

**Ladder 2 on Grinding Stone Drive**

12/22/10 48 W, 1 I - + 9 - 8

As shown at this morning's two-alarm apartment fire and operating the reserve 1999 American LaFrance platform. We'll blog about the incident at a later time. [See preliminary photos by Yours Truly](#). Stayed on scene about an hour.



noticed in this picture, a lot of fire, and a ladder truck putting a lot of water on the fire, also noticed second ladder truck in picture. why wasn't it used for elevated water stream as well.

**charlie** - 12/22/10 - 10:29

Possibly because of the lack of room for adequate positioning? Not wanting to push fire into the unburned portion of the structure?

**RescueRanger** - 12/22/10 - 11:34

Charlie, here's another reason; as quoted from WRAL's story from resident Benjamin Clark, "It was probably about 15 feet (away). You can see where it clearly stops," said Clark, who will be staying with his father. "Good thing first responders got out here and got the job done.". Sounds to me like these crews knew exactly what they were doing.

**RescueRanger** - 12/22/10 - 11:39

Charlie,

That is an excellent question to ask, and for a couple reasons. First, it demonstrates the inherent challenge of determining context when viewing still images. The picture shows two ladder trucks. But only one is elevated. What the picture doesn't communicate is time. Did the second ladder truck arrive at the same time that the first ladder truck arrived? Has it been there for many minutes, prior to the picture? Did it just arrive? That's one of the trickier aspects of interpreting images. (In this case, I believe Ladder 5 had been pulled into position maybe a minute or two before the picture was made.)

Next, your question reflects a common question heard on the fireground. Why is something (or someone) present, but not seemingly being utilized? Listen to bystander comments in videos and you'll hear this. Why aren't the fire trucks spraying water? Why are they pulling their hoses but not spraying them? Why are their firefighters standing around, like they are doing nothing? (Suggested answers might be [1] the big nozzle on the fire truck isn't needed at that time, [2] the hoses are being pulled into position or being pulled into the building, where they will be spraying, [3] the firefighters are extra personnel awaiting orders, or on stand-by in case the firefighters inside the structure get in trouble

and need rescue.)

Thirdly, your question poses a perspective of "more is better." If one aerial stream is good, then two must be great, right? Not necessarily. I will defer to our experienced readers on this one. Just off hand, I can think of a couple reasons why a second aerial stream might not be needed at a major fire. Such as, say, from the time the second aerial is requested until the time it is actually ready to raise and/or flow water, the first aerial extinguishes enough of the fire to negate the need for the second one. But let's let others expand and expound.

Fourth, and with regard to this specific incident, they will probably present themselves here. Or at least serve as amusing speculation therein!

Fifth, of Beethoven. Very good symphony.

mjl

**Legeros** - 12/22/10 - 17:51

"Fifth, of Beethoven. Very good symphony."

Wow! The Hawaiian shirt guy know real music, too!

**DJ** - 12/22/10 - 18:45

Not to mention: Can the the water main in that complex support both aerial devices and the handlines.

**gen3fire** - 12/22/10 - 19:27

Which also brings us to a common problem; if aerials are in use, hand-lines should be shut down. Let the big guns go to work, big guns being aerial devices and deluge guns. If an 1.5" or 2" is flowing at the same time one of these devices is, all you're doing is robbing water.

We've seen justification aplenty this week to show that a second Ladder Company to all apartment fires is not only nice to have, but essential to support all of the necessary truck work with a dwelling of this size (and life hazard). If two would be sent at the initial time of alarm, they'd be able to get in position early and both "go to work". I know a committee is in place looking at adjusting the run cards and such. I hope that not only is scaling back assignments considered for appropriate situations (pot on the stove), but beefing them up as well (apartments, industrial, commercial) is being looked at, regardless of having a ninth ladder.

While my thirteen years is no match for the seasoned Captain's and Chief's working on the project, I've always been pro "send it early" (and send them home if they aren't needed). Plus, send the necessary equipment early on to keep it from getting to a third alarm, resulting in larger coverage gaps.

**Silver** - 12/23/10 - 00:55

Having two ladder trucks on an incident or apartment fire would be great for any large city, but when you have a city the size of Raleigh that has at the moment 8 front line ladders, it would seem hard to send two to every call they are needed on, until the city puts L9 in service. however unless Raleigh is going to purchase a new ladder truck in the 2012 budget, placing L9 in service with a reserve ladder just doesn't seem cost effective. When that will leave two ladders in the reserve fleet. and the city has already had to put two of those reserves into service this week.

**charlie** - 12/23/10 - 05:34

I have always been amazed at the line of thought by some in the fire service of having staffed equipment stay in the station "in case something happens." Guess what? Fire blowing out the roof of an apartment building IS something happening.

I completely agree with Silver: two ladders on apartments, large commercials, etc. If we only have 8 ladders right now, make it work with eight. You have a good working fire now, that leaves SEVEN sitting in a station.

The great thing about fire apparatus: it has wheels and can be moved around. The math tells me that (in terms of coverage), when you have four engines out operating, you'll need to move at least TWO somewhere to fill in the area. Same goes for ladders: two working means one other one is moving.

I would also advocate a second BC on your first alarm/working fire, as opposed to waiting for the second BC on a second alarm. So what we are talking about on an apartment building fire would be four engines, two ladders, a rescue, two chiefs. There are enough resources in

Raleigh to make that happen.

In terms of coverage (which ultimately should be handled by COMMUNICATIONS, not field resources), I also advocate one of the move-up/coverage companies to directly head to the station where the fire is based. For example, if companies have a working fire at Cameron Village, one of the covering companies should go to Station 5. That way, if extra resources are required, at least one of your extra companies are close by.

In terms of looking for companies to make the coverage, I would suggest looking first at the unassigned double houses (ones with an engine and ladder). Split the companies, and move either up for coverage. Generally speaking, that would allow almost no gaps in coverage.

**harkey** ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 12/23/10 - 10:24

Mike, are your photos posted to your site in chronological order as taken at an incident or is there some variation after naming, processing, uploading, etc?

**Rink** - 12/23/10 - 12:46

Nearly always, my photos are assigned file names in chronological order. Rare exceptions, when I am using two cameras and mess up my naming, will have all camera 1 file name numbers together, followed by camera 2.

Usually I post photos in chronological order as well. Some times I move a few of them around, to make more narrative sense. That is editing.

Always remember that any media that you view involves some degree of editing and editorial decisions.

**Legeros** - 12/23/10 - 13:03

@Charlie; I got into this discussion yesterday, and it's pretty hard to type out so bare with me.

Ok, you're talking about the actual apparatus, the truck itself. I'm speaking of the company/crew. I could care less if they showed up on the old Baker AerialScope and Seagrave (both sold), the truck itself is just a means of transportation. In our department they have large ladders on the top and they also carry equipment. The truck itself can be used when big water is needed, but this is low on the priority list for LADDER COMPANIES. Some departments put one person on a LADDER TRUCK, and just get it to the scene. I WOULDN'T consider this a LADDER COMPANY. Plus, there are many other cities that have Ladder Companies which run a lot more than we do, and they make it just fine.

if two LADDER COMPANIES could be sent on every larger fire in the city (apartments, commercial jobs), not only are you getting two LADDER TRUCKS, but eight well trained members that are ready to go to work to get our ENGINE COMPANY brethren in there to put the fire out. Whether it's performing searches, opening the roof, throwing ladders, or doing some aggressive hook work, these members can help the ENGINE COMPANIES (members dragging hose) get to the seat of the fire and put it out.

You have to deal with the incident at hand. You can "what if" things to death, but the best thing you can do is deal with one incident at a time and then get ready for the next. Sure, planning is important and you do have to keep the rest of the city in mind when things are going on. But, it isn't very often that two working fires are going on in the city at the same time.

I know things like "automatic move-ups" are being addressed too, to deal with gaps in coverage. Great idea, I think it is anyways. If "all hands are working", it's obvious companies will be there for a while so some temporary move-ups are necessary. If you have 4, 2 & 1 working on an apartment fire (if the apartment fire run card was beefed up), that leaves 6 LADDER COMPANIES to cover the city, as well as 2 RESCUE COMPANIES. The Rescue Companies are now trained to perform "truck work", just like the Ladder Companies are, but they only have 2 members (it would be awesome if they'd have 4 members, but I don't foresee that happening in a while). So, for terminology sake, just group them both into the term "special service companies". You'd have 8 "special service companies" throughout the city left to handle other incidents. If it means relocating one to temporarily cover a gap, so be it. We're ALL a platoon, just like the military, on duty to cover the city, only we're battling fires versus enemy forces. Use the closest Rescue or Ladder and move it until the second LADDER COMPANY from the job can clear up. Just my ideas that I'm happy to share....

Clear as mud?

**Silver** - 12/23/10 - 17:05

I was only wondering! this total now makes sense to me.

**charlie** - 12/23/10 - 21:42

Does not matter how many Engines, Ladders, Rescues etc.... use what you have... When you run out guess what the county dept's have the same equip.. use them to your advantage... Down here in DeKalb we run 3 Eng's, 1 Ladder, Heavy Rescue, 1 Medic and 2 B/C's on a residential fire add an addn'l Ladder on Apt's and Commer. jobs, if you don't need them turn'm around... first B/C on scene is command and 2nd is safety .... Time to get out of the mode of this is my sandbox and think more along the lines of we are all here for the same reason "Preservation of Property and Life Safety" Have a Great evening friends FTM-PTB-EGH

**J. Kay** - 12/23/10 - 21:51

Silver I wish everyone in the fire service had the same mentality as you. The initial alarm for any type of structure should be two ladders, and the

Squad/Service Truck/Heavy Rescue whatever you want to call it. Your first due ladder takes interior to assist the engine company in opening up and getting the doors opened. The second truck handles all exterior operations Ladders, Utilities, Ventilation, and such. And the rescue's main priority should be to search. Now I'm not saying the first ladder shouldn't be searching because that's everyone's responsibility. And when units go on-scene with a working fire communications should automatically start the w/f dispatch; which could bring you two additional engines and another special service company to handle Rit operations. Don't start on the topic of not enough ladders and rescues in the city. I can't really think of any department outside of Raleigh that would have a problem transferring into the city to cover. It all falls onto the county/cities coming together to set up general SOG's that everyone should follow and obide by. Yea that will piss people off but if they have a problem on trying to bring everyone together then they probaly aren't into it for the right reasons. Just my two cents Merry Christmas everyone be safe. Your brother from the north

**PGTruckie864** - 12/23/10 - 23:10

@Charlie; No harm friend!! Like chatting about this stuff.

@JimKay and PG; Thanks for the kind words PG. I take much criticism for how I feel, but as you see I don't hide behind a name. As far as the county units go, that's a WHOLLLLLE `nutha ball game. There's no baseline staffing requirements for the county, and unfortunately truck ops haven't been engrained by many departments. I think it would be great though, to show our surrounding agencies with "special service capability" how we are doing business. If you'd like to play in our sandbox, this is how you SHALL play and what is expected of you. I definitely see the other side; you have no idea what you're getting when a county unit comes into the city. Is it a truck with a twenty-one year old driver and three eighteen year old members? Or is it a crew of four, well trained members that can go to work as a solid unit, paid or volnteer? Glad I'm not in those shoes, because it is definitely a double-edged sword.

With the way the economy is right now, I wonder if auto-aid contracts will be trimmed and cut back to curb expense....

**Silver** - 12/24/10 - 00:58

Silver, as far as county requirements go I think it is something the city needs to evaluate on a department by department basis. There are some county departments who are completely adequately trained and staffed to play in the city's sandbox. They do the same job outside the city limits very successfully and have so for years. Sure there are exceptions to every rule but on both sides of the table, Maybe you should join one of these vollie houses and see what they actually have to offer. Just a thought, do not take this as criticism. Have a great, safe and happy holiday's everyone.

**2Silver** - 12/24/10 - 14:37

@2Silver...Well, it needs to be something the county needs to evaluate, if you want the honest truth. Create a consistency so everyone is on the same page, then the issue of "what level these guys are trained at versus those guys" would be reduced.

I never said every county department is lacking. I served as a vollie for twelve years in this county. I feel like I have a pretty good grasp on which departments use a "truck work is just as important as engine work" concept. I've been nagging a certain Assistant Chief to come up with a daytime duty program for vollies, because I miss it and would love to get back into it, to no avail though. Maybe I should take a hint??? Hahahahaha...

Who knows, I may give Bethesda a shot! Was there for a class last week and they rolled a lot into the Bull City as the 2nd Truck and caught some work, which would make this guy very happy. You see, I possess a force-field which repels fire, it's evident at my day-to-day.

Not taking as criticism, and I appreciate the thought. Unfortunately, as you know, there are good ones' and bad ones', paid and/or vollie. Right now we're in the limelight, and damn if my shield ain't tarnished (unfortunately not from heat and smoke). It's downright embarassing, but all we can do is keep chugging along and shrug it off as a few bad apples on a large tree of good ones...

**Silver** - 12/24/10 - 18:46

due to the fact that Durham only runs 4 Ladder trucks. they try to send two ladders on every structure call. on a lot of calls in east Durham and south east Durham, Bethesda's L413 runs auto aid as second due.

**Charlie** - 12/24/10 - 21:42

Jeff I agree there are some awesome brothers out there volunteer and paid that protects the citizens of wake! Another aspect of what different levels of priority in our county are accountability, water supply and RIT response. Every department has their own system with several that have none! I taught a class at a combo dept. and the chief said he could keep up with all his members (I will stop there), that is sad! Water supply the size of our county and the money dumped, it is wrong that our neighboring counties have a county wide hydrant system even JOCO who is way more rural than us! Now for RIT; the county will set base pay grades for paid staff for certification and requirements, truck and gear purchasing, will dispatch 10 engines, 2 ladders and a dang tanker task force to a fire alarm form all different departments. But you never hear engine? as RIT and to me that is and will be a problem. I know there are some great Chiefs, Captains, LT. and Firefighters that set up RIT on their fire ground and can handle it if and when it happens. But there should have been a county wide accountability system and RIT response years ago! These things will not change county wide until you get rid of all the politics! Anyway please be safe all my brothers and sisters out there paid or volunteer! I hope you all have a very merry Christmas!!!!!!! God Bless you all! Jason

**Jason Lane** - 12/25/10 - 11:38

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