

10. Information Management

May 23, 2001

Secretary Heidi Prince

Goal: *“The District shall have an information management system with “user friendly” technology to provide information to support legislative, administrative, operational and planning decision-making.”*



Organizational Values:

- Maintain accurate and valid information.
- Utilize technology to meet information needs.

Historical Perspectives:

- First automation by the District was a copy machine (1978) and Macintosh SE (1984); the District starting in 1985 produced automated budget reports.
- The District has been providing automated incident reporting to the State since 1994.
- The first networked system was installed in 1993 (Macintosh based *AppleTalk*).
- The District converted to a PC based system on Novell in 1997; this also introduced Internet based applications.
- Telephone (landline and wireless), facsimile, paging, and two-way radio capabilities, as well as computerized workstations, have been improved in the past three years in an attempt to keep pace with needs; this has resulted in a significant financial expense.

Current Situation:

- All administrative functions have been computerized, including training (lessons are provided in the *MS Powerpoint* format).
- Automated data reporting requirements are increasing for both fire and EMS system reporting.
- Thurston County law enforcement is embarking on a mobile computer terminal program; fire and EMS units will be able to utilize this system as well (the infrastructure has been installed already).
- Expectations for readily available data have increased significantly due to the exponential growth of the information industry; this will drive a need to expand the networking capabilities of the District.
- The Internet has been accepted as a standard for information sharing.
- Focus on automated communication may have taken a toll on “old fashioned” methods like face-to-face; overall communications strategies are being reviewed by the Management Team.

“Some improvements are needed in the data collection system”

Program Narrative

“Electronics systems enhance collection and documentation of information”

“The Performance Objectives outline the elements of the Department’s Information Management System”

Information Management

Future Direction

- The District will manage an overall information management and communications strategy that balances automated and “manual” methods to meet member and customer needs.
- Conduct a feasibility study on the standardization and networking of incident reporting, training and other operational data between the NET agencies.
- Extend the District’s computer network to Stations 8-2 and 8-3.
- Create a robust interactive web page to include the ability of members to access scheduling and mail services, for customers to interact and conduct business, and encourage enhanced interaction with the community.

Strategies:

- Provide more timely communications to our members and citizens. Increase communications by offering it through appropriate technology so members can be updated from home, work or at each station; offer the Newsletter and updates for our customers on the District website. Conduct customer surveys over this system.
- Reduce staff time and paperwork in providing effective communications to the District members and customers. Offer the District Policy & Procedure Manual, a “bulletin-board”, training schedules, shift schedules, outdoor burning rules, and general information.
- Provide greater flexibility and accuracy of information by offering a system that makes it easy for members to check their e-mail. This would include increasing the access for members through at-home and station based network connections.
- Develop durable and reliable backup systems that will ensure timely recovery of data in the event of a disaster.