

PS COMMITTEE #1  
July 23, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

July 21, 2009

TO: Public Safety Committee  
FROM: Minna K. Davidson, Legislative Analyst *MKD*  
SUBJECT: Quarterly Update – MCFRS Reorganization

The Council enacted Bill 36-03, *Fire and Rescue Services - Amendments*, in May 2004, and the bill took effect on January 1, 2005. The bill restructured the County's fire and rescue system to clarify the command and control structure, streamline operations, and enhance volunteer recruitment and participation. It also established a uniformed County Fire Chief with the authority to administer, direct, and originate Fire and Rescue operations.

The County's first Fire Chief, Tom Carr, retired at the end of October 2008. Richard Bowers served as Interim Fire Chief while a national search for a new Fire Chief was conducted, and then was appointed to fill the permanent position. Chief Bowers was sworn in as Fire Chief on May 19, 2009.

For the upcoming briefing, Chief Bowers will provide updates on the topics listed below, and will be available to respond to Committee questions.

- Policy development across MCFRS
- Recruitment and retention of career and volunteer personnel
- Comparison of training requirements in Montgomery County and other jurisdictions
- Impact of training requirements in Montgomery County on volunteer recruitment and retention
- Outputs of Montgomery County's training requirements - for example, are there fewer accidents or injuries?
- Strategies to increase paramedic recruitment and retention
- Status of volunteer standby programs and volunteer participation in four-person staffing
- Status of the MCFRS master planning process

As has been the practice for previous quarterly updates, Marcine Goodloe, President, and Eric Bernard, Executive Director, Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCFVRA), will also be present to discuss the Association's perspective on these issues.



# Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association

P.O. Box 1374  
Rockville, MD 20849  
301-424-1297

Marcine D. Goodloe, President  
Eric N. Bernard, Executive Director

## Quarterly Update of the MCVFRA for the Public Safety Committee of the County Council *Thursday, July 23, 2009*

The Montgomery County Volunteer Fire-Rescue Association is pleased to again address the Public Safety Committee of the County Council this quarter and provide an update on the reorganization of the MCFRS in the view and opinion of the volunteer fire, rescue and EMS providers in the County.

The Association, comprised of the 19 Local Volunteer Fire and Rescue Departments in our County, continues to work through many complex and time-consuming issues related to the fire and rescue service. We continue to meet weekly at a minimum with Chief Bowers as well as other division chiefs and department heads as necessary. The Association Board meets monthly as well as the general membership of the Association which is held the third Thursday of each month. We want the members of the Council to know that you are always invited and welcomed to join us at our meetings.

We would like to update the Public Safety Committee on the following issues and concerns before the fire and rescue service that we have been working on since our last briefing before you in March of this year.

1. **Recruitment and Retention** - the MCVFRA continues to focus on the recruitment and retention of volunteers through our 19 LFRDs. We have 4 areas of concentration. They are:
  - Recruitment Business Plan implementation:
  - Marketing Plan Section Implementation:
  - Retention of volunteers
  - Volunteer Basic Orientation Crew (VBOC) training for new members

We will be giving a brief presentation on the recruitment effort via PowerPoint.

**NO TO AMBULANCE FEES**



**CALL COUNTY COUNCIL  
240-777-7900**

2. **FY10 County Budget Overtime Coverage at LFRDs** – the County Executive in his budget transmittal for FY10 made several staffing cuts to the LFRDs during daytime hours. While some funding was restored by the Council, others funding for staffing was not approved. This required 3 LFRDs to provide additional volunteer staffing above and beyond their existing levels during daytime hours. The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad, the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department and the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad all increased volunteer staffing in a plan coordinated with Chief Bowers. It is important to recognize that these departments have had tremendous success in staffing these hours that were previously staffed by career fire and rescue providers. While we are not in the dire straits that Prince George's County is in where they are de-staffing stations in roving blackouts leaving no career firefighters during the day, the increased burden placed on these 3 volunteer departments must be recognized and lauded.

3. **Other Volunteer Participation in MCFRS** – the volunteers continue to increase their numbers and hours of service. In addition to covering more daytime hours at BCCRS, KVFD and WVRS due to the budget crisis as described above, the volunteers in our other departments are serving our residents with increased service and distinction. The most telling numbers can be seen in the Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS) certified (able to provide fire, rescue and emergency service) increases in the past 18 months. According to the IECS maintained by MCFRS we have seen the following increases:

- **October 3, 2008**      **765 volunteers certified**
- **January 3, 2009**    **933 volunteers certified**
- **July 3, 2009**        **1257 volunteers certified**

These numbers do not include administrative members, auxiliary members, non-IECS certified members, or those on the provisional list. That number increases the number of volunteers to close to 1,700.

In addition, at the recent Tiger Woods AT&T golf tournament, the volunteers of 10 of our volunteer departments sent volunteer fire and rescue providers to work the event providing 921 actual hours of service over the week-long event. This allowed the County to save many dollars in overtime. Chief James P. Seavey and Lt. Corinne Mann both of the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department did a fantastic job coordinating the events and serving at the tournament. We also thank Captain Fred Probst of MCFRS for his coordination and work on the event.

A new service recently added by the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department at Station 5 adds additional advanced life support (ALS) paramedic coverage at no cost to the taxpayers. The volunteers purchased a medic unit and staff it 100% with volunteers. As EMS calls comprise over 74% of our responses in the MCFRS, this added ALS capacity is greatly needed and will reduce ALS response time in the entire southern County freeing up other medic units who would have responded to the area now covered by volunteer Medic 705.

The Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department recently took delivery of a brand new tanker purchased by the volunteer corporation. It will replace a

tanker the volunteers own at Station 14. The volunteers have loaned the replaced tanker to MCFRS to be run out of Station 22.

The volunteers lead the planning and coordination with the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair preparations working with MCFRS staff and career members. The volunteers took responsibility for all food preparation, maintenance and serving during the nine day fair. In addition, volunteer chief officers will command the event each night and weekend along with much of the daytime hours. Volunteers will staff much of the apparatus each night and weekend along with several displays. The recruitment team will staff a volunteer recruitment section during the event. We are most thankful to Chief Paul Sterling (WRS) and Battalion Chief Adam Jones (MCFRS) for coordinating this massive project.

4. **Ambulance Fee for Service** - the 19 volunteer departments as well as the MCVFRA have argued and fought for many years against charging our residents a fee to provide a basic service of any government – providing public safety services.

Indeed, the Association was in the forefront when the previous administration tried to begin charging a fee to the residents of Montgomery County for ambulance service. As you may recall, the residents of the County voiced their objections loud and clear each time this issue has been brought up in the past.

We are pleased that the majority of the Council members voted to disapprove the Executive's regulations on the proposed fee. We enthusiastically thank Council President Andrews, Council Vice President Berliner, Councilmember Ervin, Councilmember Trachtenberg and Councilmember Navarro for their leadership on this unwise fee and their continued opposition.

The MCVFRA and our 19 volunteer departments have never wavered in their complete opposition to any ambulance fee no matter how it is marketed and will continue to do so as long as necessary.

5. **Recent Significant Events** – we have seen several significant calls in the metro area where volunteers participated fully. The rescue of the triplets in Bethesda from their burning house, the fatal Metro incident in DC, and the significant fire at the Chestnut Lodge in Rockville all had significant volunteer participation.

At the DC Metro collision, several of the volunteer departments responded on the mutual aid response including many BCCRS ambulances and medic units and several volunteer chief officers. MCFRS, both career and volunteer also back-staffed several DCFD stations and EMS units during the ensuing hours after the collision.

6. **Division of Volunteer Services Manager III (Deputy Director)** – the DVS continues to operate at less than 50% staffing today as it has for over 2 years. The deputy director's position remains frozen as is the OSC position. It is incomprehensible that an office should be asked to operate at below 50% staffing especially when we are asking so much more from the volunteers. Of all the

divisions, the Division of Volunteer Services oversees the most personnel of any division and yet has the smallest staff by far of any division.

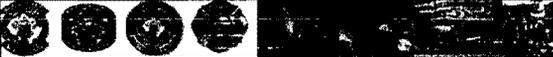
We are grateful to have Division Chief Hinde working so hard for the volunteers but he needs to have assistance. We certainly understand the fiscal difficulties facing the county, state and country, but we still must provide the service and it needs to have the staff present to assist our volunteers.

7. **Move of LFRD Maintenance Facilities and Transfer of LFRD Mechanics to County Employment** – The vehicle maintenance staff of the LFRDs recently became county employees with the help and cooperation of the several LFRDs that have been responsible for vehicle maintenance since the fire and rescue service was born out of our volunteer departments. The RVFD shop is the first maintenance shop to transition to the new central maintenance facility on Southlawn Drive, just this past week. Working with Chief Bowers, the RVFD donated tens of thousands of dollars of tools, equipment and parts to the MCFRS in the move from RVFD Station 3 maintenance shop to Southlawn. The RVFD was pleased working with Chief Bowers and Division Chief Lohr and Steve Lamphier of MCFRS. All worked very well in the time-consuming transfer and move.
  
8. **New Fire and Emergency Services Commission** – the MCVFRA spearheaded the opposition to the attempt by Councilmember Leventhal to remove the authority and participation of the Fire and Rescue Commission. While the Association agreed with the removal of all stipends to the commissioners, we vehemently objected and opposed the attempt to remove the quasi-judicial and legislative functions entrusted to the FRC after the contentious debate and compromises reached in 2003 during the Bill 36-03 negotiations. We were very sad to see that a promise made in 2003 by the full Council was before the Council again attempting to remove stakeholder and citizen participation in the fire and rescue service. It is unwise and foolhardy to take community participation out of any government function especially emergency services. While we are not completely satisfied with the outcome of the FRC abolishment bill proposed by Councilmember Leventhal, we will work with the new Commission to ensure volunteer participation and citizen involvement.

It shows significant leadership and dedication that most of the members of the now former FRC reapplied and have been appointed to the new Fire and Emergency Services Commission and will serve without any compensation or stipends.

Thank you again for the opportunity to brief the Public Safety Committee on these most important issues.





## Montgomery County Volunteer

### Fire & Rescue Association

# Recruitment & Retention Update for PSC

July 23, 2009

*Marcine D. Goodloe, President*  
*Eric N. Bernard, Executive Director*

Montgomery County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association



## 4 Main Areas to Discuss



VBOC  
Retention  
Marketing Section  
Recruitment Business Plan

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## Recruitment Update

- **Business Plan**
  - Written in 2007 and submitted to Chief Carr 42+ pages
  - Received some funding from Council but not used by MCVFRA
  - Based on 2y+ of local research & empirical data from other services including military
  - 15 of the LFRDs consistently participating
  - Several milestones reached from plan

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## Recruitment Update

- **Business Plan Milestones:**
  - SAFER grant \$254,000
  - Pimp my ambulance
  - Recruitment Resource center
  - VBOC
  - Joint recruitment effort at all events
    - » MSFA
    - » Baltimore
    - » MC Fair
    - » Recruitment hotline
    - » Resources



Joint Recruitment Team  
Ocean City - MSTA Convention 2009

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## Recruitment Update

- **SAFER Grant**
  - Awarded 10 months ago
  - \$253,000
  - Recruiting effort
  - Applied for 2 additional
  - For next 3 years



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## Volunteer Basic Orientation Crew



**VBOC**

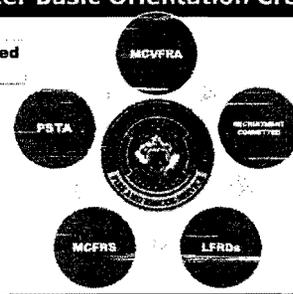
- Joint training program for all new LFRD members
- Streamlined approach to training
- "Hook" effect
- Coordinated effort
- Volunteer instructors from 15 LFRDs
- Assistance from Mike Bowman

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### Volunteer Basic Orientation Crew (VBOC)

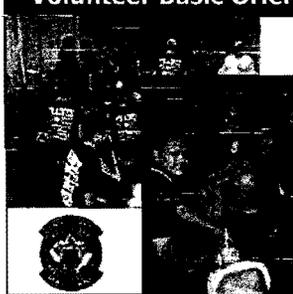
**Coordinated Effort**



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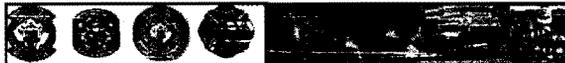


### Volunteer Basic Orientation Crew (VBOC)



- Meet other volunteers from other departments
- Learn about MCFRS structure and MCVFRA and LFRDs
- Get basic but hard to coordinate classes & requirements
  - CPR - healthcare provider
  - Physical
  - Fit test
  - Fingerprinting
  - Radio/MDC

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### Volunteer Basic Orientation Crew (VBOC)



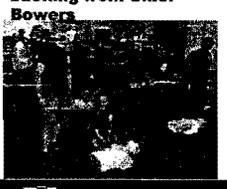
- Nearly 110 volunteers trained since January 2009 (4 classes)
- The majority of LFRDs are participating
- Retention rate over 96% to date
- Volunteers share common experience
- Joint resources

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### Volunteer Basic Orientation Crew (VBOC)

- VERY diverse classes:
  - 09-04 Class
    - 54% female
    - 47% minority
    - 9 LFRDs
    - Ages 16-64
- Many started summer EMT class on Monday. Had 82 students for an initial 30 slots. Chief Bowers added a second class of 30.
- Mutual instruction and coordination with MCFRS and MCVFRA.
- Received financial backing from Chief Bowers

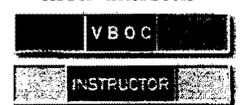


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### Volunteer Basic Orientation Crew (VBOC)

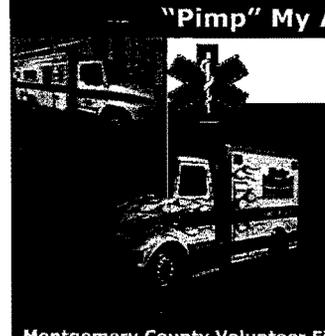
- More departments participating
- Cooperation from Chief Bowers & Chief Hinde
- Many revisions as we run classes
- Facebook
- BlackBoard
- Graduation ceremony
- Awarded certificate and service bar for their uniform



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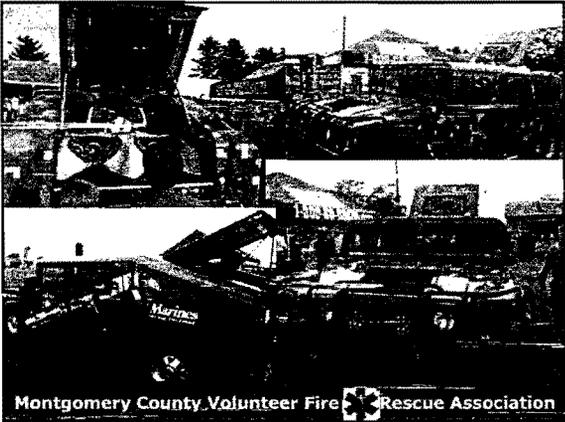


### "Pimp" My Ambulance



- Use of an old ambulance for recruiting
- Stylized with custom paint, decals, wheels and interactive screen inside

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### "Pimp" My Ambulance

- Military examples
- For use 24/7

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### Marketing Plan

- Part of the business plan
- Assistance from Greg St. James
- Joint recruitment team
- Our Mission is our Message
- Do Something Amazing

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Peggy was out all night again.  
What do the neighbors think?

Peggy spent all last night working as a Volunteer Paramedic  
What do her neighbors think?

They wouldn't want to live next door to anybody else.

**You Are Our Mission**  
Montgomery County Volunteer Fire-Rescue Association

Montgomery County Volunteer Fire-Rescue Association

Kathy was involved in three car crashes last night.  
What will her boss say in the morning?

Kathy was on duty as a volunteer EMT last night.  
No doubt she'll be a little tired when she comes into the office.  
What will her boss say when he sees her?

**You Are Our Mission**  
Montgomery County Volunteer Fire-Rescue Association

Good Job.

Montgomery County Volunteer Fire-Rescue Association

### Local Newspaper Ad

# Volunteer

Call 301-942-0100 or visit us online at [www.mcvol-fire-rescue.com](http://www.mcvol-fire-rescue.com)

Montgomery County Volunteer Fire-Rescue Association



**Psychological Process of Promotion and Marketing**

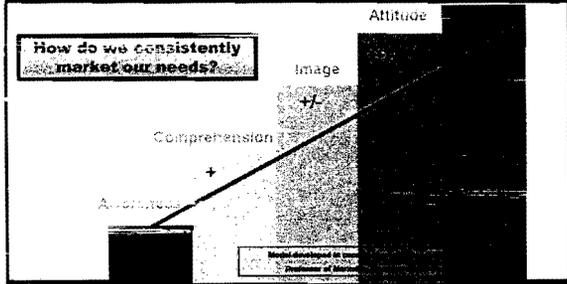
How do we consistently market our needs?

Attitude Behavior

Image

Comprehension

Advertisement



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- **First in the NATION**
- **Interactive, public recruitment space for volunteer recruitment for all departments.**
- **Staffed by volunteers**
- **Community oriented**
- **Public relations - safety message**

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- **FIRST - Recruitment & Retention**
  - Recruitment is our number 1 goal and objective
  - We need to GROW our volunteer ranks in all our LFRDs
  - Without continued growth we fail - everyone
  - Will be the FIRST volunteer firefighter recruitment office possibly in the US
  - 24 hour exposure/advertisement
  - Community tie-in
  - Opportunities for press coverage
  - Outreach

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## Vision

**To have a state of the art, first in the nation volunteer recruitment resource center with hands-on exhibits, computer stations and resources to recruit new volunteers into our 19 volunteer fire and rescue departments**



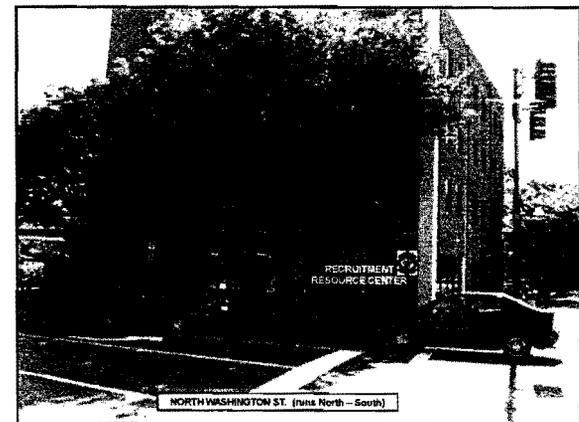
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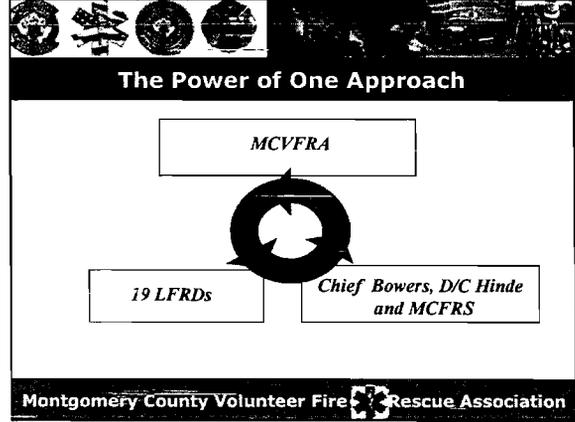


*The Solution*

## 230 North Washington St. Rockville, MD

Montgomery County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association





**Examples of Increased Volunteer Participation**

- According to Firehouse reporting – volunteer staffing over 38% of apparatus total (Only captures when a call goes out)
- Preliminary data from PIMS shows very significant volunteer participation not previously captured
- Summer EMT courses – 82 people!
- Total IECS certified for volunteers (This does not include administrative, auxiliary or provisional volunteers)
  - October 3, 2008 – 765 total
  - January 3, 2009 – 933 total
  - July 3, 2009 – 1257 total

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