

The background of the slide is a photograph showing the silhouettes of three firefighters standing in a line, looking towards a large, intense wildfire. The fire is a bright orange and yellow, with thick black smoke rising into the dark sky. Tall, thin trees are visible in the foreground and background, their forms silhouetted against the fire's glow.

Workforce Challenges

Wildfire Matters Review Committee

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About Grand Fire

- Established 1938, became a Special District in 1951
- 152 sq miles in District/ 356 sq miles “First Due”
 - Additional 486 sq miles “Second Due”
- Two Stations/ 12 apparatus
- ISO Classification 3/5/10
- Mills- 4.446 Operating, 3.8 General Obligation Bond
- Revenue- \$730K Operating, \$612K Debt
- Supplement with Grants and Wildland Assignment income
- 31 Firefighters
- Fire/ Rescue/Hazmat/ Community Risk Reduction/ Wildland Program/ EMS assist



Evolution of Service



- 1930- 1980
 - Primarily Agricultural – Under 50 calls for service each year.
- 1980-2000
 - Some tourism increase (Rocky Mountain National Park, Arapahoe NRA, USFS and BLM lands, Silver Creek Ski Area)
 - Bedroom community for Winter Park and Grand Lake
 - 50-80 calls for service annually
- 2000- Current
 - Crossroads Community- Retail Center
 - Tourism full swing (new Golf Courses, Fishing access, RV Resorts and amenities)
 - Short Term Rentals- Vacasa “*Top 10 Places to own STR Investment Property*”
 - 300 Calls annually (no BLS or ALS)



Key Community Assets

- Ski Area
- Small Airport
- 3 Schools that Serve 80% of the county
- Medical Center
- Big Thompson Project- 3 dams, 3 pump stations, water shed for Northern Colorado.
- Arapahoe National Recreation area- Lake Granby, Willow Creek Reservoir
- 2 US and 1 Colo Highway including one of the Deadliest Sections of US Hwy 40
- 300 slot RV Resort
- 6500 full time residents, supplemented by our closest 20,000 friends



Staffing Model



Combination Department

- 16 Volunteers
 - Carry pagers
 - Respond from home or work
 - Hold State and NWCG Certifications
- 10 Resident (live in volunteers)
 - Internship program
 - Typically first two years of career
- 5 Career Staff
 - Overhead – Chief, Asst. Chief, Training Captain, Wildland Captain, Admin Assistant
- 3 Seasonal Wildland



Staffing Stats

		Staffing Data for Grand County (approx.)										
		Grand Fire				County Fire Districts (5)				Federal and State		
		Number	Budget	% Budget		Number	Budget	% Budget		Number	Budget	% Budget
2010	Volunteer	29	\$85,000	11.2%		130	\$260,000	8.3%				
	Resident	7	\$80,000	10.6%		16	\$185,000	5.9%				
	Career	2	\$186,000	24.5%		15	\$1,076,000	34.4%				
	Wildland	0	\$0	0.0%		0	0	0.0%		22		
	Total	38	\$351,000	46.3%		161	\$1,521,000	48.7%		22		
2021	Volunteer	16	\$125,000	10.4%		78	\$310,000	6.2%				
	Resident	10	\$80,000	6.7%		18	\$185,000	3.7%				
	Career	5	\$420,000	35.0%		26	\$1,955,000	39.3%				
	Wildland	3	\$32,000	2.7%		6	\$75,000	1.5%		6		
	Total	34	\$657,000	54.8%		128	\$2,525,000	50.8%		6		



Staffing Challenges

Volunteer Firefighters

- Multiple jobs
- Increasingly fewer living in district
- Locals being displaced by second homeowners /STRs
- Increasingly longer commitment in training and response (esp. wildland fire)
- Competing with work/ family time/ church time

Career Staff

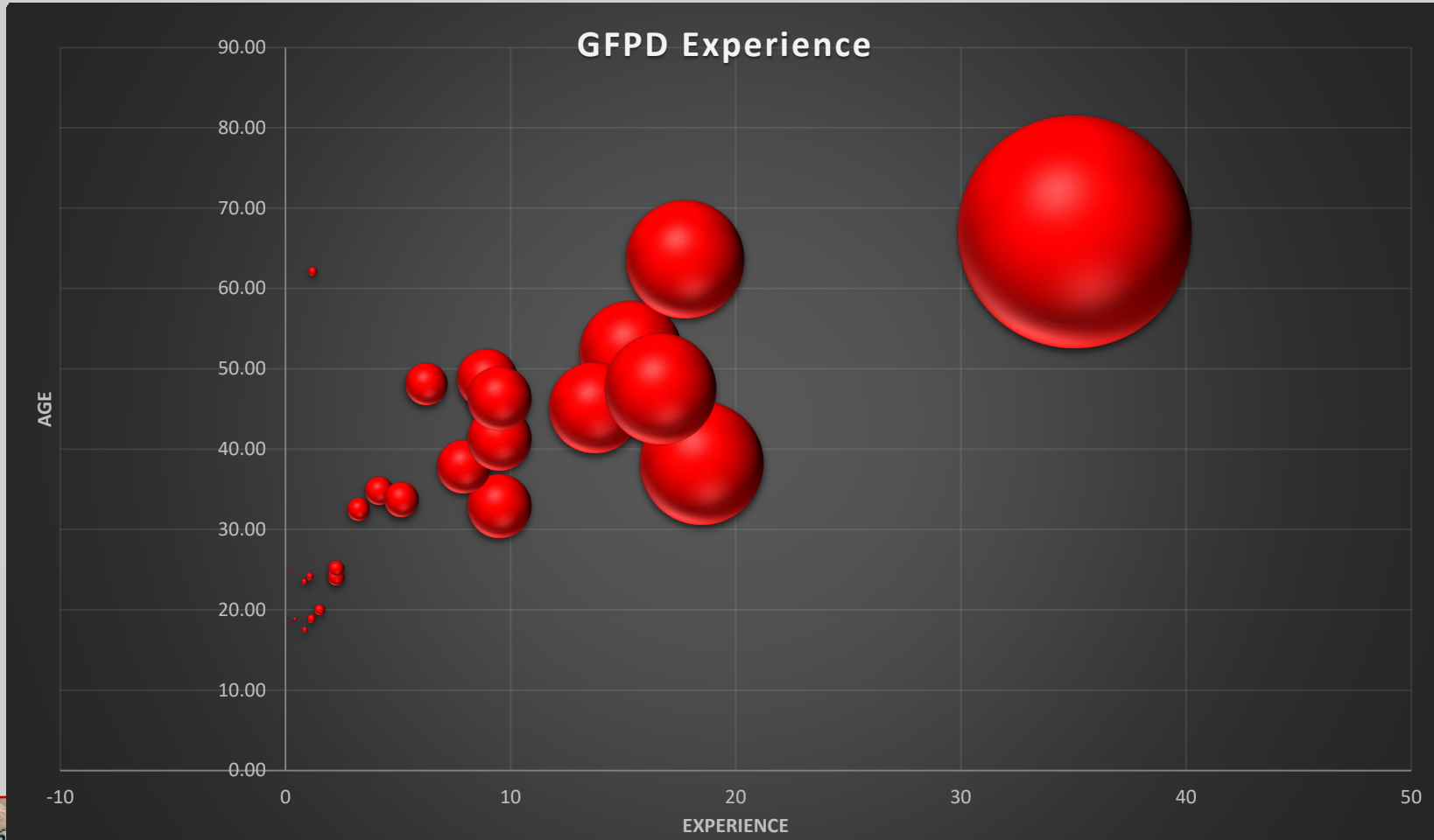
- Competing with Metro Departments and budgets
- Balance between regional FF salaries and local salaries
- Lower call volumes/ down time
- Limited local hiring pool

Resident Firefighters

- Inexperience- both on the job and in life
- Limited Demographic- requires individual willing to live in the station, by station rules
- Requires Oversight
- Increasing Competition
- Metro Agencies Hiring larger numbers



Quantity vs Quality



Firefighters

- Highly Trained at entry level
- Highly Skilled workforce
- Specialized in Everything
- Uniquely Qualified Managers
- Only effective with a qualified team, or groups of teams.
- Must be Interchangeable



Obstacles

Budgets

- Recession
- Gallagher adjustments
- SB 293
- Mobile Property
- Short Term Rentals
- East Troublesome Fire losses (\$70M in valuation)

Demographics

- Second Homeowners/ STRs
 - 68% “vacancy” rate
- Transient Residents
- Fastest Growing Group- 65+
- Fastest Shrinking Group- 18-25
- Locals “cashing in”

Competition

- Employees
 - Businesses
 - Larger Agencies
- Dollars
 - Metro Districts
 - Faulty Data
- Time
 - Other Volunteer organizations



How Do we Overcome to Provide Service?

More Effective-

- Mutual Aid (local and regional)
- Resident and Intern Programs
- Incentives (Pension and Health Insurance (EGFPD))
- Seasonal Wildland Positions

Less Effective-

- Volunteer station shifting
- Out of Area Volunteers
- Referral bonus



How can the State Help?

Incentives

- Health Insurance options for volunteers
- Tax Break for Volunteers
- Make up funds for Volunteers
- Housing stipend
- State Volunteer FF Campaigns

Funding Options for FPDs

- Impact Fee Autonomy
- Sales Tax Options
- Wildland Staffing Funds or Grants
- Funds for “Feeder” agencies
- “Sponsored” Swift Team members

Develop Surge Capacity

- Statewide Mutual Aid
- Training funds for non fire Partner Agencies
- “Severity funding” for Extreme Fire Outlooks



Questions?

