

Legeros Fire Blog Archives 2006-2015 - Greensboro Budget « This Morning's House ... » Zero Traffic Deaths i... Cuts May Lead To Eliminating Ladder Company

Greensboro Budget Cuts May Lead To Eliminating Ladder Company

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[FireNews](#) finds this [News & Record story](#) from Sunday about budget cuts in Greensboro. Their city council seeks \$18 million worth of cuts during the coming budget year. The fire department has been asked to identify \$900,000 to trim for City Manager Rashad Young. Their overall budget has increased by \$1.3 million this year, much of which was associated with the opening of a new fire station.

The most "significant and aggressive" of those cuts offered by Fire Chief Greg Grayson is eliminating one of the city's ladder companies. That's a line item of \$360,000. Greensboro has nine ladders, along with 23 engines and one rescue company. The ladder companies answered 8,654 of the 50,170 calls in the last 12 months, says the story citing the chief.

Last week, members of the Professional Fire Fighters of Greensboro (IAFF Local 947) attended a community budget meeting. They handed out fliers that ask residents to voice their support for the fire department. They've also posted a [statement on their web site](#) about such support, including opposition to the elimination of any fire companies.

What does the public think? Read some of the user comments at the [bottom of the story](#) for that perspective. Next question, what other North Carolina cities are facing company closures, or similar cost-cutting measures?

What's the historical perspective as well? How many company closures have been recorded in these parts, in past years and decades? In Raleigh, we lost a service truck company 1987. More on that story later.



WGHP story on same, <http://www.myfox8.com/news/wgwp-story-gr...> The community budget meeting was the first of six. The story notes that sworn police officer and firefighter positions are exempt from the cuts. Which means what? That the ladder company closure involves just cutting the non-personnel costs, but retaining the positions? The News & Record story, however, notes that GFD has nine vacant staff positions, which have been frozen at this time. So the jobs are cut, too??

Legeros - 03/28/11 - 06:51

Wow, very sad to see this. You see this a lot up North and out West where union contracts require a Truck to be staffed with five (for example) and Engines staffed with four. If they aren't, overtime is called in. The equipment itself is taken off the road and out of service, but the members of the company are then detailed out to fill in the holes and reduce overtime expenses.

You'd much rather see an Engine Company removed from service, since you're already behind with Ladder Companies. But, such is life and I'm sure there's justified reasoning why Chief Grayson is doing what he needs to do to spare jobs.

It seems this is a sign of the times. A close friend of mine in Wilmington, Delaware filled me in that they closed down their Heavy Rescue company, which "eliminated 16 spots", and they brown-out a company every day. This saved from having to lay off any members, and this is a city that sees its' fair share of fire daily. Just a matter of time, I guess, before the wave travels east.

Silver - 03/28/11 - 09:41

The trend now has a more local effect. I hope this is only a proposal...

A.C. Rich - 03/28/11 - 11:09

As for cost-cutting measures; the CoR, for the month of March, was limited to "emergency response only" for apparatus in an effort to reduce fuel expense. I do believe we are going back to eight hour training days as well. As an example, you may have EMT con-ed in the morning at KTC, then fire con-ed in the afternoon versus the trips to KTC for four hours and then back to the firehouse. I'd love to know how much we saved in March by having the "stand-down", as it was called. Anyone know?

Silver - 03/28/11 - 15:57

Often though, "Cutting the Budget" usually doesn't result in any taxpayer "Savings". It just allows the citizens to not pay any additional money to support current services. Usually one will find that the money is just shifted to another fund.

Ryan - 03/28/11 - 19:28

The one thing that cutting budgets does do is reduce service delivery and firefighter safety, in this area at least. We do not have many firehouses that are a duplication of effort as far as placement goes. To shut down or brown-out a company would not be immediately obvious to the general public; it would, however, be glaringly obvious when we burn down a city block or someone dies. It is unfortunate that other departments are being affected by this reduction in force. This is yet another reason why we must thrust ourselves to the forefront of the citizens minds in a positive light with the things that benefit them directly, instead of emergency response that they may never need. What you need is a citizenry that when confronted with a reduction in their emergency response, asks the governing body why we can't reduce the spending in other areas such as parks and recreation. In order for this to happen, you must make yourself more necessary than the alternatives in the minds of the people who truly control political decision making: "Mr. and Mrs. Smith". I wish the best to Greensboro, I know it was not a decision that was easily made. I am very fortunate to have a job with a great municipality that has not had to lay anyone off, and has bent over backwards to keep everyone working.

Bob P. - 03/29/11 - 10:54

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

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Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.