

This Evening's Fires

07/17/07 91 W, 1 I - + 16 - 19

Amid fast, strong storms, Raleigh had a pair of working fires, Meredith Anne Court earlier and Lash Avenue later (pictured). Swift Creek also had a working fire later in the evening, on Dover Farm Road. Lightning strikes also reported around the county. The Lash Avenue fire is still going, with additional companies being called for manpower. Mike snapped some pictures until driven away by heavy rain + leaky umbrella. Used the faster lens, so at least some of the pictures should be good.



Yes, Swift Creek had a lightning strike. Swift Creek and Fairview were dispatched to the call. Fairview and Western Wake ended up covering for us. The fire was quickly knocked down by the initial interior crew. Then it became a salvage and overhaul job. Overall things went well, but the rain made for a very long and wet 2 hours.

Griggs - 07/18/07 - 13:12

Sooooo, was RFD #20 tied up on the job on Meredith Ann or did they have a unit in quarters? Just asking.....

Silver - 07/20/07 - 17:39

Silver the CAD says that you all cleared Meredith Ann 3 mins before the fire on Dover Farm was dispatched, so no 20 wasn't on a call.

Guest - 07/20/07 - 19:48

So, allow me to ask this; RFD #20 is 2.3 miles away, versus Fairview Fire at almost 6 miles. We always hear the argument/gripes about county units not being dispatched into the city when they're closer (and now they are I believe), so what about when the shoe's on the other foot? Just wonderin'.....

Silver - 07/20/07 - 21:44

Listening to the radio traffic that night it was a mess in the western region of the county. SCFD had their fire, and then CFD got banged out to a fire (that should have been SCFD A/A), then to a fire alarm (again in SCFD's A/A area). turns out nothing to either of those, but Cary 911 and Ral/Wake 911 were swamped, according to C911 they were unable to reach Ral/Wake a number of times on Tricomm due to getting a busy signal on the beloved VIPER system.

At the same time was the Lash Ave fire, and then a reported fire on Glenwood. It was very interesting to look at the CAD and to listen to all of the traffic. As for the SCFD fire, there were no outside units on that fire, just SCFD and from what I had heard they rolled all units on dispatch due to being at the house for training.

So onto another question. With the entire western portion of raleigh, eastern portion of cary and SCFD all out on multiple calls. Why do we move units up to cover? I know this debate has gone on before, but is that almighty coverage really necessary? or could units still respond to calls from their own houses into an area? Especially with the number and intensity of storms in the area. Is coverage necessary now that CAD will just bang out the next closest unit to a call? Not saying that in this case it was right or wrong, but now you take units from the next closest department to cover yours? Trust me not trying to start anything or stir the pot, but is this philosophy outdated with the current system that's in place? Could E-20, or CFD E-3, WWFD, and FFD not cover SCFD's area from their own house? Just food for discussion, to see what others think...

CFP 7021 ([Email](#)) - 07/20/07 - 22:50

Just a question was Swift Creeks Fire in a area with no hydrants?

If so this is why RFD may have not been called 500 gallons vs 1000 gallons (water shuttle ops) but on the other hand a city engine company could have been used for man power.

just my 2 cents.

BULL - 07/20/07 - 23:11

Good feedback, however, if it's going to be "closest unit" dispatch, then it needs to be CLOSEST UNIT DISPATCH. The initial dispatch was for Swift Creek and Fairview, I heard it go out. On the dispatch, it should've been Swift Creek, Fairview and maybe RFD 20 because how close they are.

Ok, it just so happened to be a meeting night and they dumped the house. Which is excellent!! However, on a night where each unit isn't staffed, standing by at the firehouse, would it not have been beneficial to have RFD 20 on the street? You would have had 3 companies (Swift Creek unit and probably both units from RFD #20) arriving on scene simultaneously (Swift Creek is 2 miles and RFD 20 is 2.3), versus 1, going to work.

Silver - 07/20/07 - 23:23

Has anyone brought up the Meredith Anne call that night? How E8 was already out on a call, and it was up to E20 and E14 to get there 1st? Whereas Cary Sta-2 sits about 2 miles down the road from there, but of course, they weren't dispatched. The way this system is, someone from RFD would have had think about it, then call HQ's for E2 to be dispatched. WC911 might have been delayed in getting through to C911, and then to dispatch it. E2 could have gotten there much quicker than the far away responding RFD units. That is, if WC911 could have gotten through to C911 quickly and if E2 was even available in the house. The response time for E20 was probably 5-6 mins or more; E2 could have been there (w/ a quick dispatch) w/in 2 mins or so.

lee - 07/20/07 - 23:36

Well Lee, we can't help that Cary didn't want to play in "our" sandbox and get on the county system, hahahahaha (just kidding, relax 7021).

I agree 100%, they should roll, especially with the "hole" that we at RFD #20 come out of. There's really no easy way to get anywhere from where we come from (especially over in that area). Well, maybe with the exception being locations off of Tryon Rd.

Silver - 07/20/07 - 23:51

yes the SCFD call was in a non-hydranted area.

Looking at the Meredith Anne fire you could have had CFD #2, WWFD #1, WWFD #2, SCFD, CFD #3, or even CFD #1 all just as close as E-14 or E-20. It was interesting to note that Cary 571 was the first unit on scene, not sure where they were coming from

Looking at the Dover Farm Rd call you could have had CFD #3, RFD #20, or even RFD #2 in the mix... It may have even been closer for CFD #2 or CFD #6 than Fairview, that's just looking at google maps, not calculating mileage from each.

I think it just illustrates that the "closest" unit dispatch still isn't working 100% yet. But you can see a recurring theme, that is that C911 and RW911 have no idea who has what going where. It is interesting to note that C911 monitors the FD alert and EMS alert channels now, so they can know what ems units are coming into Cary for calls and that they have the right address and M/A channel.

CFP 7021 ([Email](#)) - 07/20/07 - 23:55

and jeff... just remember that great radio system isn't the county's... but rather the States, and more so the SHP's... one of the main reasons

that I have heard Cary will not go over to it. Radio systems aside, the CAD's have to be integrated, or at the very least put remote stations in, something has to give. From what I understand Cary's new CAD system is in the final spec/bid stages and should be looking to go online sometime in 09. maybe it'll have something in it that can link, guess that's a pipe dream huh!

CFP 7021 ([Email](#)) - 07/20/07 - 23:59

That's what I meant Shev, integrating the CAD's.

Hydranted or not, you can do a lot with 500 gallons of water, especially if it means affecting a rescue.

Silver - 07/21/07 - 00:35

In regard to "closest unit dispatch", I believe this looks great to the county station's personnel since they are now running more calls and it might actually justify not closing stations down (New Hope #1, Falls, Western Wake). However, the more I think about it, this is just Raleigh's way of making a statement that their residents are more important than the county residents. Think about it for a second. Now the county runs into the city (which they should) since the units are closer but the city is not responding into anymore additional county areas. The call volume of the city into county has NOT increased but it has for the county going into the city. I've noticed that Falls still covers across the street from Wakefield and mutual aid to Hwy. 98 with Stony Hill but Raleigh's E-25 still does NOT respond to those areas even though they are much closer. I think us county guys, even though we are running more calls, are just getting screwed over in the long run.

Henry P. - 07/21/07 - 10:54

Thanks for your perspective, Henry. There are a couple issues that you raise, and they may be best addressed or questioned separately.

Regarding closing stations, at least as I have observed, one of the chief considerations is number of calls originating inside the fire station's district. Those calls that send the station's units outside the station's district are weighed differently. In the case of Western Wake #2, as I understand it, the county is planning to contract Cary for two types of coverage. First, for those calls that originate in WW2 territory. Second, for those calls that WW2 also responds to, but outside of its first-due district.

Regarding closest unit dispatch in general, the concept of parity is an expected question. Both taxpayers and responders are probably prone to ponder "who's getting the best deal here?" Not sure how that is answered. Everyone's on the same team, but somebody still has to pay the bills. If two busy stations, or two slow stations start running together, that's probably perceived differently as when a busy station / slow station that start running together. Again, not sure of the answer here. Automatic aid is rooted in the concept of "we'll help when we can, and hope that you'll help when you can." Some might say it all washes out in the end.

Regarding closest unit dispatch in Wake County, perhaps someone else can explain or expanding upon "how it happens." Presumably, agreements are reached both going into and out of a city. Are city > county response changes requested/authorized on a per-department basis? That is, each county department specifies "yes/no, we want/don't want city responses into this area/these areas?" Thus, is Raleigh > Falls arranged differently than Raleigh > Wake Forest, or Raleigh > Rolesville, etc. Also, is this process applied across all municipalities in Wake County? Compelling questions, to be sure.

Legeros - 07/21/07 - 12:00

CFP 7021, I requested some coverage, one engine and a tanker, from a department who was not already committed on a call. Sure CAD will get the next closest unit in the event of another call, well next closest county unit and a RFD unit if they are closer that a unit at our station, but like our call on Dover Farm, we did not get RFD E-20 because we are closer and once you get past the 1st level, it stays with only county units.

I made the coverage request so we could help fill in the hole that was created by SCFD, RFD, Fairview and Cary being on calls. I was hoping to get a unit from outside the storm area to give some assistance. Also, I knew that I had a fire in a remote location and that I might need some additional help at the scene and I wanted some help headed my way. Start them to the station and divert them to the scene if needed. Our initial crew knocked down the fire and we got a quick handle on the scene and the other units were needed.

Yes, CAD will get the next closest, but how close is the next county unit? As it turns out Fairview cleared our call and also stood by for us. I did not intend for them to send a unit to the scene and for coverage cause that would cause them to be short.

By the way, the closest hydrant would have been back out on Tryon Rd.

Griggs - 07/21/07 - 13:37

Like you said Griggs, the closest unit only goes to the first level and it is the same with the county going into the city. CAD doesn't evaluate closest unit response on every call. A lot of times a city unit is out on a call and a county unit that is staffed is closer than the now 1st eng but the county unit isn't sent. This works the same with the city into the county. The county unit is out on a call and the city unit isn't dispatched.

None of this will truly be worked out until 2 things happen. 1. The CAD systems of Cary and Raleigh are integrated or it all comes out of 1 super dispatch center that all agencies dispatch out of. 2. The CAD, county and city incorporate staffing into the dispatch with that being that only staffed units are dispatched and shown as available in CAD. I think the 2nd problem may be harder to work out than the first. I know that New Hope is trying something similar to this but like others have said you will have to get all the kings to agree on what min staffing should be and more importantly what their certification level should be on that unit. Having a unit staffed with 1 certified/qualified person and 3 juniors doesn't help anybody on a 1st out piece.

This area is taking small steps, but it seems that too often they are very small frustrating steps.

Mike - 07/21/07 - 14:07

I was hoping you'd chime in Samuel. Good points, however my point is the 1st level. RFD 20 should've been on the initial dispatch, that's all. They were in service and there's no reason why they shouldn't have been dispatched initially with you guys and Fairview. I feel like we have a really good working relationship with Swift Creek, but this whole CAD thing needs to work both ways.

Is it a pride thing? Computer glitch? Admin disagreement?

What's the deal?

Silver - 07/21/07 - 17:20

Silver, in a perfect world E-20 could have replaced Fairview since you guys are nearly the same distance from the Dover Farm call as we are and surely closer to than Fairview. I think SCFD and RFD have a great relationship and I don't think it's a pride or admin thing, just simply the way the CAD is setup.

I am not sure about other parts of the county, but RFD has been coming out to our area anytime the call is located where RFD is closer than SCFD for years now. We get the closer city unit and it is helping the public. Get the quickest help there, regardless of whose name is on the truck. But after that 1st level it goes to county only units. Thus, the reason E-20 did not come to Dover Farm. SCFD is slightly closer than RFD #20. Not sure it is the best setup, but that is what we have to work with.

As far as best deal, I think in our case SCFD and RFD and the public are getting a good deal. Currently who ever is closest goes and the authority having jurisdiction goes. We both go to Sadie Hopkins and we both go the Southern Cross.

Stay safe and see you soon, I am sure.

Griggs - 07/21/07 - 19:30

Here is the scenario: E-20, E-8, E-5 are out on a working fire with Ladder 20 and Rescue 14. Should SCFD E-1, E-3, T-1 be first-in to Food Lion on Avent Ferry if the units are NOT staffed, around the clock, but can be enroute in less than 5 minutes? Who are the next "closest units" according to CAD? Who "should" be on that run card? Where does the responsibility fall? The closest unit or the AHJ? Should SCFD empty their house to help RFD? What about the county citizens? Do we handle the call at hand or look toward coverage of an unincorporated area? Yes, on Tuesday night, SCFD was having training and could roll the house at the initial dispatch but what about on a Thursday Night when it takes an extra couple of minutes. Even though it takes an extra minute or two to get out of the station is that better or worse than driving a few more miles from a "staffed station"? Should the originally "staffed" unit be turned around or should SCFD keep personnel at their station 24 hours a day 7 days a week to make sure that each unit in service had minimal personnel at all times? Should each unit be staffed by minimal personnel or should that unit wait for that 4th or 5th person to respond to the station from home. That person who probably works at RFD or CFD and is trained to help effect that rescue that was spoken of earlier? If I only had these answers. I'm sure one of you does?

Guest - 07/22/07 - 02:20

I guess I'll just never understand how the CAD/response agreements will ever work. I was under the impression that the CAD would dispatch the closest units regardless of jurisdiction, and a unit from the AHJ would be dispatched as well.

It's obvious that some OIC's just overlook the fact that other units might be closer, or as close as, some units outside of their respective agencies. Will it take someone getting killed, or hurt really bad (again), to open the eyes further and get people to start thinking outside the

box? Probably.

I'm all for Cary Engine 2 rolling to the Farmgate Rd. area, which is 1.2 miles away. Next due from RFD is 14 (5.26 miles) or 20 (5.2 miles). I mean, that's a huge difference folks.

I'll finish with this; a computer is what dispatches us. It's bound to make mistakes, then it's time for a human to step in and manually make it right after the dispatch. You've got resources, call 'em and call 'em early. Both incidents that night, they were right down the street.

Silver - 07/22/07 - 17:37

Closer resources that is....

Silver - 07/22/07 - 17:40

Guest list many of the difficult questions that have to be answered if the current setup is going to change. I don't have the answers either.

Griggs - 07/22/07 - 22:04

It's still messed up....it's going to take those in the "positions" to think about what resources are en-route to their incident. And, is there someone that's closer that can get there a lot faster to help and possibly make a difference?

Silver - 07/22/07 - 23:29

I agree with Silver. Largely it is not CAD Error, but human error; especially since it is humans who programmed our beloved CAD. I don't claim to know much about computers, but I do know the program will operate only off what data is put into it (by a human). I've always felt that CAD has major programming issues, and when it was implemented, a consultant should have been contracted (evidently tech support isn't enough or this blog would be shorter).

Finally, without starting a "s@t storm", It IS TIME that the humans working down there with the CAD monitor what is going on (and the Tac Channels more closely), and make those corrections on the radio. If CAD dispatches what is known to be an "unmanned" unit or inappropriate resource, call command on the radio, or get a staffed unit en-route.

Jason Boggs ([Email](#)) - 07/23/07 - 07:39

I hope that you guys who are being so critical of our telecommunicators will take some time to go sit with them and walk a mile in their shoes. Just like there are never enough firefighters, police officers, and paramedics, there are never enough telecommunicators. The ones on duty do the best they can with what they've got.

Before we will truly see closest unit dispatching, lots of folks are going to have to agree to lots of changes. CAD will send units in any order that it is given. But our county units do STATION dispatching, which confounds the concept. It sounds on Location like we do UNIT dispatching, but we really don't. So, does CAD try to send the second engine that it knows is at the same station, or does it go to another station? And what about the officers who pick up the microphone and ask for someone specific, even if they are not closer? And heaven forbid that a call should be handled by someone from other than the AHJ Do we really think that the citizens care whose name is on the truck?.

It works for EMS, but it required (a) erasing the lines, and (b) putting the citizens first – in ALL matters. It CAN be done.

Skip

Skip Kirkwood ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 07/23/07 - 08:04

Sounds like an internal CAD FAQ could be useful, to get everyone on the same page. Maybe one already exists?

LJM - 07/23/07 - 08:49

I do agree, there are never enough telecommunicators. I have, many times in the past, sat down there...BEFORE and AFTER CAD. That was hard work, and the dispatcher REALLY had to pay attention. I guess what I meant in my last comment was, That past Dilligence and Attentiveness is Missed by those of us who knew the dispatch center before CAD. And there are quite a few instances since the 800mhz implementation where I have not been answered on Disp 1 OR the TAC Channel....

It is TRUE that the dispatchers do a good job, given the resources they have (again, staffing issue), and the amount of channels they have to monitor.

CAD has done a few good things for us, like opening the door for standardization. I understand and agree with Chief Kirkwood in his explanation of station vs. unit dispatching. He is in the position to have made the intelligent decision of doing UNIT dispatching within his

organization. Until every department head in this county makes the decision, (or has the capability) to go to UNIT dispatching, the door will actually remain closed.

There are, however other issues that prevent some departments from participating in "closest station" or "unit" dispatching (namely, staffing.) I dont want to get started on the "Skeleton Engine Crew" epidemic that plagues the county departments and smaller municipalities.

Jason Boggs ([Email](#)) - 07/23/07 - 16:55

Pulling from what several people have said...it is clear that we cannot count on telecommunicators to recognize things that CAD doesn't. Unfortunately, there just aren't enough of them. That said, firefighters should have an excellent working knowledge of resources in their corner of the county. Let's start using that knowledge. I have been on several calls with WWFR during the middle of the night to reported 10-50 with pin. Instead of waiting that 3-5 minutes to get 295 out the door, we have specifically asked for R14. Problem solved, well temporarily fixed.

CFP 743 - 07/23/07 - 18:02

Good point 743, and even though its a shame the 8th fastest growing county in the nation cannot prioritize an effective emergency service delivery to the average 54 new residents a day here in Wake, We will continue to provide the best service we can with the same staffing levels we did 5 years ago, and do it proudly. (Dispatchers Included!) We all know that Fire stations dont fight fire, people do. And until those priorities are revisited, the citizens will pay the price.

On the issue of knowing our own little corner, it might be wise to know the entire county and neighboring counties department-specific capabilities; especially if your job description finds you in a command role. Without stating the obvious (knowing your mutual aid companies), Look 3 districts east or west, north or south. Why should we deplete one entire corner of the county on manpower, move-up, and stand-by? If Fuquay, Fairview, HS, and Garner are tied up, why CAN'T Western Wake and Wendell (examples only) Move 1 company up to Key Station locations. Wake EMS mastered this about 2 years ago, and again, Wake County's Fire Service remains behind. CAD Even does this Automatically (sans my other issues with CAD).

Just a thought, and an OPINION

Jason Boggs - 07/23/07 - 22:00

Why can't they move up? Because who wants to move up? I know many volunteers at my department carry the pagers as if they are "on-call" but when the pager goes off, they only go if it's a fire call. Too many volunteers only want to run the "exciting" calls and leave the medical side for the "ones who are scared to fight fire" (as I was once told) much less move over to a different department.

Henry P. - 07/24/07 - 19:16

I remember when I first arrived in Anne Arundel County MD, and we did 'transfer crews' to cover depleted areas. At first, I thought it was a 'load of crap' because we did not do stuff like that back home. However, first time I got transferred into Baltimore County, and picked up a row house fire (3 story, six units, fire from second floor of two units, occupants on the third floor of multiple units, we were the first in engine with 4 personnel on board) I decided real quick that transfers were the bomb.

As to the 'fire call only' volunteers...they are the reason some people refer to volunteers as a 'dying breed'. And when they do show up, they usually are not much use...

Every call, no matter the nature, is an emergency to someone. Sick call or house fire, smoke investigation or MVC pin-in, they are ALL equally important.

Besides, if you can't handle the little stuff, you sure as he** can't handle the big stuff.

Yep, I did say that.

If you are on an emergency unit (fire or EMS) you need to know the capabilities of EVERYONE you may respond with. If you're running in the south end of the county, you need to know Wake, Harnett, Johnston, and Chatham County's capabilities. Same thing for the rest of the county. And if you don't, you ain't doing your job. Don't wait for someone else to get the information for you. If they won't take it on yourself. Who knows, you may be the one in the hotseat one day (just because you do not have a red or white helmet does not mean you can't be in charge).

DJ - 07/24/07 - 20:48

If your members that have that mentality keep it up, they'll have no calls to run because the vollies will be gone.

Silver - 07/25/07 - 00:01

In Wake County we have the privilage of operating under the authority of an excellent medical director who TRUSTS his first responders. From where I come from, there is a HUGE mistrust of first responders in the EMS community and by the medical director. If the mentality of "I came here to fight fire so screw the rest" keeps up and proliferates, the great relationship our fire departments have with EMS and the medical director will not continue. We as a community have to overcome this disdain towards medical calls.

CFP743 - 07/25/07 - 09:45

Every now and then I feel compelled to enter a discussion, so please indulge me. The CAD system works how it was told to work. There are some limitations as to what any CAD can handle, such as areas where the street and property belong to different agencies, but by and large it outputs what was input. If there is a bona-fide error with CAD that can be fixed, we'll fix it, but we need to know about it through the established channels. However, just as those in the field experience furstrations, so do we. A good example is the number of unit swaps that routinely occur and the number of "available" units that must be tracked by CAD and the telecommunicator, that are often recommended but less frequently actually respond. All these conditions add to our workload, and could be attributed to CAD, when in actuality they represent CAD following instructions that it has been provided. Since 2000, county fire dispatches have increased by 76.5%. We also increased the number of channels monitored ten-fold. We added only one TC during that period. We will add ten later this year, but they will not be released from training until 2008. Last year we took in about 1,000 calls per week more than the year before. Our staff handles 50% more calls per person than the statewide average. Kansas City, a comparable community, has 50% more telecommunicators than Raleigh-Wake. In addition, our folks do both calltaking and dipatching, meaning that it is a rare occasion when the "only" thing they have to do is monitor channels. However, we are hiring, so if you really want to help, or know someone who does- fill out an application. The next class starts November 5th.

[RWECC] - 07/25/07 - 14:49

yes, but the question is... will you guys ever hire part-timers, and not make them sit at a police console for the first stint of their tenure of the job?

CFP 7021 - 07/25/07 - 17:30

Speaking from experience, the police console is cool stuff. Friday or Saturday night, late, when the city gets hopping. That's the place to be.

Legeros - 07/25/07 - 17:33

They are required to sit at the police console first for a reason. While sitting at the police console they are able to learn how to monitor a boat load of units at once and further learn of the keystroke functions that are needed else where. By doing it on the police channel they are able to learn this while not having to worry about answering a phone at the same time. I am sure Scott or some of the other TC's that get on here could further explain, but the fire and ems channels are the most difficult to learn how to operate, wheather you have previous fire and rescue experience or not. Just like the fire service, the FNG's have to put in their time before they are entrusted with more responsibility.

Mike - 07/26/07 - 12:46

Name: (real name preferred)

E-mail: (optional)

Web Site: (optional)

Remember personal info?

Yes

No

Comment:

/ [Textile](#)

Comment moderation is enabled on this site. This means that your comment will not be visible on this site until it has been approved by an editor.

To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?