	

**Note: Figures from Broward County Department of Elected Officials. All others from The Office of Florida State Comptroller, now known as Florida Department Of Financial Services.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Estimated total county population as of July 1, 2015 – 173,115

ORGANIZATION: - County owned and operated fire-rescue department serving Charlotte County, less and except within the City of Punta Gorda, the Boca Grande Fire Control District and the Englewood Area Fire Control District.

2016-2017 FIRE BUDGET: \$27,953,487 Charlotte Fire MSBU
2016-2017 EMS BUDGET: + \$14,961,627 General Revenue Fund
2016-2017 TOTAL: \$42,915,114

2016-2017 FIRE ASSESSMENT RATES: \$155.99 per residence + additional rates for business and commercial, vacant lots, acreage, etc.

2016-2017 EMS TAXING RATES: - Not available because countywide ad valorem tax revenue plus user fees support it.

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 16

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,682,194

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 4 in areas with hydrants on approved water systems and class 9 and 10 in all others.

HISTORY:

Previous to 1981, six special districts provided fire protection:

Port Charlotte-Charlotte Harbor Fire Control District (independent)

Charlotte County South Fire Control District (independent)

Harbour Heights Fire Control District (independent)

Alligator Creek Fire District (county-dependent)

East Charlotte Fire District (county-dependent)

El Jobean – Gulf Cove Fire District. (county-dependent)

In January of 1981, Charlotte County abolished its three dependent fire districts and created Charlotte County Fire-Rescue. In 1985, the Port-Charlotte-Charlotte Harbor and Charlotte County South independent districts were abolished and transferred to county control, and in 1991, Harbour Heights Fire Control District was abolished and merged with the county fire and rescue department.

FISCAL YEAR	CO FIRE	IND. DISTRICT FIRE	FIRE TOTAL	CO EMS
1976-1977	161,447	118,700	280,147	43,399
1977-1978	70,310	149,774	220,084	46,246
1978-1979	144,583	302,179	446,762	117,420
1979-1980	150,249	612,025	762,274	60,000
1980-1981	339,590	807,729	1,147,319	128,418
1981-1982	432,421	882,099	1,314,520	828,616
1982-1983	739,780	850,058	1,589,838	888,749
1983-1984	501,559	1,030,281	1,531,840	982,332
1984-1985	659,731	1,210,797	1,870,528	1,076,623
1985-1986	174,332	1,405,047	1,579,379	1,544,312
MERGER: ALL DISTRICTS EXCEPT HARBOR HEIGHTS ABOLISHED				
1986-1987	2,167,339	339,619	2,506,958	1,623,500
1987-1988	3,032,021	135,227	3,167,248	1,729,046
1988-1989	2,960,488	206,854	3,167,342	2,540,329
1989-1990	4,129,414	293,880	4,423,294	2,480,640
MERGER: HARBOUR HEIGHTS FIRE DISTRICT ABOLISHED				
1991-1992	4,672,301	N/A	4,672,301	2,882,186
1992-1993	5,136,975	N/A	5,136,975	3,238,594
1993-1994	6,009,723	N/A	6,009,723	3,182,304
1994-1995	6,336,571	N/A	6,336,571	3,865,065
1995-1996	9,691,474	N/A	9,691,474	no report
1996-1997	9,063,972	N/A	9,063,972	4,200,825
1997-1998	7,881,657	N/A	7,881,657	4,797,684
1998-1999	7,852,553	N/A	7,852,553	5,091,234
1999-2000	8,714,251	N/A	8,714,251	5,431,614
2000-2001	9,355,426	N/A	9,355,426	6,696,559
2001-2002	11,318,361	N/A	11,318,361	7,916,577
2002-2003	12,122,023	N/A	12,122,023	9,428,309
2003-2004	15,285,446	N/A	15,285,446	9,248,690
2004-2005	15,901,880	N/A	15,901,880	unknown
2005-2006	31,048,502	N/A	22,898,818	12,062,408
2006-2007	27,939,662	N/A	27,939,662	14,298,405
2007-2008	21,571,714	N/A	21,571,714	13,201,965
2008-2009	18,479,188	N/A	18,479,188	13,257,505
2009-2010	29,468,651 (both fire & EMS) actual from comptroller below			
2009-2010	30,054,245 total fire & EMS	N/A	17,791,147	12,263,098
2010-2011	33,419,188 total fire & EMS	N/A	22,612,587	10,806,601
2011-2012	30,965,674 total fire & EMS	N/A	19,533,397	11,432,277
2012-2013	31,555,872 total fire & EMS	N/A	20,539,066	11,016,806
2013-2014	35,872,816 total fire & EMS	N/A	21,904,447	13,968,369
2014-2015	no report			
2015-2016	no report			
2016-2017	27,953,487	N/A	27,953,487	14,961,627

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Estimated total county population as of July 1, 2015 - 1,349,050

ORGANIZATION: - A county funded and controlled agency providing fire protection to unincorporated Hillsborough County, and EMS ambulance service to the same area plus to the city of Plant City by inter-local agreement. The other incorporated communities of Tampa and Temple Terrace own and operate their own fire and rescue departments. Fully paid career department.

HISTORY: What is now the Hillsborough County Fire-Rescue Department began as six special fire control districts and volunteer fire companies in the early 1950s just before the City of Tampa began an aggressive annexation program in its adjacent suburbs. They included the North Inter-Bay Special Fire Control District, South Inter-Bay Special Fire Control District, Sulpher Springs Special Fire Control District, Bayshore Special Fire Protection District, Drew Park Special Fire Control District, the Lutz Special Fire Control District and the Temple Crest Volunteer Fire Department. By 1962, all of the communities above – except Lutz – had been annexed into the City of Tampa.

After that, new suburbs began to spring up in the unincorporated areas surrounding Tampa, and new volunteer fire companies were organized in the communities of Arm-Dale, Brandon, North Hillsborough, Thonotosassa, Lutz, Wimauma-Balm, Seffner-Mango, Palm River, Sun City Center, Ruskin, Bloomingdale, Cork-Knights, North Brandon, Dover-Turkey Creek, and other communities. In 1973, Hillsborough County began to fund the volunteer fire departments and eventually took them over and replaced them with paid staff. On January 1, 2013, Hillsborough County closed the last six remaining volunteer stations – replacing 150 volunteers with 78 paid fire-fighters and adding \$5.2 million to the budget to pay for them.

2016-2017 FIRE/EMS BUDGET: \$ 148,842,521

2016-2017 FIRE/EMS FUNDING: 999,894 from general revenue fund
 +145,872,370 from unincorporated area MSTU
 + 448,340 from countywide special purpose
 + 1,521,917 from inter-governmental revenue
TOTAL 148,842,521

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 42

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,543,870

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 3/10

FISCAL YEAR	FIRE	EMS	TOTAL
1976-1977	1,858,586	3,581,762	5,440,348
1977-1978	2,269,315	4,069,439	6,338,754
1978-1979	2,705,162	no report	incomplete
1979-1980	3,467,434	5,137,946	8,605,380
1980-1981	3,891,146	5,784,946	9,676,132
1981-1982	4,341,108	7,688,936	12,030,044
1982-1983	5,096,096	5,928,849	11,024,945
1983-1984	5,754,409	6,946,976	12,701,385
1984-1985	6,868,057	7,130,542	13,998,599
1985-1986	9,119,920	7,988,294	17,108,214
1986-1987	10,768,563	7,787,257	18,555,820
1987-1988	13,331,255	7,420,662	20,751,917
1988-1989	14,679,117	7,325,295	22,094,412
1989-1990	18,760,803	9,921,760	28,682,563
1990-1991	18,693,974	8,873,841	27,567,815
1991-1992	19,747,562	9,432,509	29,180,071
1992-1993	21,252,533	unknown	incomplete
1993-1994	23,686,663	unknown	incomplete
1994-1995	24,947,197	unknown	incomplete
1995-1996	25,637,769*	9,886,982*	35,504,751*
1996-1997	27,092,783*	11,558,958*	38,651,741*
1997-1998	32,062,631	11,707,971	43,770,602
1998-1999	34,450,067	11,611,637	46,061,704
1999-2000	COMBINED REPORTING		51,104,873
2000-2001	COMBINED REPORTING		54,420,772
2001-2002	COMBINED REPORTING		60,137,957
2002-2003	COMBINED REPORTING		69,173,421
2003-2004	COMBINED REPORTING		76,704,200
2004-2005	COMBINED REPORTING		85,736,358
2005-2006	COMBINED REPORTING		89,234,832
2006-2007	98,152,976	5,371,003	103,523,979
2007-2008	96,398,599	16,670,381	113,068,980
2008-2009	86,340,240	24,948,877	111,289,177
2009-2010	92,349,543	24,577,018	116,926,561
2010-2011	93,144,206	22,729,154	115,873,360
2011-2012	88,463,194	20,963,016	109,426,210
2012-2013	98,129,174	21,321,223	119,450,397
2013-2014	106,601,173	19,476,795	126,077,968
2014-2015			131,486,754*
2015-2016			142,892,245*
2016-2017			148,842,521*

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Estimated total county population as of July 1, 2015 – 2,693,117

ORGANIZATION: - A county-dependent special district of Dade County since 1957, this department serves unincorporated Miami-Dade County plus twenty-one of the total twenty-nine municipalities within the county. The cities of Miami, Miami Beach, Hialeah, Coral Gables and the Village Of Key Biscayne own and operate their own fire and rescue departments. Miami-Dade County department has ALS and paramedics and transports at established rates.

2016-2017 TOTAL BUDGET: \$404,500.000
2016-2017 OPERATING BUDGET: \$361,000,000 MDRF website
2016-2017 TAXING RATES: 2.4207 Mills
2016-2017 Debt Millage 0.0075 Mills

TAX MILLAGE APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.
NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 68
RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$5,948,529
I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4/10

FISCAL YEAR	ACTUALLY SPENT
1976-1977	13,941,003
1977-1978	19,728,421
1978-1979	22,983,000
1979-1980	26,586,000
1980-1981	34,542,000
1981-1982	40,141,000
1982-1983	46,232,000
1983-1984	52,682,000
1984-1985	58,392,000
1985-1986	61,588,000
1986-1987	71,147,000
1987-1988	78,070,000
1988-1989	85,873,000
1989-1990	99,383,000
1990-1991	100,388,000
1991-1992	113,249,000
1992-1993	118,990,000
1993-1994	119,086,000
1994-1995	128,982,941
1995-1996	137,000,000*
1996-1997	144,488,000*
1997-1998	167,776,420
1998-1999	164,680,702
1999-2000	187,567,931
2000-2001	188,128,401
2001-2002	206,967,988
2002-2003	216,506,186

2003-2004	234,465,289	
2004-2005	265,034,471	
2005-2006	295,056,000*	(Budgeted figure)
2006-2007	360,931,912	EMS is another 14,342,470
2007-2008	382,980,070	EMS is another 13,506,789
2008-2009	382,259,312	EMS is another 13,023,151
2009-2010	408,332,000	(Budget Dept)
2010-2011	384,270,816	with EMS
2011-2012	357,907,636	with EMS
2012-2013	351,585,853	with EMS
2013-2014	360,837,448	with EMS
2014-2015	385,311,000	
2015-2016		
2016-2017	404,500,000	

*Note: These figures from Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser. All other figures are from Office of Florida State Comptroller.

ORANGE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Estimated total county population as of July 1, 2015 – 1,288,126

ORGANIZATION: A county owned and operated fire-rescue department which serves all of unincorporated Orange County – less and except the Reedy Creek Improvement District at Disneyworld – plus the municipalities of Belle Isle, Edgewood and Oakland by inter-local agreement. It is said to be the third largest fire department in the state. Provides fire prevention and suppression, transporting and non-transporting ALS rescue (although the county contracts with Rural-Metro Services, Incorporated for ambulance service), Haz-Mat (Hazardous Materials handling), USAR Task Force 4. Fully paid career department.

HISTORY

Previous to 1981, unincorporated Orange County was served by fourteen county-dependent fire control districts – all operating and existing under a single special act of the Legislature. (Chapter 26460 Laws of Florida 1949) They were:

Apopka Fire Control District	Lockhart Fire Control District
Conway Fire Control District	Orlo Vista Fire Control District
Goldenrod Fire Control District	Pine Castle Fire Control District
Holden Heights Fire Control District	Pine Hills Fire Control District
Killarney Fire Control District	Taft Fire Control District
Lake Barton Fire Control District	Union Park Fire Control District
Lake Sue Fire Control District	Zellwood Fire Control District

Efforts to consolidate the fire districts into a single county fire department were opposed by the voters who soundly rejected the proposal at a 1976 referendum. In 1980, area legislators sponsored a bill to repeal the districts enabling act and transfer them to county government without a referendum. (Chapter 80-557 Laws Of Florida)

2016-2017 BUDGET: \$201,200,185 (annual budget doc)

2016-2017 TAXING RATE 2.2437 mills for total taxes levied \$131,378,006

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 41

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$4,907,321

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	7,466,012.00	Dependent fire district totals
1977-1978	7,946,933.00	Dependent fire district totals
1978-1979	8,999,575.00	Dependent fire district totals
1979-1980	10,045,559.00	Dependent fire district totals
1980-1981	12,680,770.00	Dependent fire district totals
MERGER: THE FIRE DISTRICTS ARE CONSOLIDATED		
1981-1982	14,897,644.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1982-1983	15,316,882.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1983-1984	17,601,178.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1984-1985	18,704,447.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1985-1986	22,608,268.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1986-1987	23,999,031.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1987-1988	29,149,650.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1988-1989	34,708,033.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1989-1990	41,709,960.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1990-1991	45,195,677.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1991-1992	44,912,393.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1992-1993	47,486,127.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1993-1994	53,545,120.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1994-1995	56,264,750.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1995-1996	48,566,211.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1996-1997	51,826,175.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1997-1998	57,726,395.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1998-1999	67,517,566.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1999-2000	75,881,394.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2000-2001	85,750,215.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2001-2002	86,317,140.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2002-2003	89,407,324.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2003-2004	106,397,682.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2004-2005	114,507,386.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2005-2006	150,694,227.00	(Orange County Budget Dept)
2006-2007	175,244,407.00	(Orange County Budget Dept) Florida Comptroller
2007-2008	136,031,135.00	COMPTRROLLER
2008-2009	139,907,920.00	COMPTRROLLER
2009-2010	186,716,612.00	(Orange County Budget Dept)
2010-2011	175,298,829.00	(Orange County Budget Dept)
2011-2012	124,585,634.00	OCFR website
2012-2013	121,403,565.00	OCFR website
2013-2014	137,576,095.00	OCFR website
2014-2015	133,707,896.00	OCFR fire website
2015-2016		
2016-2017	201,200,185.00	OC adopted budget

PALM BEACH COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Estimated total county population as of July 1, 2015 – 1,422,789

A county owned and operated fire rescue department. Provides fire prevention and suppression, ALS rescue service with transport service for ALS type emergencies only: BLS transport service provided by private ambulance company under contract (American Medical Response, Inc.), Hazardous Materials (Haz-Mat), fire inspections and investigations and building plans review. Serves all of unincorporated Palm Beach County plus the municipalities of Belle Glade, Cloud Lake, Glen Ridge, Haverhill, Juno Beach, Jupiter, Lake Clarke Shores, Lake Park, Lake Worth, Lantana, Loxahatchee, Manalapan, Pahokee, Palm Springs, Royal Palm Beach, South Bay, South Palm Beach and Wellington.

Previous to 1984, ten county-dependent fire control districts provided fire protection – all operating under the same enabling act of the Legislature. (Chapter 59-1700 and Chapter 63-1747, Laws of Florida. They were:

Del Trail Fire Control District	Southwest Fire Control District
Canal Point Fire Control District	Jupiter-Tequesta Fire Control District
Old Dixie Fire Control Tax District	Juno Beach Fire Control District
Military Park Fire Control District	Trail Park Fire Control District
Reservation Fire Control District	Palm Beach International Airport Fire

The 1983 Florida Legislature repealed these special acts. (Chapter 83-495 Laws of FL)

2016-2017 BUDGET: \$363,862,947

2016-2017 TAXING RATES:

(a.) URBANIZED AREA EXCEPT IN JUPITER:	3.4581 Mills
(b.) WITHIN TOWN OF JUPITER ONLY:	2.0035 Mills

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 45

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	3,696,888	dependent fire district totals	
1977-1978	4,364,133	dependent fire district totals	
1978-1979	no report		
1979-1980	6,166,384	dependent fire district totals	
1980-1981	8,202,360	dependent fire district totals	
1981-1982	11,639,119	dependent fire district totals	
1982-1983	14,792,920	dependent fire district totals	
1983-1984	18,120,437	dependent fire district totals	
1984-1985	19,548,096	dependent fire district totals	
MERGER – THE FIRE DISTRICTS ARE CONSOLIDATED			
1985-1986	24,118,736	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1986-1987	28,218,864	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1987-1988	42,157,595	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1988-1989	35,554,511	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1989-1990	39,217,446	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1990-1991	47,106,092	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1991-1992	51,882,863	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1992-1993	55,045,071	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1993-1994	59,462,268	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1994-1995	61,143,599	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1995-1996	66,672,022	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1996-1997	80,045,452	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1997-1998	83,054,314	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1998-1999	83,111,225	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1999-2000	93,467,881	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2000-2001	109,569,785	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2001-2002	122,387,687	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2002-2003	134,579,799	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2003-2004	146,756,188	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2004-2005	163,543,619	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2005-2006	246,000,000	Operating Budget without capital	Co Property Appraiser
2006-2007	274,594,303	Operating Budget without capital	Co Property Appraiser
2007-2008	238,209,994	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2008-2009	231,132,609	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2009-2010	235,646,410		
2010-2011	243,977,276		
2011-2012	239,040,368		
2012-2013:	253,463,957		
2013-2014:	259,782,186		
2014-2015:			
2015-2016			
2016-2017	363,862,947	county budget dept	

All figures from the Office of Florida State Comptroller except as noted otherwise.

SARASOTA COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Estimated total county population as of July 1, 2015 – 405,549

A county owned and operated fire rescue department. Provides fire prevention and suppression service to the city of Sarasota and the unincorporated area less and except within the Englewood Area Fire Control District and within the community of Nokomis. Transporting ALS rescue service to the cities of Sarasota, Venice and to the unincorporated area. (The cities of North Port and Longboat Key own and operate their own ambulance service.) Fully paid career department within the Urban Service Area and volunteer firefighters outside of the Urban Service Area.

HISTORY:

Prior to 1985, three independent special fire control districts provided fire protection in the urbanized unincorporated areas outside the city limits of Sarasota, namely:

South Trail Area Fire Control District,
Northeast Area Fire Control District, and
Fruitville Area Fire Control District.

In 1985, these three special districts were consolidated into a single new independent district called the Metropolitan Sarasota County Fire & Rescue District by special act – without a referendum. (Chapter 85-498, Laws of Florida). The following year, another special act of the Legislature dissolved this district and transferred its assets and liabilities to the government of Sarasota County – without a referendum. (Chapter 86-346, Laws of Florida). The act was effective February 1, 1987. By 1991, the South Venice Fire District and the Pinecraft Fire Control Districts were also dissolved and transferred to county fire operations. On January 1, 1996, the City of Sarasota gave its fire department to Sarasota County.

2016-2017 ADOPTED BUDGET: 95,048,492 website SC FY annual

From:

\$4,660,316 county General Revenue Fund
\$41,638,716 SC fire fund (assessments)
\$363,585 advanced grants fund
\$668,434 reimbursement grants fund
\$2,324,930 9-1-1 communications fee fund
\$44,982,511 emergency services MSTU fund (ambulance)

This is the adopted budget total for the county fire and EMS system in place, and does not include Emergency Communications, Beach-Pool Safety and Emergency Management funding.

2016-2017 FIRE TOTAL LEVY: \$41,638,716
 2016-2017 EMS TAX LEVY: \$44,982,511
 2016-2017 EMS TAXING RATE: 0.6600 Mills
 2016-2017 FIRE ASSESSMENTS: (see below)

Based upon the square footage of properties as follows:

RESIDENTIAL – \$6.72 per Equivalent Billing Unit. Total square footage divided by 100 with a minimum of 6720. Example: a 1,000 square foot home is assessed at \$67.20 for fire – a 2,000 square foot home is assessed at \$134.40, and so forth.

COMMERCIAL - \$13.29 per EBU.

AGRICULTURAL - \$2.65 per EBU

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 22

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$4,320,386

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 2 in Urban Service Area only. (as of Oct 1, 2015). Rural areas are Class 10 or un-rated except Myakka Valley area, which has a rating of 8-B.

FISCAL YEAR	IND. DISTRICTS FIRE	CO. FIRE	CO. EMS
1976-1977	1,206,904	25,639	236,526
1977-1978	1,378,760	9,412	298,277
1978-1979	1,644,529	61,682	430,532
1979-1980	3,956,960	9,412	514,697
1980-1981	4,482,566	348,338	588,310
1981-1982	5,863,420	no record	540,045
1982-1983	6,214,292	9,624	1,313,491
1983-1984	8,816,662	10,912	1,270,381
1984-1985	5,161,834	191,214	1,369,540
MERGER: NORTHEAST, FRUITVILLE & SO TRAIL AREA CONSOLIDATED			
1985-1986	5,693,200	10,912	2,109,490
1986-1987	8,152,607	10,912	2,017,517
MERGER: NEW METRO SARASOTA CO FIRE DISTRICT ABOLISHED			
1987-1988	15,850	8,256,176	2,227,462
1988-1989	18,055	10,140,647	no record
1989-1990	15,336	9,471,251	2,018,801
1990-1991	20,019	10,958,507	2,356,355
MERGER: PINECRAFT FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT ABOLISHED			
1991-1992	N/A	12,465,594	2,390,914
1992-1993	N/A	14,345,858	no record
1993-1994	N/A	14,552,145	no record
1994-1995	N/A	15,761,005	no record

MERGER: CITY OF SARASOTA GIVES THEIR FIRE DEPT TO COUNTY

1995-1996	N/A	21,812,295	2,816,620
1996-1997	N/A	27,681,283	3,010,947
1997-1998	N/A	28,659,796	2,925,796
1998-1999	N/A	30,185,452	3,112,571
1999-2000	N/A	31,401,277	3,398,004
2000-2001	N/A	31,967,954	3,489,028
2001-2002	N/A	34,519,732	3,314,153
2002-2003	N/A	39,327,066	3,212,190
2003-2004	N/A	26,213,252	21,487,118
2004-2005	N/A	32,239,876	25,124,248
2005-2006	N/A	28,551,835	26,645,195
2006-2007	N/A	33,459,613	29,908,192
2007-2008	N/A	28,154,092	34,270,110
2008-2009	N/A	34,270,110	37,561,342
2009-2010	N/A	37,025,145	37,007,764
2010-2011	N/A	33,825,059	36,731,783
2011-2012	N/A	35,513,513	33,795,266
2012-2013	N/A	38,688,048	35,036,965
2013-2014	N/A	39,653,427	35,498,244
2014-2015	N/A		
2015-2016	N/A		
2016-2017	N/A	adopted budget	95,048,492

COLLIER COUNTY

Total population estimate as of July 1, 2015 – 357,305

COLLIER COUNTY FIRE

This category includes the Ochopee Fire Control MSTU, the Isle of Capri Fire MSTU and, until FY 1982-1983, the former Golden Gate Fire MSTU. Golden Gate voters approved the creation of the independent Golden Gate Fire Control District in 1982 and is recorded as a separate government beginning FY 1983-1984. All numbers from Florida Dept of Finance (Comptroller) unless otherwise noted.

TAX MILLAGE RATE – COUNTY FIRE CONTROL	2.00	323,073
TAX MILLAGE RATE – ISLE OF CAPRI FIRE UNIT:	2.00	1,098,111
TAX MILLAGE RATE – OCHOPEE FIRE UNIT:	4.5	1,474,440
TAX MILLAGE RATE – FIDDLER’S CREEK FIRE UNIT	1.5	101,121
<u>TAX MILLAGE RATE – GOODLAND FIRE UNIT</u>	<u>1.2760</u>	<u>100,260</u>
2016-2017 TOTAL COUNTY FIRE LEVY:		3,097,005

1980-1981	335,393	1990-1991	1,179,182	2000-2001	1,618,231	2010-2011	3,306,663
1981-1982	460,673	1991-1992	1,238,838	2001-2002	1,702,907	2011-2012	3,391,251
1982-1983	453,092	1992-1993	no report	2002-2003	1,955,318	2012-2013	3,391,251
1983-1984	297,768	1993-1994	937,171	2003-2004	2,228,480	2013-2014	3,224,717
1984-1985	498,509	1994-1995	977,905	2004-2005	2,671,162	2014-2015	3,644,051
1985-1986	470,809	1995-1996	1,096,949	2005-2006	3,467,251	2015-2016	no info yet
1986-1987	568,799	1996-1997	1,089,481	2006-2007	3,284,750	2016-2017	3,097,005
1987-1988	886,660	1997-1998	1,034,570	2007-2008	3,565,053		
1988-1989	996,260	1998-1999	1,376,275	2008-2009	4,017,563		
1989-1990	1,172,554	1999-2000	1,298,733	2009-2010	3,542,525		

BIG CORKSCREW ISLAND FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT –now defunct

All figures from Florida State Comptroller unless otherwise noted

1980-1981	9,724	1990-1991	no report	2000-2001	863,356	2010-2011	3,085,160
1981-1982	18,698	1991-1992	no report	2001-2002	1,371,709	2011-2012	3,334,027
1982-1983	37,866	1992-1993	404,774	2002-2003	1,721,360	2012-2013	4,114,236
1983-1984	23,804	1993-1994	335,924	2003-2004	1,808,802	2013-2014	3,770,773
1984-1985	56,036	1994-1995	376,467	2004-2005	2,362,165	2014-2015	N/A
1985-1986	81,850	1995-1996	438,521	2005-2006	3,683,915		
1986-1987	162,885	1996-1997	427,483	2006-2007	3,856,011		
1987-1988	368,187	1997-1998	526,862	2007-2008	4,581,031		
1988-1989	242,394	1998-1999	608,751	2008-2009	4,747,804		
1989-1990	265,541	1999-2000	797,627	2009-2010	4,172,227		

EAST NAPLES FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT –now defunct

1980-1981	571,271	1990-1991	4,058,604	2000-2001	6,435,509	2010-2011	17,953,864
1981-1982	704,987	1991-1992	no report	2001-2002	6,877,381	2011-2012	11,591,968
1982-1983	813,473	1992-1993	3,767,601	2002-2003	8,331,793	2012-2013	13,041,410
1983-1984	1,061,699	1993-1994	3,864,365	2003-2004	9,529,119	2013-2014	13,461,197
1984-1985	1,471,912	1994-1995	3,969,518	2004-2005	14,806,216	2014-2015#	1,261,626
1985-1986	1,594,449	1995-1996	4,238,329	2005-2006	15,233,352	#-partial due to merger	
1986-1987	1,975,810	1996-1997	5,002,000	2006-2007	16,480,713		
1987-1988	2,622,974	1997-1998	5,074,038	2007-2008	18,412,305		
1988-1989	3,055,141	1998-1999	5,368,276	2008-2009	17,345,526		
1989-1990	3,392,717	1999-2000	6,101,428	2009-2010	15,466,413		

GOLDEN GATE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT – now defunct

1980-1981	n/a	1990-1991	1,457,836	2000-2001	2,664,267	2010-2011	7,795,185
1981-1982	n/a	1991-1992	1,005,860	2001-2002	4,599,055	2011-2012	7,154,259
1982-1983	n/a	1992-1993	983,422	2002-2003	6,798,178	2012-2013	8,221,949
1983-1984	278,133	1993-1994	1,133,284	2003-2004	12,844,896	2013-2014	8,017,173
1984-1985	352,491	1994-1995	1,417,327	2004-2005	6,723,704	2014-2015#	789,675
1985-1986	416,012	1995-1996	1,297,566	2005-2006	11,156,486	#partial due to merger	
1986-1987	511,572	1996-1997	1,348,919	2006-2007	12,609,317		
1987-1988	665,537	1997-1998	1,863,309	2007-2008	18,412,305		
1988-1989	966,310	1998-1999	1,636,655	2008-2009	17,345,526		
1989-1990	1,015,528	1999-2000	2,658,494	2009-2010	8,214,556		

GREATER NAPLES FIRE AND RESCUE DISTRICT

This district is the result of a merger of East Naples Fire Control District and Golden Gate Fire Control & Rescue District in 2014. Service to Isles of Capri fire MSTU and Ochopee fire MSTU per contract with Collier County.

2016-2017 MILLAGE RATE: 1.5?

2016-2017 BUDGET: 32,623,851

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS – 10

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION CURRENT FISCAL YEAR: 3,263,851

ISO RATING – 4/10

FORMER East Naples	2014-2015	1,261,626
+FORMER Golden Gate	2014-2015	789,675
+New District	2014-2015	21,724,742
TOTAL Gr Naples	2014-2015	23,776,043
Budget	2015-2016	28,391,119
Budget	2016-2017	32,623,851

IMMOKALEE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2016-2017 BUDGET: 10,060,723

2016-2017 TAX MILLAGE RATE: 3.75 mills

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,353,574 using budget

I.S.O. RATING: Class 5 with hydrants/Class 9 no hydrants

1980-1981	23,955	1990-1991	573,344	2000-2001	848,910	2010-2011	2,424,457
1981-1982	29,846	1991-1992	583,267	2001-2002	1,011,057	2011-2012	1,674,372
1982-1983	24,462	1992-1993	681,625	2002-2003	1,218,473	2012-2013	2,263,196
1983-1984	no report	1993-1994	775,133	2003-2004	1,468,712	2013-2014	2,568,047
1984-1985	58,809	1994-1995	921,117	2004-2005	1,438,727	2014-2015	4,360,188
1985-1986	249,786	1995-1996	no report	2005-2006	1,552,956	2015-2016	8,523,595
1986-1987	161,507	1996-1997	778,242	2006-2007	1,797,498	2016-2017	10,060,723
1987-1988	178,458	1997-1998	841,145	2007-2008	2,922,804		
1988-1989	277,981	1998-1999	661,961	2008-2009	2,245,233		
1989-1990	421,928	1999-2000	1,165,060	2009-2010	2,523,761		

LITTLE HICKORY – BONITA SHORES FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

This district is now defunct.

1980-1981	no report	1990-1991	82,952
1981-1982	12,466	Note: After FY 1990-1991, the district was dissolved	
1982-1983	25,934	and merged by referendum into the district limits of	
1983-1984	no report	the North Naples Fire Control District.	
1984-1985	7,745		
1985-1986	11,679		
1986-1987	29,985		
1987-1988	63,167		
1988-1989	34,586		
1989-1990	40,359		

MARCO ISLAND FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT/CITY OF MARCO ISLAND FIRE

The Marco Island Fire Control District became defunct as a result of the referendum to incorporate the City of Marco Island in 1999. The district's assets and liabilities were transferred to the city at that time.

2016-2017 BUDGET: 6,071,835

NUMBER OF STATIONS: - 2

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,035,917

ISO RATING:

1980-1981	341,371	1990-1991	1,846,678	2000-2001	2,690,618	2010-2011	4,842,799
1981-1982	460,134	1991-1992	5,583,972	2001-2002	2,683,913	2011-2012	4,904,319
1982-1983	427,607	1992-1993	2,113,356	2002-2003	2,601,028	2012-2013	10,741,014
1983-1984	693,068	1993-1994	2,499,619	2003-2004	2,529,754	2013-2014	6,295,373
1984-1985	794,800	1994-1995	2,153,717	2004-2005	3,371,921	2014-2015	6,078,704#
1985-1986	771,676	1995-1996	2,280,947	2005-2006	2,871,196	2015-2016	5,810,325#
1986-1987	1,100,093	1996-1997	2,933,159	2006-2007	3,553,820	2016-2017	6,071,835#
1987-1988	980,654	1997-1998	no report	2007-2008	3,780,794		
1988-1989	1,314,673	1998-1999	3,382,566	2008-2009	4,274,725		
1989-1990	1,511,975	1999-2000	2,335,698	2009-2010	5,265,903		

NORTH COLLIER FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT

This district is the result of a merger of the North Naples Fire Control District and the Big Corkscrew Island Fire Control District in 2014.

2016-2017 TAX LEVY: North Naples Service Area = 0.95/Big Corkscrew Area 3.45

2016-2017 BUDGET: \$34,682,158

MILLAGE APPROVED BY VOTERS? – Yes – by referendum prior to merger.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 10

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,468,215

ISO RATING – Class 3 in North Naples Division/Class 5/9 in Big Corkscrew

2015-2016 28,459,958 budget millage was 0.95 in NN area and 3.45 in BCI area

2016-2017 34,682,158 budget millage is .0.95 in NN area and 3.45 in BCI area

NORTH NAPLES FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT – now defunct

1980-1981	615,668	1990-1991	4,477,616	2000-2001	13,068,551	2010-2011	25,167,532
1981-1982	736,027	1991-1992	no report	2001-2002	14,791,739	2011-2012	23,425,755
1982-1983	1,467,924	1992-1993	4,972,830	2002-2003	16,200,604	2012-2013	24,473,306
1983-1984	1,730,233	1993-1994	5,199,407	2003-2004	15,398,546	2013-2014	26,620,487
1984-1985	1,506,897	1994-1995	6,456,790	2004-2005	20,596,401		
1985-1986	1,519,059	1995-1996	6,583,688	2005-2006	25,994,040		
1986-1987	3,482,483	1996-1997	7,329,361	2006-2007	32,343,857		
1987-1988	2,536,013	1997-1998	10,302,179	2007-2008	25,562,192		
1988-1989	3,035,575	1998-1999	11,932,914	2008-2009	27,881,160		
1989-1990	3,810,028	1999-2000	12,016,720	2009-2010	25,464,821		

NAPLES FIRE DEPARTMENT (City)

Municipal fire department – fully paid. 3 fire stations.

ISO RATING: – Class 2. .

2016-2017 BUDGET: \$9,554,667

2016-2017 RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION: \$3,184,889

		2000-2001	3,558,210	2010-2011	8,751,592
		2001-2002	4,093,542	2011-2012	9,791,833
		2002-2003	4,869,603	2012-2013	9,497,107
1993-1994	2,723,712	2003-2004	4,876,406	2013-2014	8,573,566#
1994-1995	2,951,106	2004-2005	7,485,181	2014-2015	8,984,034#
1995-1996	2,490,746	2005-2006	7,519,162	2015-2016	9,008,027#
1996-1997	2,939,359	2006-2007	7,385,244	2016-2017	9,554,667#
1997-1998	2,947,782	2007-2008	8,403,085		
1998-1999	3,140,361	2008-2009	9,303,543		
1999-2000	3,874,767	2009-2010	9,091,168		

MANATEE COUNTY

Total population estimate July 1, 2015 – 363,369

Like Lee and Collier counties, Manatee County has experienced high growth and urbanization during the past 30 years. Independent special fire control districts were organized decades ago by area voters who wanted fire protection and were willing to tax themselves for it at the community level. BLS rescue service provided in all districts.

Over the years, there have been numerous fire district mergers in Manatee County. The former Samoset and Oneco-Tallevast fire control districts were merged into a new entity called “Southern Manatee Fire Control District” in 1990. In addition, The Palmetto and Ellenton fire control districts merged to become the “North River Fire District” in 1988. In 1999, the Anna Maria and Westside fire control districts merged to become the “West Manatee Fire Control District. On October 1, 2007, the Whitfield Fire Control District was annexed into and merged with the Cedar Hammock Fire Control District.

MANATEE COUNTY EMS

#Co Budget Dept: All else from Florida State Comptroller.

1980-1981: 1,648,286	1990-1991: 4,648,407	2000-2001: 8,192,709	2010-2011 14,753,000
1981-1982: no report	1991-1992: 5,783,429	2001-2002: 9,780,565	2011-2012 14,552,000
1982-1983: 2,792,372	1992-1993: no report	2002-2003: 10,286,369	2012-2013 14,746,000
1983-1984: 2,949,916	1993-1994: 5,475,410	2003-2004: 11,403,085	2013-2014 14,766,000
1984-1985: 3,264,934	1994-1995: 5,427,653	2004-2005: 12,790,460	2014-2015 no report
1985-1986: 3,813,702	1995-1996: 6,009,993	2005-2006: 13,630,259	2015-2016 no report
1986-1987: 3,865,032	1996-1997: 7,452,733	2006-2007: 14,177,053	2016-2017
1987-1988: 3,506,888	1997-1998: 6,677,572	2007-2008: 15,043,601	
1988-1989: 3,888,852	1998-1999: 6,705,378	2008-2009: 14,577,627	
1989-1990: 4,412,304	1999-2000: 7,411,281	2009-2010: 14,177,903	

ANNA MARIA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT: Now defunct

This former district was merged with the Westside Fire Control District in 1999 into the new West Manatee Fire-Rescue District.

1980-1981 230,711	1990-1991 888,766
1981-1982 114,832	1991-1992 531,986
1982-1983 97,707	1992-1993 667,846
1983-1984 110,131	1993-1994 808,444
1984-1985 160,767	1994-1995 943,496
1985-1986 290,337	1995-1996 985,456
1986-1987 410,690	1996-1997 1,105,190
1987-1988 893,825	1997-1998 1,243,758
1988-1989 373,453	1998-1999 1,208,487
1989-1990 570,036	1999-2000+ see West Manatee Fire & Rescue District

BRADEN RIVER FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT – renamed EAST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT IN 1995.

BRADENTON FIRE DEPARTMENT – City

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR:

I.S.O. RATING: - Class 3/9

1993-1994: 3,232,083	1999-2000: 4,023,774	2005-2006: 6,907,860	2011-2012: 8,429,816
1994-1995: 2,898,482	2000-2001: 4,751,666	2006-2007: 7,083,750	2012-2013: 8,364,290
1995-1996: 3,192,596	2001-2002: 4,674,961	2007-2008: 8,512,199	2013-2014: 8,282,447
1996-1997: 3,103,251	2002-2003: 5,447,648	2008-2009: 7,122,395	2014-2015:
1997-1998: 3,203,923	2003-2004: 5,941,561	2009-2010: 9,134,243	2015-2016:
1998-1999: 3,649,154	2004-2005: 6,216,532	2010-2011: 7,435,868	2016-2017:

All the above from Florida Comptroller/Dept of Financial Services

CEDAR HAMMOCK FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2016-2017 Levy: \$3,158,962 from 1.3 mill special tax

+\$6,882,943 from special assessments

Total: \$10,041,945

Assessments for commercial, vacant lots, etc are also levied.

2016-2107 ASSESSED VALUE: : 3,109,379,893 TAXABLE VALUE: 2,429,975,608

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? - Yes – by referendum.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 4

RELATIVE ANNUAL COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,510,486

ISO RATING: Class 3 info from Comptroller

1980-1981 525,497	1990-1991: 2,738,702	2000-2001: 4,914,224	2010-2011: 9,521,810
1981-1982 541,138	1991-1992: 2,470,500	2001-2002: 4,929,209	2011-2012: 10,156,901
1982-1983 1,208,478	1992-1993: 2,455,756	2002-2003: 5,066,197	2012-2013: 10,134,705
1983-1984 1,372,058	1993-1994: 2,520,650	2003-2004: 6,748,967	2013-2014: 9,155,899
1984-1985 1,209,924	1994-1995: 2,872,874	2004-2005: 8,250,003	2014-2015: 10,906,768
1985-1986 no report	1995-1996: 2,825,655	2005-2006: 6,826,133	2015-2016: no report
1986-1987 1,700,129	1996-1997: 2,861,089	2006-2007: 7,136,129	2016-2017: 10,041,945
1987-1988 1,791,583	1997-1998: 3,059,232	2007-2008: 7,829,077	
1988-1989 2,038,639	1998-1999: 3,571,588	2008-2009: 7,069,370	
1989-1990 1,992,239	1999-2000: 3,922,844	2009-2010: 7,495,634	

DUETTE FIRE - RESCUE DISTRICT

Volunteer fire company organized in 1982. Became a district in 2006 by referendum.

RESIDENTIAL ASSESMENT RATE: \$150.00 per residence + additional rates

for other types of property.

2016-2017 LEVY: \$155,919

2007-2008 118,136	2014-2015 126,799
2008-2009 144,150	2015-2016 no report
2009-2010 122,709	2016-2017 155,919
2010-2011 119,558	
2011-2012 177,159	
2012-2013 129,905	
2013-2014 138,731	

EAST MANATEE FIRE RESCUE DISTRICT

This district was originally named “BRADEN RIVER FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT” and is reported to the Florida State Comptroller that way until FY 1993-1994. Re-named by Legislature in 1995.

2016-2017 TAXING RATE: 0.8 Mills

2016-2017 TOTAL TAXES LEVIED: \$5,854,460

2016-2017 TOTAL ASSESSMENTS LEVIED: \$7,142,038

TOTAL \$12,996,468

2016-2017 ASSESSED VALUE: 8,532,084,786 TAXABLE VALUE: 7,318,117,392

TAX LEVY APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? - Yes – By Referendum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS – 6

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,883,333

ISO RATING: Class 4

1980-1981	N/A	1990-1991	309,140	2000-2001	3,223,021	2010-2011:	7,736,622
1981-1982	82,777	1991-1992	no report	2001-2002	4,112,861	2011-2012	
1982-1983	no report	1992-1993	658,006	2002-2003	3,103,311	2012-2013	
1983-1984	no report	1993-1994	612,388	2003-2004	3,290,901	2013-2014	
1984-1985	141,312	1994-1995	887,388	2004-2005	4,865,542	2014-2015	
1985-1986	no report	1995-1996	2,001,550	2005-2006	8,926,708	2015-2016	
1986-1987	216,577	1996-1997	979,804	2006-2007	7,328,493	2016-2017	12,996,468
1987-1988	483,817	1997-1998	1,378,616	2007-2008	9,471,853		
1988-1989	465,054	1998-1999	2,275,387	2008-2009	8,178,226		
1989-1990	348,150	1999-2000	2,427,891	2009-2010	9,134,243		

ELLENTON FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT *Now defunct*

This former district was merged with the Palmetto Fire Control District to make the new North River Fire-Rescue District.

1980-1981:	179,043
1981-1982:	128,102
1982-1983:	154,192
1983-1984:	174,924
1984-1985:	291,726
1985-1986:	285,871
1986-1987:	511,589
1987-1988:	422,283
1988-1989:	merged into North River Fire-Rescue District

MYAKKA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT (Dependent)

2016-2017 LEVY: \$1,250,163

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: - 2

RELATIVE ANNUAL COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$625,081

ISO RATING: - no info at time of compilation

All amounts below from Florida Financial Services/Office of State Comptroller except *

2000-2001: no report	2006-2007: 555,370	2012-2013: 1,020,617
2001-2002: 295,568	2007-2008: 964,163	2013-2014: 1,646,450
2002-2003: 338,456	2008-2009: 1,521,184	2014-2015: 1,192,474
2003-2004: 654,950	2009-2010: 1,112,135	2015-2016: no report
2004-2005: 845,453	2010-2011: 1,163,629	2016-2017: 1,250,163
2005-2006: 788,688	2011-2012: 1,156,872	

NORTH RIVER FIRE DISTRICT

The North River Fire-Rescue District was incorporated in 1988 by the merger of the Ellenton and Palmetto fire control districts.

2016-2017: TOTAL TAXES LEVIED: \$7,396,263

ASSESSMENT LEVY: \$135.21 RESIDENTIAL BASE RATE + ADDITIONAL RATES FOR OTHER TYPES OF PROPERTY.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,020,000

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 5/9

1988-1989: 1,393,276	1990-1991: 1,431,857	2000-2001: 2,868,352	2010-2011: 5,876,412
1989-1990: 1,372,353	1991-1992: 2,041,299	2001-2002: 4,013,095	2011-2012: 6,610,536
	1992-1993: 1,728,641	2002-2003: 3,547,370	2012-2013: 7,572,267
	1993-1994: 1,920,981	2003-2004: 3,696,284	2013-2014: 7,458,964
	1994-1995: 2,085,464	2004-2005: 3,970,682	2014-2015: no report
	1995-1996: 2,463,159	2005-2006: 4,374,407	2015-2016
	1996-1997: 2,380,923	2006-2007: 5,253,681	2016-2017 7,396,263
	1997-1998: 2,457,196	2007-2008: 6,955,983	
	1998-1999: 2,562,402	2008-2009: 6,383,479	
	1999-2000: 2,646,352	2009-2010: 5,768,010	

ONECO-TALLEVAST FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT Now defunct

This former district merged with the Samoset Fire Control District in 1990 to create the new Southern Manatee Fire & Rescue District.

1980-1981: 245,784	1987-1988: 1,804,623
1981-1982: 279,244	1988-1989: no report
1982-1983: 435,804	1989-1990: 1,613,732
1983-1984: 489,107	
1984-1985: 587,337	
1985-1986: 839,754	
1986-1987: 2,255,994	

PAMETTO FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT *Now defunct*

This former district included both the entire City of Palmetto plus additional unincorporated areas surrounding it. The district, along with the former Ellenton Fire Control District was merged and absorbed into the new North River Fire & Rescue District in 1988.

1980-1981:	223,391
1981-1982:	305,698
1982-1983:	340,421
1983-1984:	683,786
1984-1985:	507,850
1985-1986:	621,036
1986-1987:	836,947
1987-1988:	981,959
1988-1989:	merged into North River Fire-Rescue District

PARRISH FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Part paid/part volunteer fire and rescue department.

2016-2017 TOTAL TAXES LEVIED: \$1,337,832

ASSESSMENT LEVY:

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION: \$1,337,832

ISO INSURANCE RATING 5/9

1980-1981:	N/A	1990-1991:	87,090	2000-2001:	451,087	2010-2011:	988,936
1981-1982:	N/A	1991-1992:	56,286	2001-2002:	438,108	2011-2012:	1,283,111
1982-1983:	8,149	1992-1993:	87,289	2002-2003:	488,254	2012-2013:	1,054,042
1983-1984:	7,467	1993-1994:	65,904	2003-2004:	534,686	2013-2014:	1,109,609
1984-1985:	10,099	1994-1995:	242,500	2004-2005:	531,979	2014-2015:	1,156,511
1985-1986:	11,857	1995-1996:	151,958	2005-2006:	646,511	2015-2016:	
1986-1987:	20,972	1996-1997:	193,322	2006-2007:	733,233	2016-2017:	1,337,832
1987-1988:	9,196	1997-1998:	497,239	2007-2008:	906,740		
1988-1989:	40,855	1998-1999:	645,574	2008-2009:	943,752		
1989-1990:	56,725	1999-2000:	370,827	2009-2010:	1,143,819		

SAMOSET FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT Now Defunct

The Samoset Fire Control District was merged with the Oneco-Tallevast Fire Control District in 1990, creating the new Southern Manatee Fire & Rescue District.

1980-1981:	49,721
1981-1982:	86,367
1982-1983:	70,869
1983-1984:	92,410
1984-1985:	101,346
1985-1986:	103,650
1986-1987:	259,956
1987-1988:	219,275
1988-1989:	282,228
1989-1990:	579,025

SOUTHERN MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT

The merger of the former Oneco-Tallevast and Samoset fire control districts created this district in 1988. Five fire stations. Fully paid department.

2016-2017 MILLAGE RATE:	1.2061
2016-2017 TOTAL TAXES LEVIED:	\$9,499,322
<u>2016-2017 TOTAL ASSESSMENTS LEVIED:</u>	<u>\$5,043,621</u>
TOTAL	\$14,542,943

NUMBER OF STATIONS: 5
COST PER STATION
ISO: Class 3

1980-1981:	N/A	1990-1991:	2,278,122	2000-2001:	5,683,207	2010-2011:	13,584,967
1981-1982:	N/A	1991-1992:	2,698,715	2001-2002:	4,704,675	2011-2012:	11,622,824
1982-1983:	N/A	1992-1993:	2,210,069	2002-2003:	5,558,884	2012-2013:	13,135,140
1983-1984:	N/A	1993-1994:	2,567,373	2003-2004:	11,064,150	2013-2014:	12,323,664
1984-1985:	N/A	1994-1995:	2,640,635	2004-2005:	13,162,803	2014-2015:	14,853,401
1985-1986:	N/A	1995-1996:	2,656,373	2005-2006:	11,758,705	2015-2016:	
1986-1987:	N/A	1996-1997:	3,017,359	2006-2007:	11,241,551	2016-2017:	14,542,943
1987-1988:	N/A	1997-1998:	2,634,792	2007-2008:	12,079,224		
1988-1989:	3,153,661	1998-1999:	3,223,948	2008-2009:	13,529,531		
1989-1990:	575,664	1999-2000:	4,168,506	2009-2010:	11,725,622		

TRAILER ESTATES FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2016-2017 ASSESSMENT: \$94,588
RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT RATE:
NUMBER OF STATIONS – 1
RELATIVE ANNUAL COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$94,588

1980-1981:	12,110	1990-1991:	63,733	2000-2001:	89,645	2010-2011:	77,220
1981-1982:	19,478	1991-1992:	66,095	2001-2002:	56,749	2011-2012:	84,985
1982-1983:	18,564	1992-1993:	30,998	2002-2003:	47,706	2012-2013:	89,535
1983-1984:	no report	1993-1994:	22,031	2003-2004:	57,982	2013-2014:	75,607
1984-1985:	18,809	1994-1995:	174,830	2004-2005:	66,134	2014-2015:	no report
1985-1986:	21,294	1995-1996:	74,455	2005-2006:	74,312	2015-2016:	
1986-1987:	45,544	1996-1997:	no report	2006-2007:	49,023	2016-2017:	94,588
1987-1988:	16,705	1997-1998:	49,429	2007-2008:	133,574		
1988-1989:	20,940	1998-1999:	53,945	2008-2009:	78,082		
1989-1990:	51,683	1999-2000:	59,884	2009-2010:	86,162		

WEST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT

The merger of the Anna Maria and Westside fire control districts created the new West Manatee Fire & Rescue District in 2000. (Chapter 2000-401, Laws of Florida)

2016-2017 TOTAL TAXES LEVIED: \$7,021,180

ASSESSMENT RATES:

NUMBER OF STATIONS – 3

RELATIVE ANNUAL COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,340,393

I.S.O. RATING: Class 4

1980-1981:	<i>406,001</i>	1990-1991:	<i>2,222,524</i>	2000-2001:	2,906,499	2010-2011:	5,855,288
1981-1982:	<i>313,233</i>	1991-1992:	<i>1,739,044</i>	2001-2002:	3,383,089	2011-2012:	6,736,432
1982-1983:	<i>465,057</i>	1992-1993:	<i>1,559,820</i>	2002-2003:	3,732,818	2012-2013:	6,246,621
1983-1984:	<i>445,870</i>	1993-1994:	<i>1,733,890</i>	2003-2004:	3,812,652	2013-2014:	7,542,206
1984-1985:	<i>601,942</i>	1994-1995:	<i>2,955,340</i>	2004-2005:	4,738,230	2014-2015:	6,215,749
1985-1986:	<i>694,172</i>	1995-1996:	<i>1,948,831</i>	2005-2006:	4,446,961	2015-2016:	
1986-1987:	<i>945,225</i>	1996-1997:	<i>2,102,637</i>	2006-2007:	5,879,167	2016-2017:	7,021,180
1987-1988:	<i>1,416,621</i>	1997-1998:	<i>2,279,349</i>	2007-2008:	5,346,497		
1988-1989:	<i>986,783</i>	1998-1999:	<i>2,336,144</i>	2008-2009:	5,623,055		
1989-1990:	<i>1,203,261</i>	1999-2000:	<i>3,268,596</i>	2009-2010:	6,990,127		

The figures written in *italics* represent the combined expenditures of both the former Anna Maria and Westside fire control districts prior to the 2000 merger.

WESTSIDE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT *Now Defunct*

This former district merged with the Anna Maria Fire Control District to incorporate the new West Manatee Fire & Rescue District in 1999.

1980-1981:	175,290	1990-1991:	1,333,758
1981-1982:	198,401	1991-1992:	1,207,058
1982-1983:	367,350	1992-1993:	891,974
1983-1984:	335,739	1993-1994:	925,446
1984-1985:	441,175	1994-1995:	2,011,844
1985-1986:	403,835	1995-1996:	963,375
1986-1987:	534,535	1996-1997:	997,447
1987-1988:	522,796	1997-1998:	1,035,591
1988-1989:	613,330	1998-1999:	1,127,657
1989-1990:	633,225		

WHITFIELD FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT *Now defunct*

The former district was dissolved, territorially annexed into and made part of the Cedar Hammock Fire Control District on October 1, 2007.

1980-1981:	29,038	1990-1991:	51,879	2000-2001:	236,854
1981-1982:	33,497	1991-1992:	59,454	2001-2002:	192,978
1982-1983:	53,383	1992-1993:	57,991	2002-2003:	219,197
1983-1984:	34,216	1993-1994:	105,786	2003-2004:	348,004
1984-1985:	41,157	1994-1995:	298,023	2004-2005:	290,007
1985-1986:	41,887	1995-1996:	123,353	2005-2006:	301,458
1986-1987:	no report	1996-1997:	132,926	2006-2007:	398,343
1987-1988:	40,713	1997-1998:	150,471		
1988-1989:	55,866	1998-1999:	229,525		
1989-1990:	47,964	1999-2000:	183,374		

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO

TOTAL AVERAGES ALL 17 FIRE CONTROL DISTRICTS IN LEE COUNTY – 2016-2017:

(Not including Cape Coral, Fort Myers or county fire budgets or levies)

Current combined revenue from tax or assessment levy: \$174,144,228

Average fire tax millage rate: 2.558

Number of Fire Stations: 45

Average Relative Cost Per Fire Station: \$3,869,871

TOTAL AVERAGES ALL 3 FIRE CONTROL DISTRICTS IN COLLIER COUNTY – 2016 – 2017:

(Not including Marco Island, Naples or county fire budgets or levies)

Current combined budgets from tax millage levy: \$77,366,732

Average fire tax millage rate: 1.8

Number of Fire Stations: 23

Average Relative Cost Per Fire Station: \$3,363,770

TOTAL AVERAGES ALL FIRE CONTROL DISTRICTS IN MANATEE COUNTY – 2016-2017:

(fire districts only)

Current combined budgets from levy: \$54,837,301

Average fire tax millage rate: N/A various assessment and millage rates apply

Number of Fire Stations: 28

Average Relative Cost Per Fire Station: \$1,958,475

RELATIVE COST PER FIRE STATION IN CURRENT FISCAL YEAR:

Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue -	\$8,085,803	2016-2017
Broward County Fire-Rescue -	\$7,520,479	2016-2017
Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue -	\$5,948,529	2016-2017
Orange County Fire-Rescue -	\$4,907,321	2016-2017
Sarasota County Fire-Rescue -	\$4,320,386	2016-2017
Lee Fire Districts average-	\$3,869,037	2016-2017
Hillsborough Co Fire-Rescue -	\$3,543,870	2016-2017
Collier Fire Districts Average -	\$3,363,770	2016-2017
Charlotte County Fire-Rescue -	\$2,682,194	2016-2017
Manatee Fire Districts Average -	\$1,958,301	2016-2017

RELATIVE COST PER FIRE STATION ALL PLACES IN REPORT IN CURRENT FISCAL YEAR:

PLACE OR DEPT	STATIONS	COST PER STATION ISO RATING
Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue	45	\$8,085,843 Class 3/10
Broward County SO Fire-Rescue	9	\$7,520,479 Class 3
Miami-Dade County Fire-Rescue	68	\$5,948,529 Class 4
Bonita Springs Fire District	5	\$5,418,672 Class 3
Lehigh Acres Fire-Rescue District	5	\$5,357,297 Class 3/3Y
Orange County Fire-Rescue	41	\$4,907,321 Class 4
Iona-McGregor Fire & Rescue District	5	\$4,689,461 Class 2
South Trail Fire & Rescue District	4	\$4,481,971 Class 3
Sarasota County Fire-Rescue	22	\$4,320,386 Class 2 urban only
San Carlos Park Fire-Rescue District	3	\$4,210,209 Class 3
Estero Fire & Rescue District	4	\$3,998,245 Class 2
Lee fire districts average	45	\$3,869,871
Fort Myers Beach Fire & Rescue District	3	\$3,799,658 Class 2
Hillsborough County Fire-Rescue	42	\$3,543,870 Class 3/10
Fort Myers Shores Fire & Rescue District	1	\$3,530,339 Class 3
Fort Myers Fire-Rescue	6	\$3,524,000 Class 2
North Collier Fire & Rescue District	10	\$3,468,215 Classes 3 & 5/9
Collier fire districts average	23	\$3,363,770
Immokalee Fire Control District	3	\$3,353,574 Class 5/9
Greater Naples Fire & Rescue District	10	\$3,263,851 Class 4/10
Naples Fire-Rescue	3	\$3,184,889 Class 2
Sanibel island Fire & Rescue District	2	\$3,107,949 Class 3
Boca Grande Fire & Rescue District	1	\$3,064,788 Class 2
Southern Manatee Fire & Rescue District	5	\$2,908,588 Class 3
North Fort Myers Fire & Rescue District	3	\$2,720,979 Class 4/4Y
Charlotte County Fire-Rescue	16	\$2,682,194 Class 4/9
Cape Coral Fire-Rescue	10	\$2,651,686 Class 3
Cedar Hammock Fire & Rescue District	4	\$2,510,486 Class 3
West Manatee Fire & Rescue District	3	\$2,340,393
Matlacha-Pine Island Fire & Rescue District	3	\$2,288,536 Class 6/9
Tice Fire Protection & Rescue District	2	\$2,251,862 Class 2
Captiva Island Fire & Rescue District	1	\$2,224,805 Class 3
East Manatee Fire & Rescue District	6	\$2,166,078
Manatee fire districts average	25	\$1,958,301
Bayshore Fire & Rescue Service District	1	\$1,749,618 Class 2
North River Fire District	4	\$1,479,252 Class 5/9
Alva Fire Protection & Rescue Service District	1	\$1,355,959 Class 9
Parrish Fire Control District	1	\$1,337,832 Class 5/9
Upper Captiva Island Fire & Rescue District	1	\$1,192,963 Class 4
Trailer Estates Fire Control District	1	\$94,588

CHAPTER THREE

TAXING RATES IN LEE COUNTY AND THE EFFECT OF A UNIFORM MILLAGE

The following data does not represent the actual cost of a countywide fire and rescue department. Centralized management of large agencies has its own inherent costs – typically between 20% and 22% of total budget - and is not reflected here. This chapter shows only what the effect of a uniform fire tax millage would be if that were used to generate the same amount of money currently raised by various tax/assessment levies in the seventeen fire district communities.

The elected boards of fire district commissioners in each of the seventeen community fire control districts levy their own fire-rescue tax millages and assessments. This is done after the public hearings to establish the annual budget have been concluded and the new fiscal year begins.

In no event can the elected district board levy a millage or assessment rate higher than the maximum levy (tax cap) approved by the voters.

In the current fiscal year (2016-2017), the total district tax levies of all seventeen districts add up to \$173,659,264. Although the tax millage rates vary from community to community, the average fire district tax millage is 2.5585 mills.

If the current total fire district levies were supported by a single uniform tax millage, that levy would be 2.5793 mills – generating a total revenue of \$174,148,582 upon the current assessed value of all properties within the fire districts, which totals \$67,517,769,507.

	Millage rate	Value	Levy
Alva	3.0000 mills	451,983,202	1,355,949
Bayshore	3.5000 mills	499,891,007	1,749,618
Boca Grande	1.3870 mills	2,209,652,583	3,064,788
Bonita Springs	2.3500 mills	11,529,091,203	27,093,364
Captiva	1.4284 mills	1,557,550,820	2,224,805
Estero	2.1500 mills	7,438,596,558	15,992,982
Fort Myers Beach	2.5800 mills	4,418,207,125	11,398,974
Fort Myers Shores	2.0000 mills	1,765,169,800	3,530,339
Iona-McGregor	2.5000 mills	9,378,923,683	23,447,309
Lehigh Acres	N/A	4,628,925,544	26,786,486
Matlacha-Pine Is.	3.7500 mills	1,830,820,937	6,865,578
North Fort Myers	2.5000 mills	3,265,175,636	8,162,939
San Carlos Park	2.9500 mills	4,281,568,714	12,630,627
Sanibel	1.1089 mills	5,605,463,789	6,215,898
South Trail	2.5000 mills	7,171,153,581	17,927,884
Tice	3.5000 mills	1,286,778,525	4,503,725
Upper Captiva	3.7500 mills	198,816,800 + assessments	\$1,192,963
		67,517,769,507	174,144,228

A uniform fire tax millage of 2.5793 would cause fire taxes to increase in some communities and decrease in others. In the case of Lehigh Acres, a fire tax millage levy would not represent an increase or a decrease because properties there are currently assessed by type, rather than by value. Hence, there is no current millage levy in Lehigh Acres to increase or decrease.

The Communities, which would experience a **tax decrease**, are as follows:

COMMUNITY	VALUE	UNIFORM MILLAGE AMOUNT	SUBSIDY	ORIG LEVY
ALVA	451,983,202 x 2.5793 Mills	1,165,800	190,149	1,355,949
BAYSHORE	499,891,007 x 2.5793 Mills	1,289,369	460,249	1,749,618
FT. MYERS BEACH	4,418,207,125 x 2.5793 Mills	11,395,881	3,093	11,398,974
MATLACHA-PINE IS	1,830,820,937 x 2.5793 Mills	4,722,236	2,143,342	6,865,578
SAN CARLOS PARK	4,281,568,714 x 2.5793 Mills	11,043,450	1,587,177	12,630,627
TICE	1,286,778,525 x 2.5793 Mills	3,318,988	1,184,737	4,503,725
UPPER CAPTIVA	198,816,800 x 2.5793 Mills	512,808	232,874	745,563
TOTALS	12,968,066,310	33,448,532	5,801,621	39,250,034

The Communities that would experience a **tax increase** are as follows:
2.5793 174,148,582

COMMUNITY	VALUE	UNIFORM MILLAGE	AMOUNT	LESS ORIGINAL	DONATION
BOCA GRANDE	2,209,652,583	x 2.5793 Mills	5,699,357	3,064,788	2,634,569
BONITA SPRINGS	11,529,091,203	x 2.5793 Mills	29,736,985	27,093,364	2,643,621
CAPTIVA ISLAND	1,557,550,820	x 2.5793 Mills	4,017,391	2,224,805	1,792,586
ESTERO	7,438,596,558	x 2.5793 Mills	19,186,372	15,992,982	3,193,390
FT MYERS SHORES	1,765,169,800	x 2.5793 Mills	4,552,902	3,520,339	1,032,563
IONA-McGREGOR	9,378,923,683	x 2.5793 Mills	24,191,058	23,447,309	743,749
NORTH FT MYERS	3,265,175,636	x 2.5793 Mills	8,421,867	8,162,939	258,928
SANIBEL ISLAND	5,605,463,789	x 2.5793 Mills	14,458,173	6,215,898	8,242,275
SOUTH TRAIL	7,171,153,581	x 2.5793 Mills	18,496,556	17,927,884	568,672
TOTALS	49,920,777,653		128,760,661	107,650,308	21,110,353

Thus a uniform fire tax millage of 2.5793 would generate the same amount of money in all 17-fire district communities – raising taxes in some communities while lowering taxes in others. In all, some \$21,110,353 would be taken from the communities of Boca Grande, Bonita Springs, Captiva, Estero, Fort Myers Shores, Iona-McGregor, North Fort Myers, Sanibel, and South Trail to subsidize fire protection in the remaining areas.

SANIBEL

The highest tax increase under the above situation applies on Sanibel Island with \$8,242,275 in fire tax revenues generated on the island being spent to supplement fire protection costs elsewhere in Lee County.

It is highly unlikely that Sanibel voters would allow this to happen. They would most likely reject fire district consolidation or merge their fire district with the Sanibel city government to prevent its being absorbed into a larger system. By doing this, Sanibel Islanders would keep their fire tax money on Sanibel Island and avoid the tax increase a consolidated fire system would impose.

With the loss of Sanibel Island's tax base, however, the uniform fire tax base is reduced by \$5,605,463,789 – leaving a net remaining tax base of \$61,912,305,718 to support a remaining \$167,890,766 combined budget from taxes for the sixteen remaining fire district communities. It also creates a new higher uniform tax millage levy of 2.7118 mills to generate \$167,893,791.

A uniform fire tax millage of 2.7118 would increase taxes in some communities and reduce taxes in others.

The communities that would experience a **tax decrease** are as follows:

Place	Value	Uniform Mill	Amount	Subsidy	Original
ALVA	451,983,202 x	2.7118 Mills	1,225,688	130,261	1,355,949
BAYSHORE	499,891,007 x	2.7118 Mills	1,355,604	394,014	1,749,618
MATLACHA-PINE IS	1,830,820,937 x	2.7118 Mills	4,964,820	1,900,758	6,865,578
SAN CARLOS PARK	4,281,568,714 x	2.7118 Mills	11,610,758	1,019,869	12,630,627
TICE	1,286,778,525 x	2.7118 Mills	3,489,486	1,014,239	4,503,725
UPPER CAPTIVA	198,816,800 x	2.7118 Mills	539,151	206,412	745,563
TOTALS	8,549,859,185		23,185,508	4,665,552	27,851,060

The communities that would experience a **tax increase** are as follows:

Place	Value	Uniform Mill	Amount	Less Original	Donation
BOCA GRANDE	2,209,652,583 x	2.7118 Mills	5,992,136	3,027,224	2,964,912
BONITA SPRINGS	11,529,091,203 x	2.7118 Mills	31,264,590	27,093,364	4,171,226
CAPTIVA ISLAND	1,557,550,820 x	2.7118 Mills	4,223,766	2,224,805	1,998,961
ESTERO	7,438,596,558 x	2.7118 Mills	20,171,986	15,992,982	4,179,004
FT MYERS BEACH	4,418,207,125 x	2.7118 Mills	11,981,294	11,398,974	582,320
FT MYERS SHORES	1,765,169,800 x	2.7118 Mills	4,786,787	3,520,339	1,256,448
IONA-McGREGOR	9,378,923,683 x	2.7118 Mills	25,433,765	23,447,309	1,986,456
NORTH FT MYERS	3,265,175,636 x	2.7118 Mills	8,854,503	8,162,939	691,564
SOUTH TRAIL	7,171,153,581 x	2.7118 Mills	19,446,734	17,927,884	1,518,850
TOTALS	48,733,520,989 x	2.7118 Mills	132,155,562	112,805,820	19,349,742

Thus a uniform fire tax millage of 2.7118 would generate the same amount of money in all remaining 16 fire district communities – raising taxes in some communities while lowering taxes in others. In all, some \$19,349,742 would be taken from the communities of Boca Grande, Bonita Springs, Captiva, Estero, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers Shores, Iona-McGregor, North Fort Myers and South Trail to subsidize fire protection in the remaining areas.

OTHER LIKELY OPPOSITION

Each “donor community” represents formidable political opposition to fire district consolidation. While Boca Grande, Captiva, Iona-McGregor and South Trail (South Fort Myers) would take sizable “hits” in the above situation, Bonita Springs and Estero would be particularly hit hard. It is most unlikely that the voters in Bonita Springs would support a concept that takes \$4,088,216 of their fire tax dollars out of their community to be spent elsewhere, nor would Estero voters agree to send some \$4,125,446 of their fire tax dollars to other places.

“LITTLE FIEFDOMS & BIG EMPIRES”

The arguments for fire district consolidation and a review of these mergers in Charlotte, Orange, Palm Beach and Sarasota Counties.

To the best of my knowledge, the first public official in Lee County to refer to the community fire districts as “*little fiefdoms*” was a former Lee County commissioner shortly before his commission was revoked by the Governor. Prior to that time, fire district detractors referred to them as “*little kingdoms*.” Those who oppose the concept of independent community fire districts generally favor their consolidation into a much larger agency which, they say, will “save money”, “lower taxes” and be “better.” It is noteworthy that the push for consolidation has always come from special interests and ideologues - and not from fire district residents and taxpayers.

The ideologues have included the editorial staffers of the Fort Myers News-Press and a number of reporters, while special interests have included several firefighter union officials, various area land developers and building contractors - and political figures within county government who wished to control the fire departments and their tax monies. This chapter considers their arguments for fire district consolidation and how *not* to get fooled by any of them.

When the last populated communities of Lee County voted to create their own fire districts in 1976, the opponents to this concept were out in full force – urging a “no” vote. The Fort Myers News-Press featured an editorial to that effect, saying, “*centralized county fire management is superior... to local sympathetic taxing districts.*” The Lee County Protective Services Division Director said “*the price of autonomy is high and I don’t think this will answer the fire defense problems in Lee County.*”

The referendum was overwhelmingly approved in all seven communities where the question appeared on the ballot.

By 1976, there was no longer the question of whether or not property should be taxed for fire protection – fire taxes had already been imposed in the non-district communities by the county commissioners - without a referendum. Instead, it was a matter of “how much” would be paid and to “whom”. Given the choice of being taxed by the county government or by themselves as a community fire district, the voters opted for local control, and soundly rejected the consolidation option. By doing this, all fire tax monies stayed in the community where they were generated, and have remained there ever since. In the years that followed, tax millages were increased in these communities, but then only by referendum election after the need was justified to the voting public.

During the 1980’s, consolidated county fire systems were created in Charlotte, Orange, Palm Beach and Sarasota counties. In every event, these systems were advocated to “*save money, reduce the cost of the service, improve service and cut taxes,*” – even in high growth areas. These fire department mergers allow us to review budget growth in those areas as shown in Chapter Two of this report – both before consolidation took place and afterward.

History shows us that in every event, costs went up - not down - after the fire departments were consolidated. So did budgets and expenditures as reflected in the Florida State Comptroller’s annual reports over the years. Taxes went up as well – without a referendum vote of the people.

Some of the consolidated fire system communities examined in this report enjoy an insurance rating of I.S.O. Class 3/10. Those areas had poorer ratings before fire consolidation, so their goal of “improving service” was successfully reached. On the other hand, the following Lee County communities also hold a Class 3 or better rating at this time:

PLACE	ISO
BAYSHORE district	Class 2
BOCA GRANDE district	Class 2
BONITA SPRINGS district	Class 3
CAPE CORAL city	Class 3
CAPTIVA ISLAND district	Class 3
ESTERO district	Class 2
FORT MYERS city	Class 2
FORT MYERS BEACH district	Class 2
FORT MYERS SHORES district	Class 3
IONA-McGREGOR district	Class 2
LEHIGH ACRES district	Class 3/3Y
SAN CARLOS PK district	Class 3
SANIBEL ISLAND district	Class 3
SOUTH TRAIL district	Class 3
TICE district	Class 2

The above communities represent the overwhelming majority of people who live in Lee County. Inasmuch as most of the remaining communities hold only slightly poorer ratings, the “improving service” argument does not appear to be a valid one.

CLAIMS, MYTHS, LIES AND FACTS

As previously shown, those favoring fire department consolidation in Lee County make many claims and promises. They fall into two distinct categories:

- (a.) **Ideologues** – people who simply believe that “bigger-is-better-and-more-efficient” – even when these beliefs are contrary to actual fact.
- (b) **Empire Builders** – typically, appointees at the county government level, they seek to create a large public safety empire on the backs of the taxpayers.

Ideologues believe that the public is unfit to handle the tax dollars and administration of their fire departments at the community level – even though they have successfully done that for decades. **Empire builders** know better and will say and do anything they can to separate the public from the fire department it’s taxes built, bought and paid for. This involves calculated deception to a large degree and taxpayers are wise to be informed.

CLAIM: - *County taxpayers are paying for 20 fire departments, all those fire chiefs, redundancy, we ALL live in Lee County, time to share the wealth, etc etc.*

FACT: -County taxpayers do not support multiple fire departments. Your tax bill shows that you pay for only one fire department – and not redundant fire Departments.

FACT: - We have 20 fire departments in Lee County because we have 20 separate communities in Lee County that built, own and operate them.

CLAIM: - *These individual fire districts were created long ago and are no longer the best way to provide fire protection for an urban area like Lee County. The people should be able to vote on this issue.*

FACT: - General law of this state already provides for a public vote on any fire district mergers should there be sufficient public interest in doing that at the community level.

FACT: - Most of the fire districts were incorporated in 1975-1976 to escape the county fire empire then being created by Lee County. This issue was thoroughly discussed and debated. It was also firmly resolved. The vote in each community was overwhelmingly in favor of an independent district. There is absolutely no evidence that public sentiment has been reversed since then.

FACT: - In 99% of America's communities, the fire department is a community function. These include large metropolitan areas like Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis-St Paul, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Buffalo, New York and its suburbs plus countless others. Consolidated fire departments do not exist in these places because inter-local agreements allow community fire departments to assist one another when needed. This is also the case here in Lee County; hence, big bureaucracy is avoided, along with its horrific costs.

CLAIM: - *Fire Department consolidation would save taxpayers money.*

FACT: - It would not. Refer to Chapter Two of this report to determine the "savings" to taxpayers in the consolidated fire system areas. In every event, costs went up, not down, as a result of fire consolidation. Higher costs mean higher taxes. Since taxpayers lost their right to vote on fire tax issues in those counties, they are powerless to do anything, except to pay their taxes.

CLAIM: - *Even if there is no savings at the outset, eventually taxpayers will save money "down the road."*

FACT: - No, they will not. Again refer to Chapter Two of this report. Apparently, no one knows just how long the road to savings is.

CLAIM: - *The per-capita costs of fire protection would be reduced with fire department consolidation.*

FACT: - The per-capita argument attempts to figure fire protection costs for each man, woman and child. The argument is invalid because *people* are not taxed for fire protection – *property* is.

CLAIM: - *Fire consolidation will reduce administrative costs by eliminating seventeen fire chief positions and appointing a single Lee County Fire Chief.*

FACT: - County taxpayers are not paying for seventeen fire chiefs.

FACT: - County taxpayers are not paying for seventeen fire departments.

FACT: - Administrative costs would skyrocket here – just as they have everywhere else fire consolidation happened – and for exactly the same reasons. Merge the seventeen fire districts into a single county fire department and it would be one of the largest fire department organizations in the State of Florida today. It would own, for example, the 45 fire stations currently owned by the 17 community fire districts, and it would be a bigger fire department organization than the present consolidated fire departments of Broward, Charlotte, Hillsborough, Orange, Palm Beach or Sarasota counties.

An organization that large could not be effectively operated or managed from a fire station any more than the Lee County School system could be run from a schoolroom. A new centralized fire system requires a new system of centralized management. A new fire safety (or public safety) administration building would need to be constructed, probably in or near downtown Fort Myers, at a cost yet to be determined. That building would house many of the offices, agencies and bureaus needed to operate a system of that size. They would include but not be limited to the following:

County Fire Chief
County Assistant Fire Chief
Legal Department
Risk Management
Human Resources Department
County Emergency Medical Services Chief
County Fire Training Chief
County EMS Training Chief
Chief of Communications
Property Management Division
Master Mechanic
Data Processing Department
Fire Code Enforcement Department
Plans and Development Review Department
Purchasing Department
Budget Analysis and Finance Department
Labor Relations Division
Public Relations Chief
Fire Prevention Bureau and Chief.....

...plus the salaries, benefits, pensions and perks of their secretaries, their assistants (and their secretaries), clerks, custodians and other office staffers needed to manage the larger organization. As the system grows in size, more departments, bureaus and divisions will be added as needed until it is time to expand the administration building itself or relocate to a new facility elsewhere.

A new management structure created by fire consolidation replaces the current community fire chiefs with a new system of division chiefs and battalion chiefs to actually run the fire stations, unless the consolidated fire officials in charge are willing to rely upon persons of lesser training, experience and certification.

CLAIM: - *Fire consolidation will provide an equal level of service on a countywide basis.*

FACT: - None of the consolidated fire systems considered in this report were able to achieve an equal level of service on a countywide basis. In addition, none of the consolidated fire systems have an equal level of taxation throughout the merged fire areas, either.

Only properties within five road miles of a fire station are considered to be “protected,” according to the ISO. In effect, this means that a lot of western Palm Beach County along State Road 80, southern Charlotte County along US 41, eastern Sarasota County and eastern Hillsborough County areas are “unprotected.” That is interesting because no part of populated Lee County is lacking quality fire protection.

CLAIM: - *Rural fire district stations provide a substandard level of service due to budgetary restraints.*

FACT: - Rural fire stations protect fewer people and less property than urban fire stations do; however, their rural status does not arbitrarily render their services “substandard.” For example, the Bayshore (ISO Class 2) and Fort Myers Shores (ISO Class 3) fire districts serve mostly rural areas yet both of those communities enjoy the same I.S.O. insurance ratings as Palm Beach County and the more urbanized cities and fire districts here in Lee County.

NOTE: The rural fire district stations in Lee County include paid fire fighters and modern fire apparatus and equipment - something that is uncommon in consolidated fire systems here in Florida. In a consolidated fire system, rural fire stations typically get “hand-me-down” vehicles and equipment from the urban stations once they have outlived their usefulness.

CLAIM: *Fire District consolidation would eliminate hundreds of miles of boundary lines and provide service from the closest station. It will eliminate turf wars, etc etc*

FACT: Inter-local agreements for “Closest Unit Response” already provide for this, along with Mutual aid and automatic aid agreements.

FACT: There is no evidence of fire service area “turf wars” here in Lee County – now, or at any point in the past. The fire-fighter union locals in Orlando and Orange County had a particularly nasty one in 2007, however.

LIE: *Taxpayers would have a “better voice” with fire consolidation.*

FACT: Taxpayers would be silenced with fire consolidation:

(1.) – Consolidation takes all of the financial decision-making (and taxing authority) out of your community and gives it to someone else. As a voter and taxpayer, you would no longer control your fire district or its taxes. In addition, your fire tax dollars and equipment could be sent anywhere else in Lee County without your consent, and your nearest fire station could be closed down. It happened before and it would happen again if the community fire districts were somehow merged, abolished or consolidated.

(2.) – Losing one’s fire district also means losing the fire district tax cap. In most districts, the taxing cap is 2.5 or 3 mills. Under county control, there are no more fire tax elections because the County Commissioners decide what the tax millage rate will be. Under Chapter 125, Florida Statutes, that millage rate can be as high as 10 mills – without a referendum.

LIE: *Independent fire districts are not accountable to anyone.*

FACT: Fire District Commissioners are elected officials and are accountable to the voters in the community whom elected them. They are bonded, subject to suit and/or recall for mismanagement, must reside and vote in the district and are subject to the state “Government In The Sunshine” open meetings laws as well as the state Code of Ethics for Public Officials. In addition, the financial activities of all districts are subject to an annual independent audit as provided by law. Annual financial reporting to the Office Of Florida State Comptroller/Department of Financial Services is also required.

LIE: *Firefighters serving on the elected boards overpay their fellow firefighters.*

FACT: (1.) – Firefighters may hold public office in the community fire district in which they reside – just as any other citizen may do – provided they are not not employed by that fire district.
(2.) – There is no evidence that firefighters are being overpaid.

MYTH: *Even if it is legal, firefighters shouldn’t be elected as fire district commissioners.*

FACT: That is a matter of opinion. Similarly, there are some who feel that it’s a bad idea to elect attorneys to the State Legislature – fearing a supposed collusion to thwart attempts at enacting tort reform. Others feel that electing someone who has expertise can probably do a better job than someone who does not. In any event, the voters are free to elect whomever they wish.

CLAIM: *Fire consolidation will work if the “right people” are in charge.*

FACT: The same thing has been said of socialism for decades.

There are other myths which surface from time to time, however, the above appear to be the more common ones. Whatever the arguments or reasons given to merge fire departments in Charlotte, Sarasota, Orange and Palm Beach counties will probably remain unanswered because none of the county and fire officials who created those merged systems are in office any longer. They’ve moved on.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

The only urbanized area served by Charlotte County Fire-Rescue is the unincorporated community of Port Charlotte. Suburban communities include Harbour Heights, South Punta Gorda Heights, the Solana and Cleveland communities and the El Jobean/GulfCove/Placida area. In these areas, an improved I.S.O. fire insurance rating of Class 4 has been achieved where fire hydrants on an approved water system exist. The remainder of the county is rural forest, farm and rangeland. Charlotte County is therefore not comparable to Lee County in terms of population, density or urbanization.

When the majority of fire districts were merged in 1986, the combined levies of all fire districts totaled \$1,579,739 – roughly the same figure for the previous four or five years. By 1998, however, the merged fire budget was \$9,509,276 – not including the EMS budget. A January 25, 1996 Fort Myers News-Press article written by Mike Hoyem reported the Charlotte County Deputy Fire Chief as saying that he “*couldn’t put a dollar figure on the savings*” due to consolidation, but said he was “*confident they’ve been substantial.*” In the current fiscal year (2016-2017), the Charlotte County Fire-Rescue budget is \$27,953,476. When added with their EMS budget of \$14,961,627, a total organizational budget of \$42,915,114 is realized.

ORANGE COUNTY

The consolidation of fourteen county-dependent fire districts in 1981 was the subject of an article written by Rich Olsen and published in the April 1985 edition of “Fire Chief” – a fire service monthly magazine. In his article, Olsen elaborated on the progress of the consolidated Orange County Fire & Rescue Department:

“With all these improvements, it would be logical to conclude that fire/EMS protection costs the citizens of Orange County a lot more money. That is not true. While manpower and coverage have increased 25%, costs have remained constant and insurance rates have dropped.”

History shows that while Olsen was correct about the improvement in fire insurance ratings, he was highly mistaken about costs “remaining constant.” The combined fire district expenditures at the time of the merger in 1981 were \$12,680,770. By the time Olsen wrote his article in 1985, the merged county fire department was spending \$22,608,268 in that fiscal year. The current Orange County Fire-Rescue levy is \$201,200,185, and historically, “administration” costs there have hovered around 22% of total budget. If that still holds true today, taxpayers there are paying some \$44,264,040 to manage their consolidated fire system.

An article by Lawrence Lebowitz in the October 12, 1995 Orlando Sentinel goes into greater detail. It explains how the Orange County Fire-Rescue Department went broke with a \$53 million dollar budget and a \$9 million dollar budget gap. That event prompted a reorganization that cost 49 county fire department workers – including 23 fire fighters – their jobs. As for the concept of centralized management, Lebowitz wrote: ***“Trapped between (county) commissioners and county administrators and the unionized rank and file, fire department managers tend to remain cloistered in “The Blue Roof Inn” – the new \$30 million dollar headquarters in Winter Park.”***

PALM BEACH COUNTY

The merger of ten county-dependent fire districts in 1985 was the subject of an article written by Stephanie Smith and published in The Sun Sentinel on October 2, 1994. The article begins: ***“Unite ten county fire districts into one, and emergency services will be better, more uniform and cheaper” Palm Beach County residents were told ten years ago. Ten years later, many of those promises have been kept – but at what cost?”***

County Fire Chief Herman Brice is also quoted in Smith’s article. The article reads: ***“Brice, who was fire chief in Miami for six years before he took the job as Chief of the consolidated department, said he was the first to admit his department could not be both better and cheaper. “When I got up here, they said “we did this to save money.” I said “guess what – that’s not going to happen.”*** History shows that Chief Brice was correct. At the time Smith wrote her article in 1994, the Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue Department was then beginning its new fiscal year in which \$61,143,599 was eventually spent. Three years later, their budget was \$100,823,096 and in the current fiscal year, their budget is \$363,862,947.

In 1998, the uniform fire tax levy came to an end when the Town of Jupiter threatened to drop out of the county fire system and form its own fire department. In the end, the Town of Jupiter stayed in the county fire system but they demanded (and got) a lower tax millage rate. Currently, the county fire/EMS taxing rate in Jupiter is 2.0035 mills, however, the fire millage is 3.4581 for most of the remaining majority of residents served by the department. A proposal to add a penny to local sales taxes is again being discussed as a way to help fund the Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue Department.

SARASOTA COUNTY

There have been numerous fire department mergers since 1985:

- (1.) In 1985, the Fruitville Area, Northeast Area and South Trail Area independent fire control districts were consolidated into a single new independent district called the “Metropolitan Sarasota County Fire & Rescue District.
- (2.) In 1987, the Metropolitan Sarasota County Fire-Rescue District was abolished and its assets and liabilities transferred to the Sarasota County Commissioners.

- (3.) In 1990, the independent Pinecraft Fire Control District was abolished and its assets and liabilities transferred to county control.
- (4.) On January 1, 1996, the City of Sarasota gave its fire department to Sarasota County.

On November 1, 1994, Sarasota City Manager David R. Sollenberger and Sarasota County Administrator John Wesley White submitted a report entitled “Consolidation of Sarasota and Sarasota County Fire-Rescue Departments.” This report included the findings and recommendations of a citizens study committee that was formed to consider the consolidation option. A complete merger was recommended for the following reasons:

- (1.) – Improve the level of service. *
- (2.) – Reduce cost of service.
- (3.) – Lessen the negative effects of urbanization.

*Note: The improvement in service levels was to come from the elimination of political boundary lines for service delivery purposes so that service could come from the nearest fire station to the emergency.

The report had great expectations of saving taxpayer’s money when it was published in 1994, however, history shows that did not happen. The report explains how these savings were to be realized: *“The most significant and obvious savings will occur from the relocation and/or deferral of capital costs associated with a fire station and various fire apparatus. Construction of a planned county fire-rescue station will be avoided through the consolidation because existing city fire –rescue stations can serve the same area as the planned station. Avoiding construction of the planned station will result in annual operational cost savings of \$771,000 in fiscal year 1997, \$818,000 in fiscal year 1998 and \$842,000 in fiscal year 1999 through fiscal year 2000.”*

After the consolidation took place, however, county officials decided to build the station anyway, plus additional stations not previously considered.

The projected savings to taxpayers were featured in the Sarasota City-County fire consolidation report. These projections were based upon budget growth of the separate city and county fire departments. Bear in mind that these projections were calculated in 1994.

1996 PROJECTIONS

City Fire – without consolidation	\$9,686,685
County Fire – without consolidation	+\$16,148,610
<hr/>	
Total city and county fire – without consolidation	\$25,835,295
Projected consolidated fire budget for 1996	-\$25,648,972
<hr/>	
Total projected savings due to consolidation	\$186,323

1996 ACTUAL CONSOLIDATED FIRE BUDGET

Approved consolidated fire budget	\$26,400,000
<u>Projected consolidated fire budget</u>	<u>-\$25,648,972</u>
Total increased cost over original projections	\$751,018

The end result was that instead of saving \$186,323 as was projected in 1994, costs to taxpayers actually increased \$751,018 over the projected figure.

1997 PROJECTIONS

City Fire – without consolidation	\$10,186,866
<u>County Fire – without consolidation</u>	<u>+\$17,539,874</u>
Total city and county fire – without consolidation	\$27,726,740
<u>Projected consolidated fire budget for 1997</u>	<u>-\$26,769,417</u>
Total projected savings due to consolidation	\$957,323

1997 ACTUAL CONSOLIDATED FIRE BUDGET

Approved consolidated 1997 fire budget	\$32,890,363
<u>Projected consolidated 1997 fire budget</u>	<u>-\$26,769,417</u>
Total increased cost of original projections	\$6,120,946

The end result is that instead of saving \$957,323 as was projected in 1994, costs to taxpayers actually increased \$6,120,946 over the projected figure.

In a January 26, 1996 Fort Myers News-Press article by Mike Hoyem, Sarasota Finance Director Gibson Mitchell is quoted as having said he is “*...not promising savings at the outset, but he says he’s confident, “eventually, there will be savings.”*”

The 1994 fire study also addressed the I.S.O. fire insurance ratings then in effect. The City of Sarasota had a Class 2 rating while the unincorporated fringe areas carried a Class 4 rating. It was hoped that a consolidated fire department would carry a Class 3 rating overall. Eventually, The I.S.O. re-rated only the so-called “Urban Service Area” as Class 3 while the rural areas without a water system are rated as Class 9 and then only those areas within five road miles of a fire station. Therefore, while an “equal level of service” may exist in the urbanized areas served by the Sarasota County Fire & Rescue Department, it does not apply equally to the rural areas of the county. In the end, the City of Sarasota did indeed lose its Class 2 ISO rating and did not get it back until the urbanized areas were re-rated by the ISO on October 1, 2015.

THE LEE COUNTY 1998-1999 FIRE CONSOLIDATION STUDY

The February 28, 1997 Naples Daily News featured an article within which former Lee County Administrator (later Manager) Don Stillwell proposed consolidating fire districts while speaking at the Rotary Club of Bonita Springs. The article, in part, read as follows:

“We all want to save money,” he said, “yet in Lee County we have 17 different, individual fire districts plus three cities that have fire departments. Twenty different entities, 20 different fire chiefs, 20 fire captains, 20 sites. It’s a frenzy.” Consolidating into fewer districts would save money, Stillwell said. He said the current system is inefficient, noting the county pays \$54.2 million for fire services, plus another \$20 million for emergency medical services.

“We don’t have many fires anymore, he said. To spend \$54 million in this county for fire protection in my opinion is ludicrous. We would be better off with a volunteer fire department and a few paid people and go out and secure the house and let the house burn down and we’ll pay you for your house.”

Mr. Stillwell was not alone in his belief that a bigger fire department would be “better.” Area fire fighter union leaders also shared that belief, as did numerous area builders, contractors and developers, ideologues and the editorial staffers of the Fort Myers News-Press.

On February 19, 1997, the Lee County Board of Commissioners voted to have a study conducted on the matter. It’s purpose was: *“To determine if emergency services, excluding law enforcement, can be delivered with a higher level of service for less cost.”*

The project was put out on bid on April 15, 1997 and awarded to David M Griffith & Associates (now DMG Maximus) on October 14, 1997 for \$185,000.00. By May 27, 1998, the first completed draft of the study was compiled. Several consolidation scenarios were shown – and each of them originally included the existing and proposed tax millage rates for each fire district. In most every scenario, tax millage rates were shown to increase as a result of consolidation. After that, all language dealing with actual tax millage rates was deleted from the final published study and replaced instead with “percentage” and “share” amounts - *doubletalk*.

On Monday, February 1, 1999, DMG Maximus consultant Richard Brady addressed the Lee County Commissioners, saying: **IT’S VERY DIFFICULT TO MAKE CONSOLIDATION WORK IF YOUR MAJOR CRITERIA IS COST-EFFECTIVENESS. IT DOESN’T WORK.**” The study concluded that a consolidated county fire department would cost \$9 million more than what was then being spent, but did not include administrative costs.

COLLIER COUNTY

The subject of merging fire districts has been an ongoing one in Collier County for the past few years, with its proponents promising tax savings and better service. Recent drops in real property values that have reduced tax revenues, plus a continuing issue with the County Medical Director led county commissioners to believe there was an opportunity to establish a consolidated metro-type fire system in the county. On November 2, 2010, voters in unincorporated Collier County approved the following straw-ballot proposal submitted to them by the county commissioners:

“Would you support consolidation of the five independent fire districts and two dependent fire districts into one independent fire district for unincorporated Collier County – provided that the consolidation will improve efficiency and promote a more cost-effective use of tax dollars?”

The results were as follows:

COMMUNITY	YES	NO
County area (Isles of Capri & Ochopee)	1,126	578
Big Corkscrew Island	2,479	1,040
East Naples	12,604	6,127
Golden Gate	12,532	4,622
Immokalee	734	497
North Naples	25,929	9,139
	55,404	22,003

The same day, however, the East Naples Fire Control Commission submitted its own straw ballot proposal that appeared on the official ballot in East Naples only:

“As a resident of the East Naples Fire Control and Rescue District, do you support the consolidation of your fire district with the other fire districts if the consolidation may result in higher taxes and decreases the efficiency and effectiveness of the emergency services currently being provided to you?”

YES - 4,508

NO - 14,259

Thus it appears that while East Naples voters favored “improved efficiency” and a “more cost-effective use of tax dollars,” they absolutely rejected both “higher taxes” and “decreases in the efficiency” of the services they received.

Four years later, the voters in four fire districts approved two consolidations:

(1.) The East Naples and Golden Gate fire control districts merged into a new independent special district called the Greater Naples Fire & Rescue District. This district is in the process of annexing and absorbing the Isles of Capri county fire unit, the Ochopee Area county fire unit, and part of the Collier county fire unit.

(2.) The North Naples and Big Corkscrew Island fire control districts merged into a new independent special district called the North Collier Fire Control & Rescue District.

Both of the above were promoted as a means of “saving money” and “reducing duplication of effort.” In reality, there was no “duplication of effort” because district taxpayers supported only one fire district and not several of them. Only time will show to what degree of success they’ve had, however, costs in the consolidated areas continue to climb as shown in Chapter Two.

The Cities of Naples and Marco Island have chosen to keep their fire departments, along with the Immokalee Fire Control District.

SUMMARY

There have been several fire mergers here in Southwest Florida over the years and most of them made sense. The 1971 merger of the Cape Coral Fire Control District with the city made sense. The merger of the Marco Island Fire Control District with the new City of Marco Island made sense. Their boundaries were identical. When the Little Hickory Shores residents realized their community was geographically too small to generate the tax base needed to support a modern fire department, they and the voters of the North Naples Fire Control District voted for a merger. In addition, the Heights Fire Department was absorbed into the Iona-McGregor Fire District in 1975 and the Charleston Park Fire Department was absorbed into the Alva Fire District in 1976.

The above examples were very localized events that were handled locally and then only after much discussion, research and planning. Creating a larger countywide fire department agency is another matter entirely. History shows us that when large agencies such as consolidated fire departments are created, they tend to become empires unto themselves and politically well insulated from the public they serve. History also shows that these larger entities are decidedly more expensive to operate than the community fire districts are. Chapter Two of this report clearly demonstrates this fact.

When DMG Maximus presented its fire and EMS study to the Lee County Commissioners in February of 1999 and advised them that consolidating the fire districts would cost over \$9 million dollars more than what was then being levied, some of them expressed shock and disbelief. *“How can that be,”* they asked?

The answer is quite simple. It is unrealistic to expect a big government to operate as efficiently as a smaller and more localized one. Community independent special districts have little administrative expenses because they are owned, controlled and operated by the local voters and taxpayers themselves. With no bureaucrats feeding at the public trough, significant savings are realized and funding is directed to providing service rather than to high administrative costs. The fire districts are a role model for efficiency and cooperation between local governments and it would do well for other local governments to study their operations. That is particularly true when fire district governments operate at the community level.

Some have suggested creating a countywide independent special fire control district to replace the community fire districts, but if the prerequisite is “lower cost and better fire protection,” that won’t “work”, either. With a total of forty-five fire stations, it would still be too large an organization to operate efficiently and taxpayers would still be stuck with the cost of a new public safety administration building downtown, plus the cost of its administrative bureaucrats and their staffers - a horrific expense that our taxpayers have avoided by keeping their fire districts intact.

How high could fire administration costs be? Consider the Orange County Fire & Rescue Department's current budget of \$201 million dollars – with typically 22% of that amount of it spent for administration expenses. And that doesn't include the \$30 million they spent to build their fire administration building twenty-one years ago. Orange County is not being deliberately wasteful with tax money – the high administrative costs are simply required to operate a fire system of that size.

These costs are not unique to Orange County, Palm Beach County or the other consolidated fire systems in Florida - there is at least one local example of this here in Lee County. The Lee County School Board Administration Complex in the former Metro Mall had a price tag of \$42.7 million – enough to build and equip a brand new state-of-the-art high school, according to the April 13, 2005 News-Press. But the building is needed to accommodate over 600 “administrators, accountants, secretaries, clerks and other central office workers to manage the school system.”

QUALITY OF SERVICE FOR TAXES PAID

The I.S.O. is the nationally recognized agency which actually inspects each community's fire defenses – here and in 44 other states - and establishes public protection class ratings accordingly. The ratings speak for themselves:

There are 591 fire departments here in the State of Florida. Of that number:

In Florida, there are only 26 Class 1 communities. Of that number, none have consolidated fire departments.

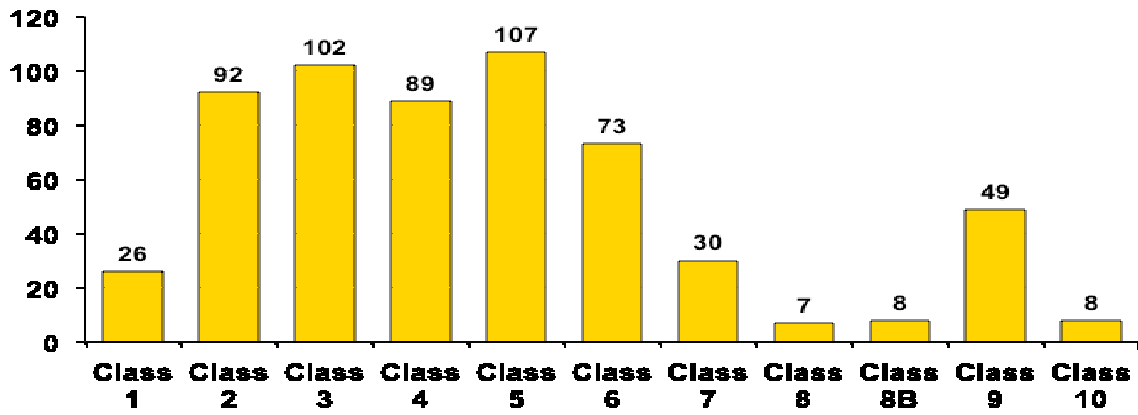
In Florida, there are only 92 Class 2 communities. Of that number, only one of them (Sarasota County) has a consolidated fire department, and the Class 2 rating isn't uniform – it applies only to the urbanized areas.

In Florida, there are only 102 Class 3 communities. Of that number, only two – Broward County and Palm Beach County – have consolidated county fire departments and the Class 3 rating only applies in a very limited area. Neither operates a countywide department.

The consolidated fire systems in Charlotte, Orange and Miami-Dade counties enjoy a Class 4 rating. Most fire district communities also enjoy a Class 4 or better rating - but at a much lower cost. There are a total of 89 Class 4 communities in Florida.

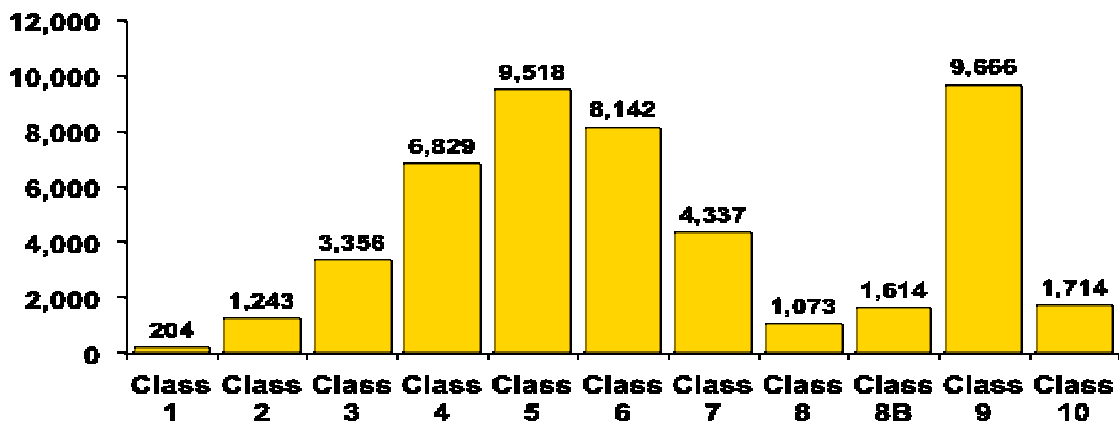
Statewide, the following graph shows the total number of fire jurisdictions in Florida by their ISO ratings:

Florida



This graph shows the total number of fire jurisdictions in The United States by their ISO ratings:

Countrywide



In fact, the overwhelming majority of fire district communities enjoy some of the best fire protection in the United States today at a cost that is lower and better than what is paid elsewhere. In Lee County, the lowest and best ratings today apply to seven communities with ISO Class 2. That is more ISO Class 2 communities than the entire states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, New Hampshire, Utah, Vermont and Wyoming. Eight Lee County communities hold a Class 3 ISO rating with the others not far behind. The citizens of these communities, their elected officials, chiefs and the fire fighters are to be congratulated for doing an exemplary job of providing for their own fire defenses and keeping taxes low. Some of the fire districts have gone as long as twenty years without having to ask the voters for a tax increase.

Some fire district detractors say that the reason the voters won't approve fire consolidation is because they take pride in seeing the name of their community painted on the fire engines. In my view, these communities have every reason to be proud of what they have accomplished. Increased annual spending has been a reflection of growth, but with independent fire districts, the community has something to show for the money they've spent.

Other than a matter of community pride, the main reason fire district consolidation is not politically possible has to do with taxes and money. As it is, fire district residents own and operate their own fire and rescue departments – elect their own fire district commissioners and tax themselves for this service. But the voters in each fire district decided to limit the taxing millage rates. In most districts, the tax cap is 2.5 or 3 mils, and even their elected fire district commissioners may not levy more than that amount without voter approval at a referendum election. This is as it should be, however, dissolving the local fire district automatically dissolves the fire tax cap as well.

CO-OPERATION IS THE KEY TO REAL TAX SAVINGS

Because they are smaller and more localized “grass roots” governments, they are by their very nature compelled to economize and co-operate with their neighbors and with other local governments. That is also why typically 95 cents out of each fire district tax dollar goes to service delivery.

It is apparent that -

- (a.) When local governments compete with each other, taxpayers lose.**
- (b.) When local governments consolidate into bigger ones, taxpayers lose.**
- (c.) When local governments co-operate with one another, taxpayers win.**

The benefits of co-operation are often visible to the public – especially when fire departments assist one another on major fires. In 2008, four different entities co-operated with each other to build The Pine Ridge Government Complex in Iona. They include The Lee County Sheriff Department, The Lee County Tax Collector, The Board of Lee County Commissioners on behalf of the Lee County Emergency Medical Services, and the Iona-McGregor Fire Protection & Rescue Service District.



There are many co-operative efforts and inter-local agreements that are not generally seen by the public, but are very useful in service delivery and tax savings. Some of them include the following:

- (1.) - Lee County EMS vehicles and staff are often located in city and district fire stations, sparing the county of the financial burden of providing separate facilities.
- (2.) - Closest Unit Response/Automatic Mutual Aid provides the fastest service in an emergency – regardless of political boundary lines.
- (3.) - Standardized protocol between city and district fire department paramedics and the Lee County Medical Director provide for seamless service delivery at the point when a patient is transferred to a Lee County EMS ambulance.
- (4.) - Standardized emergency radio dispatching (and station/vehicle numbering) along with CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) speeds up emergency service delivery.
- (5.) - Fire hydrant maintenance and regular inspection by the fire departments alert the water utilities of any problems with hydrants, flows and pressures.
- (6.) - Fire Code Enforcement is also uniform – using the Florida State Fire Safety codes.
- (7.) - New construction plans review – Many districts contract with the Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District for this service as a cost-effective alternative to doing this work in-house.
- (8.) - “Piggy-backing” with other governments (including state and federal) for savings in mass purchasing.

In effect, all fire departments in Lee County can and do operate as a single large department if and when the need comes. The only thing we appear to be “lacking” here in Lee County is a large bureaucratic public safety empire – a new administration building complex and hundreds of bureaucrats to work in it. Ideologues and empire-builders will tell you that we just can’t get along without these things.

Don’t let them fool ya!.

Yours for good government,

Brian R Juntikka

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