

New Nebo

12/20/12 84 W, 1 I - + 9 - 2

New apparatus that is. This photo's from a FireNews.net feature about a new pumper-tanker delivered to Nebo Volunteer Fire Department in McDowell County. That's a 2012 International/Rosenbauer with a 1250 GPM pump and a whopping 1,800 gallon tank. Now that's a tall truck! And check out something called a "swivel dump." [See the story](#) for more photos and details. That's a delivery from local Rosenbauer dealer C. W. Williams, and here's the [delivery information](#).



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

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Idea of Hiring Chief Splits Maryland Volunteer and Career Firefighters

12/21/12 392 W - + 7 - 1

That's the title of this [firehouse.com story](#), reprinting this [Frederick News-Post story](#) about a controversial proposal to create a Fire Chief position to oversee the volunteer fire (and rescue) departments in Frederick County, MD. The proposed authority structure was crafted by a committee of stakeholders over about eighteen months. The position would replace (or at least augment that of) the county's fire and rescue services director. And the proposal has brought mixed feelings. Will this chip away at the authority of the volunteer departments? But it will bring (more) standards and compliance therein. ([Here's an editorial](#) from the paper on the topic.)

From the county's web site, [here's a listing](#) (PDF) of the thirty-two fire and rescue departments. They're a mix of municipal and volunteer. Frederick, for example, is protected by four fire companies. (Don't know if they're unified under a municipal fire chief, or operate independently.) There's the Vigilant Hose Company in there, that protects Emmitsburg, the location of the National Fire Academy and the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. (They also have a fire museum up that way. [Here's that site](#). And the [National Fire Heritage Center](#).)

How does this relate to Raleigh and Wake County? Well, many have long wondered if a county-run fire department is an eventual future here. Ours is an apple to their orange, however. We have municipalities, but of vastly varying sizes. One to lead them all include Raleigh, Cary, Apex, et al might be a considerable uphill battle. But what about the dozen-plus rural fire protection districts? Either initially with a leader or later with WCFD on the sides of the trucks? Good question.¹

And how do such consolidating efforts resolve the long histories of the existing departments, you have to wonder. Maybe a WCFD has the "Stony Hill Fire Station" or the "Bay Leaf Fire Company" or such. There's some serious speculation to be had, through nothing no one's hasn't thought about before. (Nice triple-negative, there.)

Interesting story all the same. Read, ponder, discuss, debate.

¹Don't have a backend comparison to cite, either. How does their county compare with our country with regard to consistency in operations, for example? What sort of service deficiencies or surpluses exist? What do their administrative processes look like, individually and holistically? No idea.

Didn't they propose this a few years ago in Wake County? I thought somebody was trying to create a county chief.

captainchaos - 12/21/12 - 09:18

I believe Frederick Co already has paid guys in quite a few of the firehouses. I think that all paid guys are already county employees, no one works for the corporations.

If they did go WCFD, then yes I don't see why the name of the area served couldn't remain on the truck. They could say Stony Hill or Bay Leaf.

Mike - 12/21/12 - 20:38

There was a proposal several years ago (1994???) which suggested mergers of some fire departments.

Brandon ([Email](#)) - 12/21/12 - 23:18

It seems as if that was the one. I believe it was that study which recommended the merger of the Town of Zebulon Fire Department and the Zebulon Rural Fire Department into one agency which occurred if my memory is correct on March 1, 2000. Perhaps this was also the first study with the idea of creating districts through mergers and consolidations

I agree that change is difficult. Many people have dedicated their lives to these departments, some since the departments began years and years ago. I never like to talk about shutting down services, but I do think that in the current time we live in, with the ever watchful eye of the citizens we serve upon us, we need be good stewards of the tax payer's money. If that means consolidation of services then the topic should

be discussed. I have always said " the only ones who care what name is on the side of the truck are the people riding in the truck".

Having cut my teeth in the volunteer world of the Hopkins Rural Fire Department, which bears my family name, and having spent countless hours cutting wood, cooking pigs and chickens and serving plates I know the pride I feel when I see those trucks and that Fire Station. I also know what that fire Station has been to this community, just as many other stations and departments around Wake County have been to their own communities.

I guess that last part was so everyone knows that I do remember where I came from and how thankful I am for the chance I was offered.

Brandon ([Email](#)) - 12/22/12 - 11:32

<http://legeros.com/ralwake/photos/weblog..>

found it

Brandon ([Email](#)) - 12/22/12 - 11:42

Wake should try contractual standardization of service delivery costs prior to pressing consolidation. I have argued this perspective for years within the county. Consolidation is an option but first insure "what it should cost to deliver fire services" and standardize before embarking on consolidation. As I have said in the past, Wake has to determine what the "right size" is.

A.C. Rich - 12/23/12 - 01:21

Yes... ditto Mike!! In my opinion, every complex issue has a simple answer – and it is typically human behavior based. It is the willingness of others to recognize the issue that creates path to a solution. Again, personal beliefs and values are obstructions to vision.

A.C. Rich - 12/23/12 - 11:22

Would money be saved if we had a county shop that was responsible for everyone's truck maintenance instead of depts either doing their own or paying an outside party to do repairs?

Mike - 12/23/12 - 15:05

But there already is a county shop, at least a facility. What would the expense be of adding certified EVT's and tools, etc to fleet services. This is one question that has been asked time and time again as there are so many different companies working on fire trucks in the county. And this gets paid for by budget funding. Has this ever even been approached within the fire commission?

Mechanic - 12/25/12 - 08:41

Could the county's shop even handle the extra load that having all of the Contenders in their shop would create? I have to take ambulances to the shop regularly and those guys are great but always completely slammed with all of the existing county vehicles. They would need a shop twice as big to handle all of the issues that the fire trucks would bring (thank you low bid contenders). It would make sense though to have a centralized shop and maintenance plan for them though.

Plus then maybe the county would realize how spending \$20k more on the front side could

A) Save \$10k+ a year for some of those rolling pieces of....

B) Will get a truck that will actually last the proposed 20 years

Poor Shop - 12/25/12 - 11:48

I doubt that a class A pumper would even fit inside the current county maintenance facilities. To my recollection, COMM-1 has to be worked on outside. Maybe not.

What's this about trucks that last the proposed 20 years? What trucks have been bought by the county that haven't "lasted" their proposed lifespan, and what has been the reason? "Worn out from fighting fire"?

Skip K - 12/25/12 - 16:20

Based purely on cost to maintenance right now for trucks that are only a few years old (the contenders) the cost of ownership will quickly outpace the feasibility of keeping them for the full 20 years that they are expected to last. No historical data to utilize because the county only started buying fire apparatus about 5ish years ago. Ergo if it already costs \$10k plus for a single truck in a given year at what point do you say that you are spending more than is necessary for that piece of equipment and get rid of it?

Chief K does Wake EMS have a system in place where they say Ambulance X costs \$Y to repair each year, but the value of the rig is only \$Z

therefore it is just not worth the maintenance and downtime that, that entails?

Poor Shop - 12/25/12 - 20:46

So looking at the added cost of fleet repair to the Wake County fire apparatus fleet. There has to be a deeper underlying issue then just they are crappy trucks. If you look at the contender on a historical basis, the departments that aren't in Wake County haven't experienced half of the issues Wake County departments have. So I wonder where the true underlying issue is, is a department short changing the alternators in order to have a light bar that is full of nice wonderful LED's? Or is it axle issues because of wanting some other cool item. Maybe it's truly time for a real specification committee. No more of this I want this or we want that. Truly look at what is needed vs what is wanted. I hear so many complaints about the Contender being a piece of junk, but when you look deeper into the problem it falls right back into the specification committee's hands.

Any truck you specify, be it a top of the line Pierce Quantum or a Pierce Saber/Contender, an Eone cyclone or typhoon, a KME severe duty or base line model, and the list goes on and on, can be a heap of junk if not specify appropriately. Every last bit goes back to how you specify your new apparatus. Specify the truck from top to bottom. Axles, transmissions, motors, alternators, brakes, etc need to be first priority then all the other items can be added, if cost and maintenance friendly. Without an awesome drive train you won't have an awesome truck.

I've also seen the base line specifications and the options for Wake County and the specifications can and will produce an apparatus that will last 20-30 years.

The last part of the specifications of an apparatus is preventative maintenance. How often are the apparatus seeing a shop outside of being repaired? Changing the oil annually just doesn't cut it, checking the brakes annually doesn't either. There are so many issues that become issues because of lack of maintenance. How often do you change the oil and filters in your own vehicle? I change mine every 5000 miles, but my truck doesn't sit idle for hours pumping at a fire or just idle in general. A great preventative maintenance program will help keep the repairs down and the apparatus on the road more. So I leave everyone with this challenge, take a look at how your running your fleet maintenance program and pick it apart before picking apart the apparatus that are in your fleet.

Fleet - 12/25/12 - 22:16

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