

LEANDER FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE DEPARTMENT

2002-2003

YEARLY REVIEW

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE BY
MANAGING TODAY



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BACKGROUND

This report provides a comparison of key performance indicators of the Leander Fire Department to NFPA 1710. NFPA 1710 is the National Standard which establishes the minimum requirements for fire department performance. The standard provides information on necessary staffing, response time to emergencies, equipment needs, and safety concerns.

NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The purposes of the Association shall be to promote the science and improve the methods of fire protection and prevention, electrical safety, and other related safety goals; to obtain and circulate information and promote education and research on these subjects; and to secure the cooperation of its members and the public in establishing proper safeguards against loss of life and property.

NPFA does not create law but establishes standards that are adopted by government entities, such as the Texas Commission on Fire Protection, and are used by courts to establish the acceptable norm in the Fire Service.

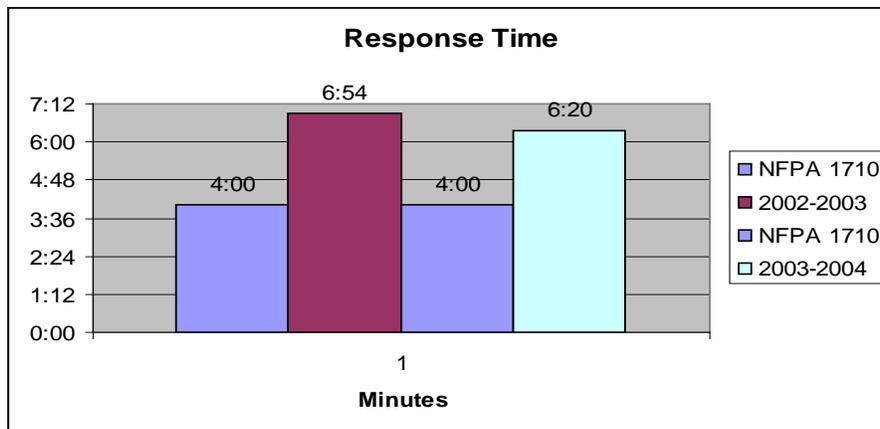
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Response Time

The time in which it takes firefighters to arrive at an emergency is able to be measured in not only in dollars, but also in lives and memories that are saved. A fire doubles in size every 2 minutes. Fire will burn outside the room of origin, and a single family home will reach collapse state in 12 -20 minutes from the time a fire begins.

NFPA 1710 states that fire departments shall establish time objectives of 4 minutes or less for the first arriving engine company at a fire or emergency medical incident and shall have the arrival and deployment of the remaining alarm within 8 minutes. The fire department shall meet this objective 90% of the time.

Leander Fire Department has an average response time of 6 minutes and 20 seconds and meets the 4 minute response time of the initial engine only 47% of the time. The time it takes for the second arriving engine company is an average of 14 minutes.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

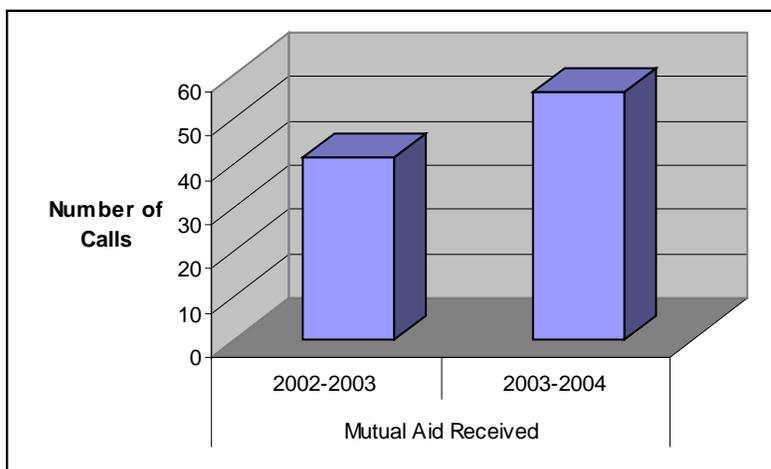
Staffing Levels

Firefighting is physically and mentally taxing. These demands require a large number of people to safely and effectively handle emergency situations. NFPA 1710 states that the initial arriving engine company shall consist of 1 company officer and 3 firefighters. The initial alarm assigned to a major event shall consist of a minimum of 2 engine companies, 1 support/truck company, and 1 chief officer. The department shall hold also the necessary resources to provide an additional engine company for larger working fires. The initial alarm is a total of 13 people on the scene with in 8 minutes.

Leander Fire Department has an average of 5 people per event. The average number of staffing changes when calculating only major events to 7.62 people per event. The staff numbers includes career staff, part-time paid staff, volunteers, and mutual aid from other departments.

The department currently has a total of 35 volunteers with 22 of the volunteers living in district, which is an increase of 6 from this time a year ago. The department had ten basic or higher certified volunteers. That number has increased to 22 this year. In order to maintain membership, each volunteer is required to serve a minimum of 42 hours a month at fire department activities. Currently, the average time spent by volunteers each month is 62 hours. The majority of time is spent at night and on weekends after they have worked a full time job. This has lead to the volunteers becoming more taxed and availability becoming maximized.

The members of the department spent a total of 46,969.46 man hours involved in training, emergency response or fire prevention from August 1, 2003 to August 1, 2004. Even with the amount of time spent, the Leander Fire Department had request for additional assistance 56 times during this time frame, not counting the times we had other fire department covering our station while Leander units were at emergency events. The request for mutual aid is up from 41 during the same time frame in 2002-2003.

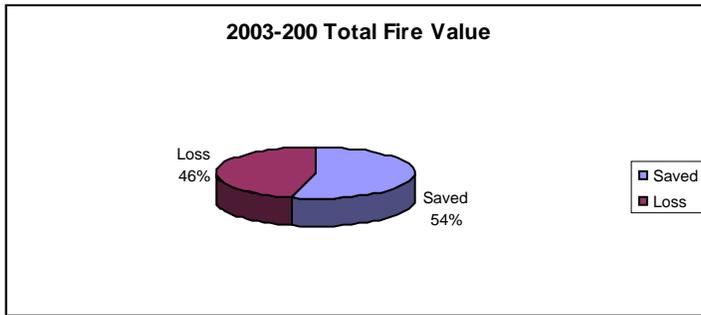


KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Fire Loss Value

One of the evaluations for a fire department is the ratio of total values saved versus total values loss. Given that the progression of a structure fire to the point of very rapid spread due to superheating of room contents and other combustibles generally occurs in less than 10 minutes, the two important elements in limiting fire spread are the quick arrival of sufficient numbers of personnel and equipment to attack and extinguish the fire as close to the point of origin as possible.

Leander Fire Department had a total of \$1,443,503.00 in potential fire loss during the examined time period. The total fire loss was \$667,025.00 and total value saved \$776,478.00 for a save value of only 53.79%



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Scene Time/Overlapping Calls

The ability to be able to answer calls in a timely manner has been discussed in other sections of this report. One factor that must be evaluated on a regular basis is the amount of time fire fighters spend on scene with initial calls for service while other calls for service may be pending or waiting for response.

Leander Fire Department has an overall average scene time of 42 minutes, with a an average scene time of 8.5 hours for fire calls.

The increase of scene time and increasing call volume leads to the potential of multiple calls occurring during the same time. From August 1, 2003 to August 1, 2004 a total of 170 overlapping calls occurred that received delayed response time due to pre-existing calls. This is an average of a delayed call every other day. To understand overlapping calls, Attachment A provides a detail explanation for the overlapping calls from the last 90 days.

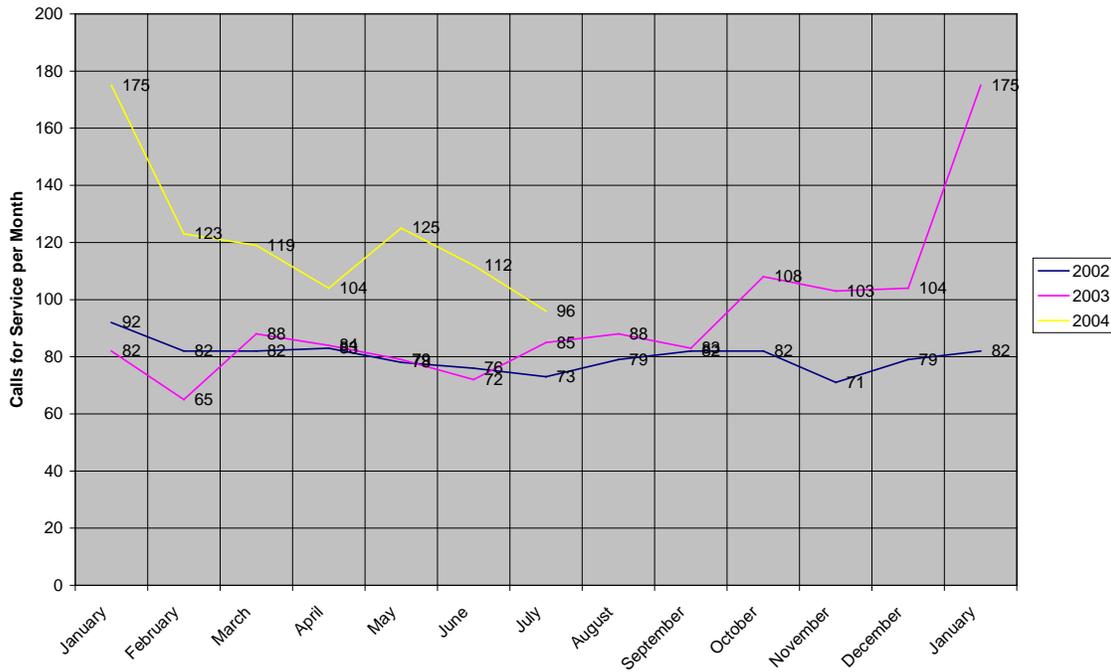
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Calls for Service

The evaluation of calls for service is used as a marker for the amount of activity taking place in the Leander Fire Department response area. This indicator allows the ability to trend events from previous years and determine if the need for the fire department by the community is increasing.

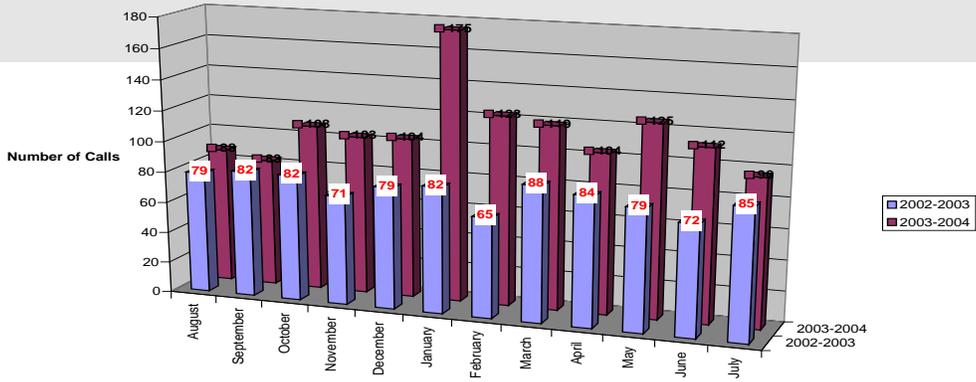
The number of calls for service from August 1, 2003 to August 1, 2004 was 1340; this is an increase of 29% from the 948 the previous year. The two graphs below show the difference in call volume.

Leander Fire Dept. Call Volume 2002 Compared 2003





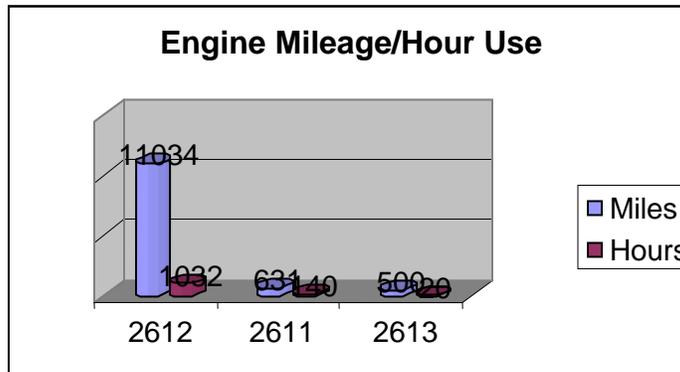
Monthly Calls for Service



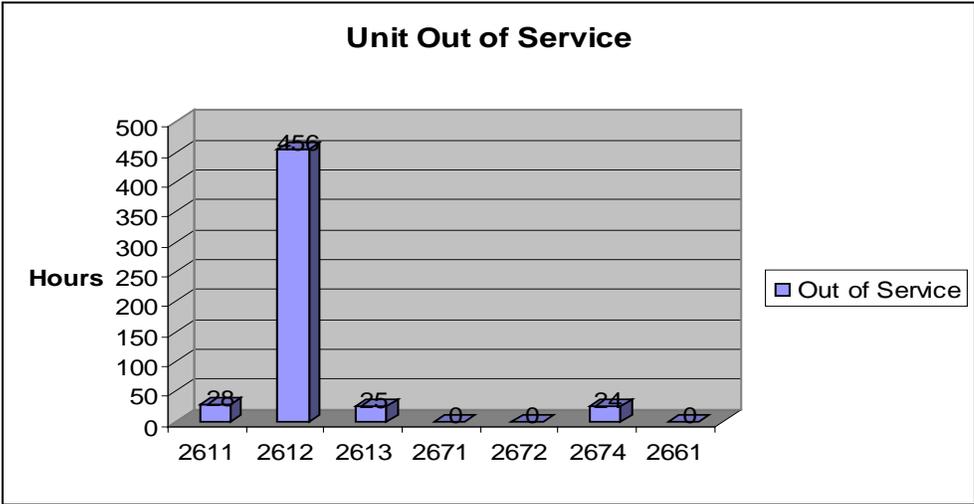
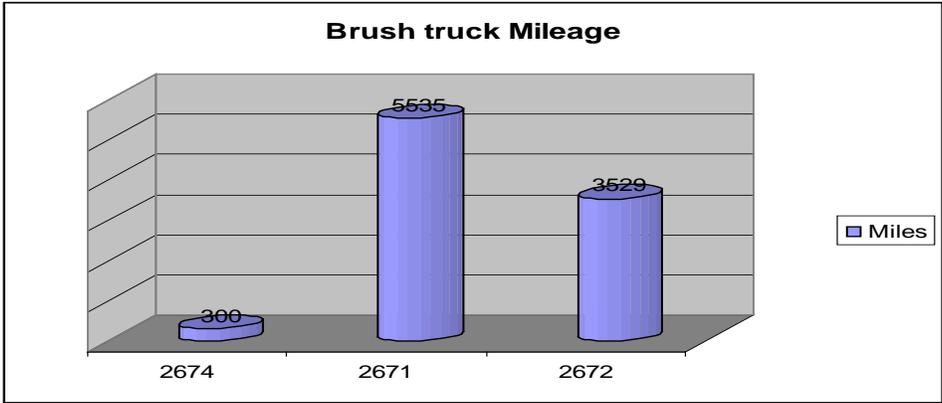
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Fleet Usage

The measurement of vehicle usage allows for long term planning and provides indications of how much life expectancy exists on a certain vehicle based on the hours used, miles used, and out of service time. During the time examined, the fleet had over 33,000 miles driven in a response area that covers only 55 square miles. The charts below will provide the number of hours used and miles driven for the emergency fleet.



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For pictures and information on the fleet discussed refer to Appendix B.

EQUIPMENT STATUS

Personal Protective Equipment

The last item that needs to be reviewed during this year’s report is the age, quantity, and need for personal protective equipment and communications equipment.

Each firefighter must be protected to be able to perform on the emergency scene. This protection comes from the firefighter’s personal protective clothing (PPE or Bunker Gear) which includes the firefighter’s coat, pants, boots, gloves, hood, helmet, and SCBA mask. This gear must be fitted for the firefighter that is going to wear the equipment, and each firefighter must have a complete set. This gear becomes worn with time, use and activity on emergency scenes. The Leander Fire Department currently has 70 coats with 44 in need of replacement at this time or by the end of 2004-2005 budget year, 73 pants with 41 in need of replacement at this time or by the end of 2004-2005 budget year, 67 helmets with 41 in need of replacement at this time or by the end of 2004-2005 budget year. **The department currently has no coats, pants, masks hoods, gloves, or boots to be distributed to new members.** The current gloves, hoods, and boots for the majority of the members are in need of replacement.

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Communications Equipment

To have safe, efficient, and timely response to emergency scenes and provide for the safety of dependable communications on the fire ground, there is a need for hand held radios for volunteers and on each on duty responder. To meet this need would take 45 hand held radios. The department currently has only 22 functioning handheld radios.

The decision will need to be evaluated if the department stays with the current radio system or to begin to upgrade to a newer system. The department currently lacks the ability for its firefighters to communicate with EMS, Law Enforcement, or a majority of mutual aid departments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conclusions

The information provided in this report shows the signs of a rapidly growing community that has begun to supersede the current available resources provided by the fire department. The report shows calls for service increasing at a rate of 29% annually. The current staffing resources are maximized to the point of inability to provide timely response to other calls for service. The department is not meeting the national recommended standards at this time. The department has received no substantial increase in funding and staffing in several years. There are five main areas of concern that need to be addressed are:

- Staffing - Lack of Adequate Staffing is leading to longer response time, failure to meet nationally recognized standards, inability to meet increasing call volume and unsafe working environment.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention – Because of increasing demands to meet community needs, the ability to consistently retain qualified volunteers for any length of time and to find other citizens in the community willing to give of the required time and risk.
- Fleet – Increasing call volume and time on scene has began to increase the wear and tear of fleet leading to increasing unit hour cost and unit out of service time.
- Protective Equipment – The increasing number of staffing and additional wear on protective equipment with existing age requires replacement and plan for continued up keep of protective equipment.
- Communications – The ability to communicate emergencies to the volunteers and communicate effectively on a fire scene increases with the need of call volumes increase and becomes less controllable with the continued addition of volunteer staff.

The information provided shows an urgent need for timely action from the leaders and decision makers of the City of Leander to address these concerns. The department continues to work and maintain a positive attitude and hope for the future changes while these items are discussed.

Recommendations

While this report has brought several concerns supported by facts and statistics, there are also some possible recommendations that are being worked on that should be considered and supported by the City of Leander.

- Staffing – The department developed a possible staffing need report that should be evaluated by the city, and then a plan developed for implementation with adequate funding. This plan is Appendix C. While it may not be possible to meet all parts of the plan, the need for additional staffing to begin in October 2004 is crucial.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention – The ability to properly provide adequate equipment, communications, and working fleet will help in recruiting more interest in the department while the addition of more career staff will help in providing additional training, management, and decreased non-emergency work load so volunteers are retained for longer periods of time.
- Fleet – The City support the current evaluation of the first line engine for possible early trade in to lower out of service time and decrease maintenance cost while preparing for the purchase of an aerial device to be delivered in 18 months with the projected opening of the new station.
- Protective Equipment – The City support the current lease purchase program being investigated by the current fire administration and provide the funding for a lease purchase agreement to begin in October of 2004.
- Communications – The City support and fund a purchase agreement for new radios for the staff with the purchase and implementation of new hand held radio equipment taking place over the next two budget cycles.

**APPENDIX A
OVERLAPPING CALLS**

The following is an example of overlapping calls and the result of those calls. This set of examples was taken from the last 90 days.

May 1, 2004

(Battalion 2601 unmanned this date)

13:37 Engine 2611 dispatched to Medical assist in Grand Mesa

13:46 LFD dispatched to Cardiac on County Road 280; call punted to LHVFD for mutual aid, no units available

May 6, 2004

(Battalion 2601 unmanned this evening—manpower shortage)

4:07 Engine 2611 dispatched to Signal Hill for respiratory distress

4:23 LFD dispatched to Hazelwood for sick call; Engine 2611 unable to clear due to critical patient; volunteers toned out; 2 volunteers and one off-duty firefighter respond in privately owned vehicles (POV's) to assist ambulance crew with patient care.

May 16, 2004

19:07 Engine 2611 dispatched to sick call on County Road 273

19:23 LFD dispatched to sick call 1900 block of US Hwy 183; EMS unit released Engine 2611 to answer second call

May 24, 2004

16:13 Engine 2611 dispatched for mutual aid request by CPHFD to cover entire City of Cedar Park for additional calls due to structure fire at Cedar Park High School (CPFD and Jollyville FD working on scene already); volunteers toned out to staff Engine 2612. Once staffing for 2612 was obtained, 2611 moved up to Cedar Park station 1.

16:42 Engine 2611 dispatched by CPHFD for collision at US 183 @ Cypress Creek.

16:47 CPHFD requests two additional engines for mutual aid CPHS; Engine 2612 and Liberty Hill Engine 3511 respond. Georgetown FD requested mutual aid by Battalion 2601 for move-up to cover Leander, Liberty Hill and Cedar Park.

May 25, 2004

08:17 Engine 2611 dispatched to County Road 179 for a snake bite

08:33 Engine 2611 clears call on CR 179, returning to city

08:37 Engine 2611 dispatched to medical assist in County Glen; Engine 2611 arrived on scene 12 minutes later due to prolonged response from responding from CR 179 area.

May 26, 2004

16:45 Engine 2611/Battalion 2601 dispatched to Glass drive for Cardiac

16:58 LFD dispatched to fire alarm activation in Horizon Park; Battalion 2601 clears call on Glass Drive and requests volunteers toned out to respond Engine 2612. Alarm cancelled by 2601 on the scene @ 17:05

June 2, 2004

20:06 Engine 2611/Battalion 2601 dispatched to Cardiac/Crystal Falls Pkwy

20:12 LFD dispatched to Injury/Glass Dr; 2601 diverted and took this call; was assisted by 2 volunteer firefighters that responded POV to the scene.

June 13, 2004

23:40 Engine 2611/Battalion 2601 dispatched to smoke investigation, possible structure fire, in the area of the Crystal Falls Golf Course.

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23:44 LFD dispatched to sick call on S Bagdad; Engine 2611 diverted to medical call. 2601 determined that structure fire did exist but was in Jonestown.

June 22, 2004

12:03 Engine 2611/Battalion 2601 dispatched to poss. Cardiac in County Glen;

12:14 LFD dispatched to poss. Gas leak in area of 2243/Bagdad; 2601 responded to investigate and requested LHVFD to respond mutual aid;

July 17, 2004

Both Engine 2611 (normal staffed unit) and Engine 2612 (additional volunteer staffed unit) manned this date (Saturday) due to an EMT class at station 2

14:26 Engine 2611 checks out of service with a walk-up poss. Cardiac patient

14:30 LFD dispatched to OD in Horizon Park, Engine 2612 shuts down class and responds; Battalion 2601 backs up.

14:55 LFD dispatched to Poss. Suicide on Glass Dr; Engine 2611 clears call at station (left with EMS unit) to answer this call

15:02 EMS Medic 21 transports code 3 with 2 firefighters from Engine 2611 with critical patient; Engine 2611 out of service—insufficient manpower, and returns to station

15:54 LFD dispatched to collision 2400 block S US 183; Engine 2612 shuts down class again to respond, Battalion 2601 also responds

16:00 LFD dispatched to grassfire US 183 north of FM 2243; Battalion 2601 clears collision to respond; requests mutual aid LHVFD to respond. Off-duty firefighter responds from house to station to pickup brush truck to respond as a single-man unit. Fire extinguished by LHVFD units.

July 20, 2004

12:57 Engine 2611/Battalion 2601 dispatched to Bagdad @ 2243 for a downed power line that was taken out by a delivery truck.

13:26 LFD received request from LHVFD for mutual aid on major collision in Liberty Hill; Battalion only answers call; Engine 2611 unable to clear scene. Volunteers toned out for help, 2 respond to man Engine 2612.

August 5, 2004

(Battalion 2601 unmanned this evening)

22:51 Engine 2611 dispatched to attempted suicide Crystal Falls Pkwy

23:03 LFD dispatched to grassfire behind Leander High School; call punted to CPFDD for response. Due to a dispatch error, CPFDD is delayed by over 20 minutes to this call.

**APPENDIX B
FLEET INFORMATION**

Engine 2611 Engine 2611 is a 2000 Class A pumper. It responds to fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical calls, and almost anything else! It is fully equipped for Basic Life Support with a Automatic External Defibrillator.



Engine 2612 Engine 2612 is a 1999 Class A pumper. It responds to fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical calls, and almost anything else! It is fully equipped for Basic Life Support with a Automatic External Defibrillator.



Brush 2674 Brush 2674 is a 1978 Chevrolet Medium Duty Brush Truck



Brush 2661 Tanker 2661 is a 2001 Pierce/International 4900 Tanker



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**APPENDIX C
STAFFING PLAN**

See Following Pages

STAFFING AND RETENTION PLAN

INITIATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE STAFFING AND RETENTION FOR THE LEANDER FIRE DEPARTMENT.

February 2004

SECTION

NEED ASSESSMENT

1

STAFFING AND RETENTION PLAN

CALL VOLUME INCREASED

In 1965, the Leander Volunteer Fire Department was established to provide fire protection to neighbors, friends and relatives. This reasoning is why the Leander Fire Department exists today, to be able to help someone in the time of need.

During the last year the community has grown and the number of times in which people are in need of assistance from the fire department has grown also. The Leander Fire Department responded to over 1040, calls which is an increase of 100 calls from the year previously. (See attachment A) While a 10% increase in the number of citizens having

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emergency is something that must be addressed, a more concerning fact is the pace of the call volume when compared during the last six months to the same time frame last year. (See attachment B) This trend shows an increase of calls at a rate of 22%-23%. This increase in calls will place a strain on the fire department and create a possible decrease in service received by the citizens if additional resources are not committed to meet these demands for service.

Many of these calls occur while resources are already committed to emergency events, causing delays to responding to the next emergency. If additional staffing were available these resources would be able to answer additional requests for service without separating staff from the event they are already assigned.

Additional staffing would allow more participation in the prevention and education programs established by the department without taking away from units in readiness for emergent response.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

The Leander Fire Department strives to abide by all standards and regulation to help make fire department activities as safe as possible for its personnel and the community.

In 2001, the National Fire Protection Association released NFPA 1710, The Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments and NFPA 1720 which was established for Volunteer Fire Departments. Several of these standards were adopted by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection which regulates the fire service of Texas.

This standard was designed to define minimum requirements that are intended to provide effective, efficient, and safe protective services that operate on a sound basis to prevent fires and reduce risk to lives and property, to deal with incidents that occur, and to prepare for anticipated incidents. It sets minimum standards considered necessary for the provision of public fire protection. It addresses the structure and operation of organizations providing such services, including fire suppression and other assigned emergency response responsibilities, which include emergency medical service and special operations.

NFPA 1710 and 1720 defined the following:

- ❑ Four people shall make up a company
- ❑ Each company will be lead by a company officer who will be considered part of that company. .
- ❑ A Supervisory Chief Officer being dispatched on all full alarms assignments.
- ❑ The fire department will have a response to an emergency with the first unit being on scene with in 4 minutes 90% of the time.

The four minute response is connected to the need for an early aggressive and offensive primary interior attack on a working fire which is the most strategic and effective way to save

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lives and reduce property loss. Studies have shown that at 8 minutes fire will flashover causing extension outside of the room the fire began.

RETENTION OF EXPERIENCE

The growth that has began in Leander is common to a large part of the Central Texas Area, as the area grows so does the need for firefighters, especially well trained and experienced firefighters. Leander Fire department has been privileged to have both career and volunteer firefighters that have become part our department that have several years of experience and excellent, above average training. These people have become highly recruited by other departments and agencies in the area because of the above mentioned traits. These people have attributes for the organization that should be rewarded and efforts made to retain those people to limit the loss that comes when experience leaves and the cost involved in training new staff. The retention of experienced staff creates a work environment which will attract other professionals to want to be involved in the department.

SECTION 1 SUMMARY

The need for additional staffing and the retention of current employees is shown in the above sections by demonstrating a rising call volume, increasing government regulations, and a more competitive market for quality employees. The most important point that should be reviewed is the service the citizen receives. The service should be timely, quality, and efficient. To meet this level of service, the city will need to commit the resources needed for additional staffing and efforts necessary in retaining the current staff.

SECTION

2 ADDITIONAL STAFFING

STAFFING AND RETENTION PLAN

STAFFING ADDITIONS

The following requests for staffing are to help address the problems reviewed in Section 1. These requests will be broken down by the budget year requested for implementation in the order of need.

2003-2004 MID-YEAR BUDGET REQUEST

Shift Commander (District Chief)

- 3 positions, 1 per shift
- Serve as a District Chief to meet NFPA 1710 on full alarm assignments
- Provide direct supervision for shift and response during that shift
- Allow the Company Officer to become part of the Engine Company as described in NFPA 1710
- Market Pay rate for a District Chief is \$ 48,000

Fire Marshal (Captain)

- 1 Position

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- ❑ Serve as designated Fire Prevention Head for the Department
- ❑ Provide Special Skill in prevention, investigation, and public education in the fire service
- ❑ Market Pay rate for a Fire Marshal \$44,000 to \$46,000

2004-2005 BUDGET

Lieutenant

- ❑ 3 positions, 1 per shift
- ❑ Serve as a Company Officer to meet NFPA 1710
- ❑ Provide direct supervision for company and company operations
- ❑ Market Pay rate for a Lieutenant is \$38,000 to \$40,000

Driver/Engineer

- ❑ 3 Positions, per station
- ❑ Serve as designated Pump Operator and Vehicle Operator for that shift
- ❑ Provide Special Skill in operating fire service vehicles and equipment
- ❑ Market Pay rate for a Driver /Engineer \$36,000 to \$38,000

Firefighter

- ❑ 2 Positions, per station
- ❑ Serve as additional staffing on fire apparatus to meet staffing requirements of NFPA 1710 90% of the time
- ❑ Eligible Firefighters will be certified by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection as Firefighters upon hiring assisting in cost of initial training.
- ❑ Market Pay rate for Firefighters \$29,000 to \$ 35,000

2005-2006 BUDGET

Assistant Fire Chief

- ❑ 1 Position
- ❑ Serve as designated Assistant to the Fire Chief
- ❑ Provide special skill in fire service administration and operations
- ❑ Market Pay rate for an Assistant Fire Chief \$ 48,000 to \$51,000
- ❑ Evaluation for the need of this position will be made to determine time of implementation.

SECTION 2 SUMMARY

The addition of the above staff will help in meeting the time obligations, expertise, and man power needs of the department to insure a high level of service to the citizens and a safe working environment for the members of the Leander Fire Department.

SECTION

3 RETENTION OF
STAFFING

STAFFING AND RETENTION PLAN

RETENTION INCENTIVES

The following incentives will help address the problems reviewed in Section 1 of this report. These incentives will be broken down by the budget year requested for implementation in the order of need.

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2003-2004 MID-YEAR BUDGET REQUEST

Market Pay Increase for staff

- Lieutenant
 - o Increase to \$ 40,000
 - o Current range is from \$ 32, 900 to \$34, 108

- Driver/Engineer
 - o Increase to \$36, 000
 - o Current pay is \$32, 197

- Firefighter
 - o Increase to \$33, 000
 - o Current range is from \$ 29, 965 to \$ 29, 955

2004-2005 BUDGET

Education/Certification Pay

- Present (None)
- Intermediate Firefighter \$25/month
- Advanced Firefighter \$50/month
- Master Firefighter \$100/month
- Associate Degree \$500/year
- Paramedic Certification \$500/year
- Fire Officer I Certification \$500/year

Assignment Pay

- Training Officer \$500/year
- Fire Marshal \$500/year

Step Pay Increase

3%+ on base every two years up to ten years to establish pay steps

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2005-2006 BUDGET

Education/Certification Pay

- Associate Degree in Fire Science \$750/year
- Bachelor's Degree \$1250/year
- Fire Officer II Certification \$500/year
- Hazardous Material Technician \$500/year

Assignment Pay

- Inspector \$500/year

Working out of class pay

- Driver/Engineer working as a Lt. \$ 1.00 per hour increase
- Firefighter working as a Driver/Engineer \$ 0.50 per hour increase

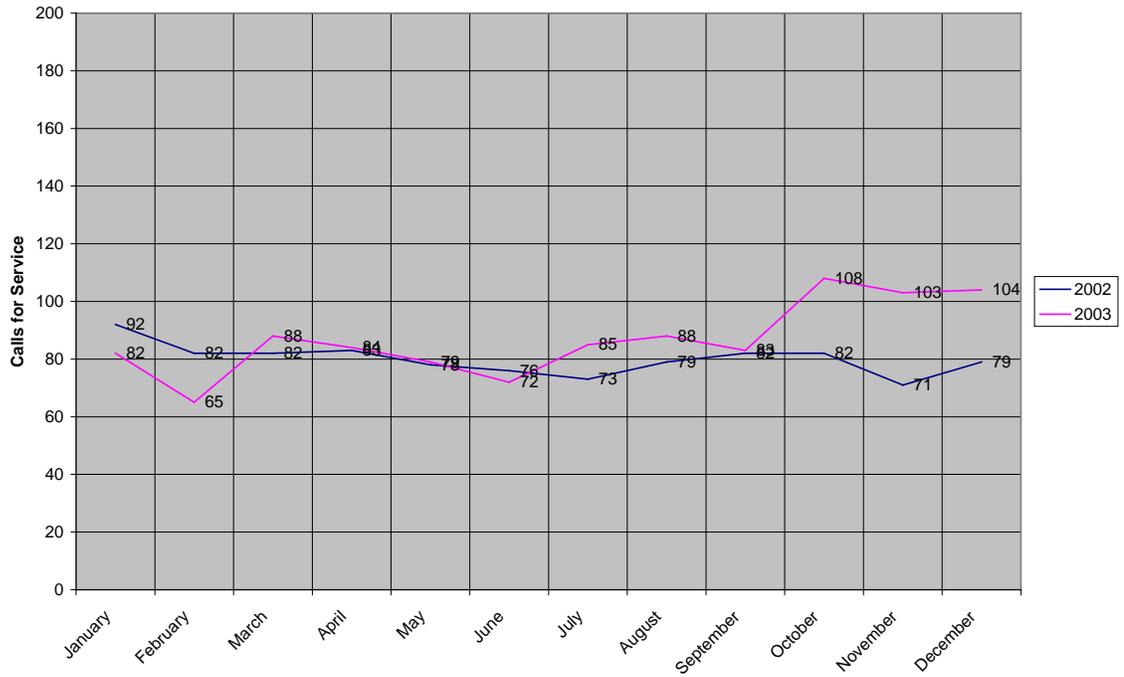
SECTION 3 SUMMARY

The incentives discussed being implemented would help to insure a highly motivated, trained and experienced work force that can evaluate, plan, and respond to the citizens needs. These firefighters who, as part of their daily routine, openly face risk and challenges to help every citizen equally and fairly would be rewarded as the professionals that they are and help establish a level of commitment and professionalism for all new comers.

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ATTACHMENT A

Leander Fire Dept. Call Volume 2002 Compared 2003



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ATTACHMENT B

Leander Fire Dept. 02-03 Compared 03-04

