

Garner Fire, Garner Rescue Updates

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On Friday, October 1, the role of rescue service provider within the town of Garner was transitioned from Garner EMS & Rescue Squad to the Garner Fire Department. We touched base with the chiefs of both agencies and present an update below.

Fire Department

The Garner Fire Department acquired the response area, the subsidized funding from the town, and three full-time employees from Garner EMS & Rescue Squad. No vehicles or equipment were transferred. The three rescue technicians are classified as entry-level firefighters, and will be fully certified as firefighters by the end of the month. They are all already experienced or veteran fire service members.

Deputy Chief Matt Poole, currently the Interim Fire Chief, noted it's been "business as usual" for the fire department. They were already responding as First Responders inside the town, and were also already providing rescue services outside the town limits. They had also worked alongside Garner EMS rescue units and their members, and the three acquired staff members already had strong working relationships with the members of the fire department.

Though no vehicles were acquired by the fire department, the Town of Garner did take possession of Squad 881. The 2007 Spartan/EVI heavy rescue is being stored at the Public Works facility. The town has formed a committee to sell the vehicle. No additional equipment, however, was transferred to town ownership.

The Garner Fire Department is preparing to open their fourth fire station on Spaceway Court. Nine new firefighters are currently completing the Wake County Fire Academy. When the station opens in November or December, the department will be staffed as follows: four engines with three people, one rescue with two people, and one rescue with one person. The two rescue trucks are housed at Station 1 (2009 Pierce Velocity) and Station 2 (1997 Pierce Saber).

After the new station is opened, hiring of a Fire Chief is planned to begin in January. Deputy Chief Matt Poole is currently serving as Interim Fire Chief. He was appointed in July, after the retirement of Fire Chief Phil Mitchell. Poole is also a third-generation (!) firefighter, and the grandson of Garner Fire Chief B. R. Poole Jr.

Rescue Squad

The transition of rescue services was planned by a committee that met earlier this year, with representatives from Garner Fire, Garner EMS, the town, and county fire services. They were targeting January 1, 2011, as the transition date. Vance Haywood was appointed Interim Chief of the Department in September, after the resignation of Chief Bill Frederick.

Meeting with Chief Poole to become oriented on the transition, Chief Vance learned that most of the transition planning process was completed. He thus proposed a transition date of October 1, 2010. That date aligned with the Garner EMS budget cycle, as well as the quarterly subsidy from the town. An earlier transition date also further allowed Garner EMS to cut costs during a tough budget year, and allowed for the best care of their employees.

With the transfer of rescue services, Chief Haywood, his staff, and the Board of Directors are turning their focus to the future of Garner EMS & Rescue Squad, and developing a solid business plan.

Looking Forward

Though their Emergency Services Division was transferred to Wake County EMS earlier this year, Garner EMS & Rescue Squad continues to operate both their Medical Transport and Rescue Services Divisions. Note that their name has not yet changed. GEMS administration, their staff, and their Board of Directors recognize the need for a new name. They have two focus groups working on the project. Though no date has been set for the change, Chief Haywood expects a name change near the first of the year. That allows enough time for marketing of the new name, prior to the official change.

On the rescue front, they still have the equipment and assets to provide valuable and much-needed services to our area and other agencies statewide. Chief Haywood will be focusing on the needs that exist in the areas of rescue service that they specialize in, and also expanding

their services to meet potential needs. They have had several committee meetings to evaluate needs, to assist with developing plans for their future.

Chief Haywood is also excited about some community programs that they've started, such as their upcoming "CPR for the Community" class. One of the goals of GEMS is ensuring that everyone in Garner receives CPR and first-aid training, and to provide that training at no cost to participants. "As we all know," says Haywood, "these basic skills are truly what can make the difference in life and death and I am proud to see this program succeed."

Medical Transport

Started in December 2008, the Medical Transport Division focuses primarily on transportation of patients between medical appointments, between facilities, and after hospital discharges. The division also has a goal of providing community service, by providing dependable transportation. This allows patients to stay at home longer, or be discharged for rehab or long-term care sooner.

The members of the Medical Transport Division also visit the homes and facilities of their patients to help assess and evaluate their various needs. They're able to identify and suggest various resources for the patients and their families. The division is currently staffed with 37 members, and operates six transport units from their station on Vandora Springs Road.

Rescue Services

Plans are being developed for the Rescue Services Division and its future functions. Presently, GEMS continues to hold Rescue Certification at the level of Heavy Rescue. They are available as a (statewide) resource, and hold mutual-aid agreements with several agencies across North Carolina. "We will begin to focus on more specialty areas and specific needs," says Chief Haywood, "such as disaster relief and deployment for major incidents." This expanded scope will allow the Rescue Services Division to perform on a much larger scale than in the past. "We have a great group of dedicated personnel that are looking forward to expanding the focus of our Rescue Division," adds Haywood.

History and Change

Chief Haywood also reflected on change and concluded our information exchange with the following message: "Some have thought that our agency has changed too much and no longer has the same values or focus. Or that our mission is no longer the same. This couldn't be further from the truth.

"Garner EMS & Rescue Squad, Inc. began in 1975 as Garner-St. Mary's Rescue Squad. At this time it was the desire of the founding members to provide service to our community in the way of public service. This public service was to provide services that would better the lives and functionality of the people we served.

"Our community benefited from lifesaving and life changing services provided by this dedicated group of Samaritans that developed what was started as Garner-St. Mary's Rescue Squad.

"Today our mission and goals are no different. We are still here to provide the same care and compassion to our community. We are still here to ensure that lives are saved and changed by the services provided by our agency.

"While the services provided by our agency may have changed and evolved over time, the desire and dedication to our community remains the same."

Thanks to both Chief Poole and Chief Haywood for their participation in this article. Maybe we can do more of these, as means of communicating changes and developments in our local fire, rescue, and EMS community.

so garner will not staff the ladder truck once the new station opens?

charlie - 10/12/10 - 03:59

Name a Wake County fire department who DOES staff their ladder!! (other than Raleigh or Cary)

Sue Ellen - 10/12/10 - 06:50

I congratulate these organizations for working collectively though some recently difficult times. Great progress to all involved!

A.C. Rich - 10/12/10 - 08:40

I'm sure there's more to it, and that the GFD has put more thought into than us bloggers, but, from the outside looking in you'd think at the very least a three man ladder would be better use of personnel versus a two man and one man rescue.

If extrication is a concern, some smaller departments that are experiencing this very type of growth issue re-organize an engine company to a rescue-engine concept. Or, place extrication equipment on the ladder company and then you get the best of both worlds (a staffed ladder company capable of performing extrications). In the event of a complex extrication requiring additional resources, cross-staff the better of the two rescues and roll it out as needed....

I too, am glad to see these two organizations work out a solution, and pretty damn fast on top of that.

Silver - 10/12/10 - 09:11

sUe ElleN

I believe Wake Forest staffs their ladder.....

who knows - 10/12/10 - 10:35

Apex has a staffed quint and a staffed platform

Apex Batt Chief - 10/12/10 - 12:48

Define staffed....and, more importantly, does the "staffing" perform truck work while the engine performs engine work?

Silver - 10/12/10 - 13:37

Let me first thank Mike for providing an accurate and unbiased piece of information. Too many times in our line of work does emotion and opinions get in the way of facts. The greater Garner area has taken on major changes in its emergency services this year. I would like to say that at this point I feel that the relationship between Garner Volunteer Fire-Rescue, Inc., Garner Police, Garner Medical Transport, and Wake County EMS are undoubtedly more harmonious and corporative than ever before.

In regards to your questions about our staffing of rescue or ladder trucks, this accurate information should clarify our operations. With the opening of our station four in the near future the GFR will have four three man engine companies. Also the GFR station one has one rescue truck "Rescue One" and one Ladder truck "Ladder One". The two personnel that will be assigned to the "rescue company" will respond to the appropriate call with the appropriate piece of apparatus. Our employees are cross trained to mitigate many different types of situations. If they are dispatched to a wreck they respond with a rescue truck. If they are dispatched to a commercial fire they will respond with the ladder truck. Also we have a rescue truck "Rescue Two" at our station two. The purpose of staffing it is due to our large service area and the ability to respond swiftly with rescue capabilities and or supplement the other rescue company. We are also in the process of placing our older combi-tools on our engines so that if the engine company arrives first they may initiate an extrication plan until further support arrives. In a perfect world we would love to have four person engine companies, fully staffed rescue, and ladder companies. However this is not a perfect world and we make the most of what we have and try to properly plan for the future.

Please be safe and remember "acting on a good idea is better than just having one".

Matthew R. Poole ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 10/12/10 - 23:16

Very well said Mr. Poole!!

Captain1202 - 10/13/10 - 08:44

Morrisville Ladder 2 is staffed with 4 (min 3).

Spanky - 10/13/10 - 12:49

"Who Knows" WF Ladder is out of service more than it is in,(due to various unfortunate reasons) thus you here Zebulon ladder and Bayleaf ladder being dispatched accordingly. Deputy Chief Poole thanks for setting the record straight I have the utmost respect for you having recently attended one of your rookie essentials schools (not in Wake County) all young and upcoming FF's should have the honor of attending your class you said and did all the correct things to these young men and woman I observed, your father and grandfather taught you well and more importantly you absorbed and listened, most instructors donot know how to talk to people sir you are the master .

stay safe out dere !

NWFF - 10/14/10 - 23:10

Who at the town would I need to contact if interested in purchasing the rescue rig? My vollie department is in need of a new rescue as ours is

nearing it's 20 year service life, and purchasing a brand new rig is not in our financial future right now.

Rides An Engine ([Email](#)) - 10/19/10 - 13:20

NWFF-

While true, WFFD's ladder truck is a POS and is/has been out of service more than in service over the last year/18 months, it is STAFFED with 4 people. While the actual apparatus is out of service, the crew is riding on the rescue, there again...still STAFFED with 4 people.

Wayne - 10/19/10 - 16:10

With that being said about WFFD ladder, What is ther staffing levels across the board at WFFD?

curious - 10/19/10 - 18:25

2 engines staffed with 4 people, 1 engine staffed with 3 people, and the ladder/rescue with 4 people.

Wayne - 10/19/10 - 18:43

There is some hope that the remaining engine company will get its 4th person later in the budget year.

Wayne - 10/19/10 - 18:55

Rides An Engine, you need to contact Forrest Jones with the Town of Garner. He is in charge of showing the truck and will have all the needed information as to the cost and other such things.

Mike - 10/19/10 - 19:33

Thanks Mike!

Rides An Engine - 10/20/10 - 09:50

Town of garner has put the old heavy rescue truck out for bid. Bids close on November 10th. I found it listed on <http://www.ncarems.org>.

Only 28,000 miles. Nice truck.

JA - 10/22/10 - 10:41

Name: (real name preferred)

E-mail: (optional)

Web Site: (optional)

Comment:

Remember personal info?

Yes

No

/ [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'?

[\(Register your username / Log in\)](#)

Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.