



FIRE CONSOLIDATION REALITIES REPORT

A REVIEW OF THE FACTS

-SIXTH EDITION-

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INTRODUCTION

Homeowners have two fire protection costs. They are:

- (1.) – Taxes paid to support a fire department, and**
- (2.) - Fire insurance premiums**

Both subjects are closely related because the quality of fire protection provided dictates the cost of buying a fire insurance policy. In effect, better fire protection results in lower and better insurance rates for the homeowner. The Insurance Services Office – or I.S.O. is a non-political independent organization that serves the insurance industry. They are the agency that actually sends inspectors to each community to rate the level of fire protection – both here in Florida and in forty-four other states as well. Fire insurance companies use these ratings to determine how much to charge their customers.

There are nineteen communities in Lee County and each of them own and operate a fire & rescue department. The citizens of these communities organized their own volunteer fire companies, beginning with the City of Fort Myers in 1901. Starting out with absolutely nothing except the community need for fire protection, these volunteer fire companies have improved, expanded and evolved into modern tax supported fire departments and districts. Twelve communities have urbanized to the extent that the local fire departments are no longer volunteer but are fully paid career departments. The other seven are combination part paid/part volunteer departments.

This report explains in plain English what kind of fire protection we have here in Lee County – and especially within the independent community fire districts. You will learn their history – their tax levies and expenditures over the years – the services they provide – their accountability to voters and taxpayers – and the arguments to abolish them in favor of a larger consolidated fire system. In addition, much the same information is included within this report with respect to independent fire districts in Collier and Manatee counties as well. And dollar for dollar, you'll be able to compare the fire districts with consolidated fire systems already in place here in Florida.

Nothing in this report is hypothetical. Real numbers are used – taxing rates, budgets, annual cost-per-station amounts, insurance ratings, actual expenditures, actual dollar amounts and similar information. The budgets and/or actual expenditures of the past thirty-five fiscal years are included in this report where that information is available – not only for the fire districts and cities considered in this report but for the consolidated county fire systems in Broward County, Charlotte County, Miami-Dade, Sarasota

County, Hillsborough County, Orange County and Palm Beach County as well. So are their insurance ratings and their tax levies where this information could be obtained.

I have been keeping track of this information for over thirty years. In 1996, I prepared a similar report and updated the same in 1997, 1998, 2006 and again in 2007. The same fire protection agencies are considered in this writing as in the previous reports except that the fire districts in both Collier and Manatee counties are now included. I began to compile annual fiscal information for those areas in August of 1995 and went back to the 1980-1981 Florida State Comptroller's Reports to obtain this information.

Copies are provided to The Governor of Florida, our local Legislative Delegation, Board of County Commissioners, Florida Association of Special Districts, Florida Association of County Commissioners, The Florida Department of Financial Services (formerly Office of Florida State Comptroller), The Florida Department of Community Affairs and to every city and independent fire control district governing board in Lee, Collier and Manatee Counties. In addition, this report is available online – courtesy of the Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – <http://ticefire.com/docs/downloads/>

My active involvement in the fire service ended in 1981 – thirty years ago. I believe that I have the firsthand knowledge and expertise to compile this document and my qualifications to do so are as follows:

- (a.) - Volunteer firefighter at Iona-McGregor from 1971 to 1981.
- (b.) - Co-authored charters to create independent fire control districts in Iona-McGregor in 1975, Alva, Bayshore, Estero, Fort Myers Shores, San Carlos Park, South Trail and Tice in 1976 and several others in the Florida panhandle area in 1980. State legislators used these documents to write district enabling legislation.
- (c.) - Elected to Iona-McGregor fire district board of commissioners by the voters for a four-year term in 1977.
- (d.) - First president of the Florida Legislated Fire Districts, Incorporated in 1979 and again in 1980. This group merged with the Florida Special Districts Association in 1983.

For the record, no one asked me to compile this report. It is a labor of love for which I had the time and the interest – and I give it to the voters and taxpayers to use as they see fit. Additionally, this report and its contents cost county taxpayers zero dollars.

I am particularly grateful for the fact-finding efforts of Mr. Otis Smith of the Office of Florida State Comptroller/Department of Financial Services. Without his valuable assistance, this report could not have been completed. In addition to Mr. Smith, my sources included:

Retired Chief Dan Gourley - Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District
Broward County Fire And Rescue Department

Broward County Property Appraiser
Cape Coral City Budget Department
Charlotte County Fire & Rescue
Charlotte County Property Appraiser
Collier County Property Appraiser
Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue (formerly Metro-Dade Fire & Rescue)
Miami-Dade Property Appraiser
Fort Myers City Office Of Management & Budget
Fort Myers Fire Department
Fort Myers News-Press
Hillsborough County Fire & Rescue
Hillsborough County Office of Budget
Lee County Clerk of The Circuit Court
Lee County Law Library
Lee County Office of Manager (formerly County Administrator)
Lee County Property Appraiser
Lee County Supervisor of Elections
Lee County Tax Collector
Manatee County Property Appraiser
Orange County Fire & Rescue
Orange County Property Appraiser
Orlando Sentinel
Palm Beach County Fire & Rescue
Palm Beach County Property Appraiser
(Palm Beach) Sun Sentinel
Sarasota County Fire & Rescue
Sarasota County Property Appraiser
Former Chief Rick Fulwider of Cedar Hammock Fire Control District
Retired Chief Gerald Adema of Iona-McGregor Fire Protection & Rescue District
Former Chief Tom Zepp of South Trail Fire Protection & Rescue Service District
Retired Chief Greg Bradley of Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District
Mr. Lee Evett, Town Manager of Jupiter
ISO – Insurance Services Office

And finally, this document is not a “fire study,” – it is a report. I haven’t attempted to reinvent the wheel and the reader will find no promises or plans here. My summary is included at the end of this report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian R. Juntikka

Chapter One

**FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
IN LEE COUNTY**

FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

Fire protection organization and structure in Lee County, Florida is typical of almost every area in The United States today when taking the following into account:

(a.) IT IS A COMMUNITY ORGANIZED, OWNED AND CONTROLLED FUNCTION

There are nineteen separate communities in Lee County, Florida. Independent special taxing districts provide fire protection and rescue service to seventeen communities in Lee County while two city governments (Cape Coral and Fort Myers) provide these services within their corporate boundaries. Since the voters within each community elect both fire district and city governing boards, the public has complete local control over their local fire department as well as its funding. This situation is typical of fire department organization elsewhere in The United States where community fire protection is a service of the city, village, borough, township or fire district.

(b.) MOST FIRE DEPARTMENTS BEGAN AS DONATION SUPPORTED VOLUNTEER COMPANIES.

The first organized fire department in Lee County was the Town of Fort Myers Fire Department (now City of Fort Myers), which organized as a volunteer company in 1901. By the 1940's, volunteer fire companies were established by the citizens of Boca Grande as well as Fort Myers Beach and North Fort Myers. During the 1950's and early 1960's, the citizens of Matlacha and Pine Island, Bonita Springs, Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Cape Coral, Fort Myers Shores and Lehigh Acres organized additional volunteer fire companies.

After the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the federal government began to question the fire defense capabilities of the states in time of national emergency. Florida became one of eight pilot states in a federal program known as the Rural Fire Defense, or "RFD" program. Its purpose was to strengthen the fire defenses of existing rural fire departments and to assist in the organization of new volunteer fire companies in communities that had no protection. In Florida, the Florida Forest Service – now known as the Florida Division of Forestry, administered this program. That state agency assisted the citizens of Alva, Bayshore, Estero, Iona-McGregor, San Carlos Park and South Trail in organizing their own volunteer fire companies from 1964 through 1967.

From 1945 until 1971, Lee County paid the City of Fort Myers to provide county fire control service to unincorporated areas. The Tice Fire Department was organized as a county fire station in September of 1971 when disagreements over money between the City of Fort Myers and Lee County caused the Fort Myers Fire Department to cease service to that community. In 1976, the voters of Tice approved a special act of the Florida Legislature creating an independent special fire control district. (*see page 64*)

(c.) THERE IS AN OLDER CENTRAL-CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT SURROUNDED BY NEWER SUBURBAN FIRE DEPARTMENTS LOCATED IN COMMUNITIES AROUND THE OLDER CENTRAL CITY AREA.

As previously stated, the City of Fort Myers Fire Department is the oldest organized fire department in Lee County. As was the case in most of post World War Two America, suburban growth alone created the demand for better fire protection in these areas.

(d.) THE AREA FIRE DEPARTMENTS WORK TOGETHER UNDER MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS.

Realizing that no single fire department – here or anywhere else – is staffed or equipped to handle 100% of all emergencies that happen, the area fire departments are contracted together with mutual aid inter-local agreements. These inter-local agreements provide for assistance from other fire departments when needed in an emergency, without charge. In recent years, the concept of mutual aid has been greatly expanded to the end that all fire departments in Lee County can effectively operate as a single department when the need arises. The concept of “automatic mutual aid” is continually being expanded.

THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS

The State of Florida differs from northeastern and Midwestern states in that civil township government does not exist here. *Towns* do exist in Florida but they are incorporated municipalities – not to be confused with townships as they exist in the northeast and Midwest. Fire protection is typically provided by the city, village, borough, - and town or township in the twenty-two states that use that form of local government. Additionally, 5,725 U.S. communities rely upon their local fire district government to provide that service. Seventeen of those communities are in Lee County.

Florida is divided by general law into sixty-seven counties. Any additional local governments (municipalities, independent special districts) exist by special acts of The Legislature and approval by the voters living within the boundaries of these governments. Special District governments are created to provide municipal and other specific purpose services to the citizens who live within their boundaries. Fire Control Districts are typical of this, however, there are two different types of special district governments in Florida:

(a.) **DEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS:** These are local units created and controlled by county government. The Board of County Commissioners are the governing body of the district, however, the county commissioners may appoint an advisory board to assist the county in its oversight of district affairs and business. Local examples of dependent districts include the Lee County Port Authority and The Lee County Industrial Development Authority. Municipal Service Taxing Units are a similar county revenue source used to fund various municipal services in unincorporated neighborhoods. They are often referred to as “MSTUs”. Since dependent special districts and MSTUs are functions of the county government, they are subject to such policy, administration and taxation as is handed down by rule of the County Commissioners through the Office of County Manager and other appropriate department heads within the county government organizational structure.

(b.) **INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS:** These are public municipal corporations created by special act of the Florida Legislature and a majority vote of the citizens who reside in the district. They are called *independent* districts because they exist and operate independently of county government. Instead of being controlled by county commissioners or an appointed county manager, an independent special district is governed by an elected board of commissioners - citizens who reside in the district. The fire control districts in Lee, Collier and Manatee Counties are independent special districts, with the exception of Myakka Fire Control District, which is a dependent district.

HISTORY

The independent special fire control districts in Lee County were created by individual special acts of The Florida Legislature. Previous to 1965, that was the only option available to an unincorporated community if taxing authority was needed to support a local fire department. The fire control districts created during that era were:

Boca Grande Fire Control District – Chapter 22372, Laws of Florida 1943
Fort Myers Beach Fire Control District – Chapter 27676, Laws of Florida 1951
North Ft. Myers Fire Control District – Chapter 30925, Laws of Florida 1955
Captiva Island Fire Control District – Chapter 30929, Laws of Florida 1955
Sanibel Island Fire Control District – Chapter 30930, Laws of Florida 1955
***Cape Coral Fire Control District** – Chapter 63-1537, Laws of Florida 1963
Lehigh Acres Fire Control District – Chapter 63-1546, Laws of Florida 1963
Mat'lacha-Pine Island Fire Control District – Chapter 63-1558, Laws of Florida 1963
Bonita Springs Fire Control District – Chapter 65-1828, Laws of Florida 1965.

*NOTE: The Cape Coral Fire Control District was abolished and its assets and liabilities

transferred to the City of Cape Coral in 1971. This move was approved by the Florida Legislature in Chapter 71-736, Laws of Florida, approved by the board of commissioners of the fire district, approved by the Cape Coral city council and by a majority vote of fire district electors who decided the question at a special referendum election held for that purpose.

COUNTY HOME RULE – In 1965, the Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 65-1821, Laws of Florida, granting limited powers of local self-government to the Lee County Commissioners. This statute became known as the *Home Rule Law* and was approved by county voters at a referendum held later that year. Among other provisions, the new home rule law allowed county commissioners to create dependent special districts by simple county ordinance – with a referendum required if the district were to have taxing authority.

The only dependent special fire control district that ever existed in Lee County pursuant to this act was the former ***South Trail Fire Control And Rescue District Of Lee County*** – predecessor of the present-day independent South Trail Fire Protection And Rescue Service District. Created by county ordinance in 1970, this unit replaced the former South Trail Volunteer Fire Department. Voters in the South Trail community approved creation of the new district by referendum that year and the county commissioners appointed an advisory board to assist the county in the operation of the district.

Due to a restructuring of county government in 1972, the limited authority of the fire district advisory board was almost completely diluted. A newly created county Division of Protective Services assumed control of the South Trail department on October 1, 1972. That event and others prepared the way for additional independent fire control districts by mid-decade.

MOVEMENT TO CONSOLIDATE – In late 1972, The Lee County Administrator instructed the county Director of the Division of Protective Services to draft a plan for the consolidation of all fire departments in Lee County into a single county owned and operated agency. When the existence of the plan was discovered by area fire departments in the spring of 1973, a political firestorm erupted, causing the Division Director to resign his post. Not long afterward, the County Attorney learned that the county government had no authority over the independent special fire control districts whatsoever and the matter was dropped.

The 1974 Florida Legislature enacted a number of laws dealing with the long burning issue of dual taxation – (*city residents paying for county services not used.*) These new laws permitted counties to create a new type of dependent special taxing district called a *Municipal Service Taxing Unit* or “MSTU” as these came to be known. But unlike dependent special districts, an MSTU can be created by county ordinance with taxing authority – without a referendum vote of the people affected. (*Chapter 74-191, Laws Of Florida*)

With a new Protective Services Division director, the county government used these new laws to create a fire protection MSTU to cover the volunteer fire areas of Alva, Bayshore, Fort Myers Shores, San Carlos Park, Estero and Iona-McGregor in 1975. Another fire protection MSTU was created to serve the community of Tice at the same time. From the time the City of Fort Myers Fire Department discontinued service to the Tice area in October 1971, taxpayers countywide had been supporting the county fire station in Tice through general county taxes and surplus toll revenues from the Sanibel Causeway Administration.

IONA-McGREGOR – By March of 1975, the members of the Iona-McGregor Volunteer Fire Department and concerned civic leaders in that community saw the county fire protection MSTU as a threat to the local control of their fire department. Donation supported since its organization in 1965, the Iona-McGregor Volunteer Fire Department's service area included some of the highest property values in suburban Fort Myers. It became clear to both fire and civic leaders that the community's tax base was to be plundered by those in county government seeking to create a new county fire department. An independent special fire control district was the only solution.

Despite strong opposition from various county governmental factions, the Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 75-421, Laws of Florida that June, creating the Iona-McGregor Fire Protection And Rescue Service District – subject to a referendum. On November 4, 1975, Iona-McGregor voters decided by a lopsided 2649 “yes” to 301 “no” vote margin to approve creation of the district.

Local public support of the Iona-McGregor Volunteer Fire Department played a major role in the district's success in that referendum, but another major factor involved the county fire MSTU tax bill that arrived less than a week before the referendum was held. The county commissioners imposed a 0.75-mill fire tax on the community – without a referendum. In addition, of the \$109,000 that tax levy generated in the Iona-McGregor community, only \$47,000 was to be spent there. The remaining \$62,000 was taken to support the county fire station in Tice. Iona-McGregor taxpayers were incensed by this and voted accordingly.

NEW DISTRICTS END COUNTY FIRE SYSTEM – Without the Iona-McGregor fire taxing base to support it, a county fire system was no longer possible without increasing the MSTU tax millage rate from 0.75 to 1.332 mills. In the spring of 1976, the remaining volunteer fire companies in Alva, Bayshore, Estero, Fort Myers Shores and San Carlos Park all petitioned the Florida Legislature for independent special fire control districts. When county commissioners learned of this, they decided to divest themselves of the two fire departments they owned and operated – South Trail and Tice. Legislation was soon drafted for these two communities as well.

In the September 1976 primary election, voters in those communities overwhelmingly approved the creation of independent special fire control districts. They were:

Estero Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-408, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 207 “yes” to 61 “no” popular vote.

Ft. Myers Shores Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-409, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 649 “yes” to 390 “no” popular vote.

Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-410, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 1,095 “yes” to 809 “no” popular vote.

San Carlos Park Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-411, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 359 “yes” to 96 “no” popular vote.

South Trail Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-412, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 1,509 “yes” to 533 “no” popular vote.

Alva Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-413, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 276 “yes” to 101 “no” popular vote.

Bayshore Fire Protection & Rescue Service District – Chapter 76-414, Laws of Florida 1976 by a 358 “yes” to 112 “no” popular vote.

The major difference between the fire control districts created prior to 1966 and those created in the mid 1970s had much to do about money and local control. The pre-1966 districts were created as independent entities because that was the only option available to them at the time. The independent special fire control districts created in the mid 1970s were created as such to keep control of both the local fire departments as well as fire tax monies in the hands of the voters and taxpayers in each community.

In 1990, the Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 90-397, Laws of Florida, creating the **Upper Captiva Island Fire Control District**, which was also approved by the voters living there later that year.

THE FIRE DISTRICTS TODAY

In the thirty-five years that have passed since the last populated areas of Lee County were incorporated into special fire districts, much has changed.

FULLY PAID CAREER DEPARTMENTS: - The continuing urbanization of the Bonita Springs, Estero, San Carlos Park, South Trail, Iona-McGregor, Tice, Fort Myers Shores and North Fort Myers districts required the change from mostly volunteer to fully paid status. They joined the Fort Myers Beach and Lehigh Acres districts – and the Fort Myers and Cape Coral Fire Departments, which were already fully paid departments in 1976. The districts of Alva, Bayshore, Boca Grande, Captiva Island, Matlacha-Pine Island, Sanibel Island and Upper Captiva Island are part-paid/part-volunteer departments.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SYSTEM: - Fort Myers Beach and Lehigh Acres districts provide a fully paramedic ALS (Advanced Life Support) ambulance service within their

boundaries. Ambulance service in all other communities is provided by Lee County Emergency Medical Services. The city and fire district departments work with Lee County EMS in a number of ways:

- (1.) – Lee County EMS vehicles and personnel are routinely housed in fire stations – saving county taxpayers from the burden of having to build separate accommodations.
- (2.) – All fire district and city fire departments provide Rescue Service. This includes heavy rescue operations such as extrication from wrecked vehicles, emergency evacuation activities as coordinated with other fire districts, the county and the state, and varying degrees of emergency medical services to save lives and to assist the paramedics of Lee County EMS.

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS) In Alva, Bayshore, Boca Grande, Captiva, Fort Myers Shores, Matlacha-Pine Island, North Ft Myers, Tice and Upper Captiva Island, fire district Emergency Medical Technicians provide this service.

ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT (ALS) In Bonita Springs, City of Cape Coral, Estero, City of Fort Myers, Iona-McGregor, San Carlos Park, Sanibel and South Trail, fire district/fire department Paramedics provide this service. Fort Myers Beach and Lehigh Acres also provide ambulance service.

ENHANCED 911 EMERGENCY REPORTING: Thirty years ago, dispatchers at the separate fire districts and departments handled emergency telephone calls. In 1986, Lee County, the cities and fire districts adopted the Enhanced 911 Emergency Telephone Number. While the concept of the 911 emergency reporting telephone number had been around since 1968, ours was one of the very first areas in The United States to have the Enhanced 911 system. With Enhanced 911, telephone company digital switching equipment provides emergency dispatchers with vital information such as the caller's location, serving fire district and law enforcement agency and telephone number.

FIRE AND BUILDING CODES: The Lee County Commissioners enacted the first fire safety codes in 1974 but chose not to enforce them. The Florida Legislature authorized the fire control districts to enact fire safety rules and regulations – some of them with the same fire safety ordinances as those adopted by the county and to enforce the same by civil injunction. Although county commissioners initially authorized the fire districts to enforce the county's fire prevention codes in 1978, complaints from builders and developers caused the county commissioners to revoke this authorization in 1979. When that happened, a number of districts began to enact and enforce their own safety codes and regulations. A uniform fire prevention code was finally adopted by ordinance and by inter-local agreement between the fire districts and Lee County in 1984 and it has worked reasonably well ever since, using the uniform Florida State Fire Safety Code.

MASS PURCHASING: In a cooperative effort to save tax dollars, the fire districts organized a mass purchasing association in 1986 to receive quantity discount on major and minor purchases. The association also included the fire control districts in Collier County as well as the governments of Lee, Hendry and Collier counties themselves. This arrangement worked well for about 12 years until a better system replaced it. Today, fire districts obtain substantial cost reductions in purchasing by “piggybacking” these purchases with Federal, State and local bidding for the same products.

FLORIDA USAR TASK FORCE SIX (*URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE*):

The fire districts in Bonita Springs, Estero, Fort Myers Beach, San Carlos Park, South Trail, Iona-McGregor and the Lee County Division of Public Safety created USAR TASK FORCE SIX – (FL-TF 6) - a unit of some 73 specially trained fire fighters, emergency medical technicians and paramedics to search for and rescue victims of natural or man made disasters. This includes rescue from collapsed structures, pre-hospital emergency care and treatment of disaster victims, rope rescue, swift water rescue, confined space rescue, trench rescue and similar situations.

It's first major local response was for Hurricane Charley in August of 2004 – searching for victims on the offshore islands three days before FEMA teams arrived in Lee County for the same purpose. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, USAR TASK FORCE SIX did not deploy but was the only USAR team available for emergency response and was on stand-by for the remainder of Florida as well as the states of Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama.

In as much as this function is a unique and a highly specialized one, it is not necessary that each area fire district or department participate in this operation. USAR Task Force Six will deploy whenever and wherever needed.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS (HAZ-MAT): - Just as USAR is a highly specialized function, so too is the handling of hazardous materials in emergencies. In Lee County, The Fort Myers Fire Department provides much of this service. While they are assisted by the other area districts and departments, it is not necessary to duplicate this effort on a countywide basis.

DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PLANNING: - The duties and responsibilities of all U.S. fire departments were changed forever on September 11, 2001. In Florida, however, calamity struck in August of 1992 with Hurricane Andrew. The problems and mistakes made during and after the storm in Miami-Dade County have been studied with much scrutiny ever since so that they could be avoided in future major emergencies.

Starting with Hurricane Opal in 1995, the fire districts in Lee County began to deploy personnel and equipment to other Florida communities hit by hurricanes – so that actual “hands on” experience in these situations could be had. The Florida Fire Chief’s Association coordinates the deployment of personnel and equipment. By the time Hurricane Charley hit Southwest Florida in August of 2004, these pre-planning efforts paid off. The fire districts were able to handle their duties during and after the storm without the need to call for assistance from other counties. The same was true a year later when Hurricane Wilma wrecked havoc.

As new district fire stations are added to accommodate growth, they are constructed to withstand hurricane force winds and to serve multiple emergency purposes.

FLORIDA FIRE JOBS: The growth in population and development in the more urbanized districts creates the need for additional fire stations and equipment. That growth and development also creates the need for additional fire fighters and paramedics. In August of 2001, the fire districts of Bonita Springs, Estero, Fort Myers Beach, Iona-McGregor, Lehigh Acres, Matlacha-Pine Island, North Fort Myers, San Carlos Park, Sanibel and South Trail together with the City of Cape Coral Fire Department and the Lee County Port Authority created The Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida - an applicant screening and testing program. By doing this, a better selection of candidates can be had to fill these positions as they become available.

NEW STATIONS & EQUIPMENT - In 1976, the fire districts in Lee County owned and operated 17 fire stations. By 1996, that number increased to 35 stations and today that number is 45 stations with more on the way as growth and development continues. These numbers do not include the City of Cape Coral’s 10 fire stations and the City of Fort Myers, which owns and operates 6 stations. It also does not include the Lee County Port Authority Fire and Rescue stations at Page Field and Southwest International Airports.

New ISO rated fire apparatus and equipment have replaced the second hand and government surplus fire trucks, which served the public for many years. The cost of new fire engines and equipment is always high, however, it is worth the expense from the standpoint of fire fighter safety and reliability. It is also a requirement of the Insurance Services Office (ISO) in order to reap any benefits providing lower and better fire insurance rates to the public.

THE INSURANCE SERVICES OFFICE – (I.S.O.)

The I.S.O. is an independent and non-political organization that serves the insurance industry. This is the agency that actually inspects and rates a community’s fire defenses – here in Florida and in 44 other states as well. These ratings are called the “Public Protection Classification” or “PPC” for short.

The ratings program recognizes the efforts of communities to provide fire-protection services for citizens and property owners. A community's investment in fire mitigation is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses. So insurance companies use ratings information to help establish fair premiums for fire insurance — generally offering lower premiums in communities with better protection. By offering economic benefits for communities that invest in their firefighting services, the program provides a real incentive for improving and maintaining public fire protection. The program also provides help for fire departments and other public officials as they plan for, budget, and justify improvements.

But the most significant benefit of the ratings program is its effect on losses. Statistical data on insurance losses bears out the relationship between excellent fire protection — as measured by the ratings program — and low fire losses. By helping communities prepare to fight fires effectively, the ISO's ratings program saves lives.

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATINGS – Each community's fire defenses are graded using a point system to consider the following:

- (1.) – **THE FIRE DEPARTMENT:** - A review of the fire department accounts for 50% of the total classification. ISO focuses on a fire department's first-alarm response and initial attack to minimize potential loss. Here, ISO reviews such items as engine companies, ladder or service companies, distribution of fire stations and fire companies, equipment carried on apparatus, pumping capacity, reserve apparatus, department staffing and personnel, and training.
- (2.) - **FIRE ALARM AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM:**
A review of the fire alarm system accounts for 10% of the total classification. The review focuses on the community's facilities and support for handling and dispatching fire alarms.
- (3.) – **THE WATER SUPPLY:** A review of the water-supply system accounts for 40% of the total classification. ISO reviews the water supply a community uses to determine the adequacy for fire-suppression purposes. They also consider hydrant size, type, and installation, as well as the inspection frequency and condition of fire hydrants.

Generally, residential property located within five road miles of a fire station and within 1,000 feet of an approved fire hydrant benefit by paying lower and better fire insurance premiums.

After a community's fire defenses are inspected by the I.S.O., the community is "rated" and given a Public Protection Classification number – ranging from Class 1 to Class 10.

On a scale of 1 to 10, a Class 1 community has the best fire protection possible, while a Class 10 community has no fire protection at all. Therefore, a homeowner's insurance policy costs a lot more in a Class 10 community than the same policy would cost in a Class 1 community.

As a practical note, there are only nine places in Florida with a class 1 rating (including Apopka, Hialeah, Hollywood, Coral Gables and Pembroke Pines.) Until recently, a class 9 rating was the best a community without an approved water system could obtain – even if the fire department otherwise qualified for a better rating. The I.S.O. has amended these guidelines somewhat to allow credit to rural fire departments with access to alternate sources of water to fight fires.

Community	1976 ISO Rating	2011 ISO Rating	
Alva	Class 10	Class 9 (no water system)	
Bayshore	Class 10	Class 3	
Boca Grande	Class 8	Class 5	
Bonita Springs	Class 10	Class 3	
Cape Coral	Class 8	Class 3	
Captiva	Class 10	Class 4	
Estero	Class 10	Class 3	
Fort Myers	Class 6	Class 3	
Fort Myers Beach	Class 8	Class 4	
Fort Myers Shores	Class 10	Class 4	
Iona-McGregor	Class 9-AA	Class 4	
Lehigh Acres	Class 8	Class 4	
Matlacha-Pine Island	Class 10	Class 6	
North Fort Myers	Class 8	Class 5	
San Carlos Park	Class 10	Class 3	
Sanibel	Class 10	Class 6	
South Trail	Class 8	Class 4	
Tice	Class 8	Class 4	
Upper Captiva	Class 10	Class 7	

Improvements in fire protection over the past 35 years have lead to lower and better fire insurance ratings for residents of Lee County. These improvements included additional fire stations and equipment, the addition of more full-time paid staffing, improvements made to area water systems and the activation of the enhanced 911 emergency reporting telephone number.

Chapter Two

“SHOW ME THE MONEY”

A complete review of actual services provided, taxing rates and assessments, relative annual cost-per-station amounts, ISO community fire insurance ratings and budget/expenditure growth over the past 35 fiscal years. The summary of this chapter begins on page 67.

BUDGET GROWTH

In this chapter, the taxing rates, budgets and/or actual expenditures, annual cost-per-station analysis and I.S.O. fire insurance ratings will be examined. The fire and rescue departments included within this report are as follows:

Broward County Fire & Rescue – *pages 19 and 20*
City of Cape Coral Fire & Rescue – *page 63*
Charlotte County Fire & Rescue – *pages 20 and 21*
Miami-Dade Fire & Rescue (formerly Metro Dade Fire & Rescue) – *pages 23 & 24*
City of Fort Myers Fire & Rescue – *pages 62 & 63*
Hillsborough County Fire & Rescue – *pages 24 & 25*
Lee County EMS (formerly Lee County Ambulance) – *page 64*
Lee County Fire Control as a budgeted item – *pages 64 & 65*
Collier County Fire (basically two units at Ochopee & Isles of Capri) – *page 43*
Collier County EMS – *page 43*
Manatee County EMS – *page 48*
The Independent Fire Control Districts in Lee County – *pages 26 through 42*
The Independent Fire Control Districts in Collier County – *pages 43 through 47*
The Independent Fire Control Districts in Manatee County – *pages 48 through 55.*
Orange County Fire & Rescue – *pages 56 & 57*
Palm Beach County Fire & Rescue – *pages 58 & 59*
Sarasota County Fire & Rescue – *pages 60 & 61*

TAXING RATES – there are two different types of fire protection and EMS taxing systems used in this report:

- (1.) – **TAX MILLAGE:** An ad valorem millage levy based upon the VALUE of property. One mill equals \$1.00 of tax for every \$1,000 of value.
- (2.) – **SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS:** A flat-fee levy based upon the TYPE of property. Usually this is calculated by residence, square foot or by acre.

Tax millages apply for fire protection in Lee, Collier, Hillsborough, Orange, Dade and Palm Beach counties and for EMS in Broward and Sarasota counties. Special assessments apply for fire protection in Broward, Charlotte, Manatee and Sarasota counties.

BUDGETS AND/OR EXPENDITURES – A review of all available figures for the past thirty fiscal years. Most figures from the Florida Department of Financial Services/Office of Florida State Comptroller, which show monies actually spent.

COST-PER-STATION ANALYSIS – Annual cost-per-station figures consider the entire fire-rescue annual budget or tax levy and divide this amount by the number of fire stations actually delivering service to the public.

BROWARD COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE

ORGANIZATION: County owned and operated fire/rescue department that serves a limited area of unincorporated Broward County and seven incorporated places by inter-local agreement. Incorporated areas include the cities of Cooper City, Dania Beach, Sea Ranch Lakes, Pembroke Park, Lauderdale Lakes, West Park and Weston. The remaining 22 incorporated municipalities in Broward County own and operate their own fire departments or buy this service from adjacent municipalities.

Broward County is different than most other areas in that the overwhelming majority of county residents live within the boundaries of a city or town.

Prior to fiscal year 1977-1978, fire protection in the urbanized unincorporated area of Broward County was provided by numerous volunteer fire departments – all funded through a single independent special district known as Broward Fire Control. The Florida Legislature abolished the district in 1978 and transferred its assets and liabilities to the government of Broward County. On October 1, 2003, the County Commission turned Broward Fire & Rescue over to the Broward County Sheriff's Office and it has been operated as a division of that entity ever since.

Broward Fire Rescue is a fully paid career department.

2010-2011 FIRE BUDGET: \$67,684,310 fire suppression and rescue service

2010-2011 FIRE-RESCUE MSTU: 2.5224 2,110,352

2010-2011 FIRE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT RATES: \$190.00 per residence

2010-2011 VALUE AVERAGE HOME IN TAXED AREA: \$80,396

2010-2011 TOTAL FIRE TAX & ASSESSMENT AVERAGE: $\$212 + \$190 = \$402$

ASSESSMENTS APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by County Commission.

TAX LEVY APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by County Commission

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 13 (BCFR)

COST PER STATION: \$5,206,485

ISO RATING: Protection Class 3 with hydrants on approved water system.

FISCAL YEAR	FIRE	EMS	
1976-1977	445,297	1,790,205	
1977-1978	597,008	unknown	
<i>MERGER - FIRE DISTRICT ABOLISHED</i>			
1978-1979	1,929,201	4,502,564	*Note: These figures do not include amounts spent on countywide fire and rescue associated services. These include logistics, air rescue, specialized services administration (Haz-Mat, etc) and communications.
1979-1980	3,761,916	4,914,545	
1980-1981	2,472,531	7,326,870	
1981-1982	2,735,702	7,801,746	
1982-1983	3,445,000	8,767,000	
1983-1984	4,973,000	10,716,000	
1984-1985	6,006,000	12,498,000	
1985-1986	6,645,000	13,427,000	
1986-1987	8,444,000	14,296,000	
1987-1988	10,024,000	17,055,000	
1988-1989	9,694,000	15,506,000	
1989-1990	8,978,000	20,939,000	
1990-1991	10,144,000	22,642,000	
1991-1992	13,925,000	unknown	
1992-1993	11,284,000	24,413,000	
1993-1994	12,298,000	27,423,000	
1994-1995	13,588,000	30,367,000	
1995-1996	14,081,000	33,250,000	
1996-1997	17,323,000	27,279,000	
1997-1998	15,439,000	26,430,000	
1998-1999	17,213,000	28,101,000	
1999-2000	20,072,000	28,809,000	
2000-2001	20,217,000	28,119,000	
2001-2002	20,311,000	30,388,000	
2002-2003	21,647,000	34,529,000	
2003-2004	50,567,610	FIRE & EMS COMBINED**	
2004-2005	47,555,780	FIRE & EMS COMBINED**	
2005-2006	55,104,000	FIRE & EMS COMBINED**	
2006-2007	58,896,860	FIRE & EMS COMBINED Broward Co Budget Dept	
2007-2008	104,028,000		
2008-2009	87,550,000		
2009-2010	66,005,780	Broward Co Budget Dept	

**Note: Figures from Broward County Department of Elected Officials. All others from The Office of Florida State Comptroller, now known as Florida Department Of Financial Services.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

ORGANIZATION: - County owned and operated fire-rescue department serving Charlotte County, less and except within the City of Punta Gorda, the Boca Grande Fire Control District and the Englewood Area Fire Control District.

2010-2011 FIRE BUDGET: \$33,401,945 FIRE LEVY: \$21,137,597#

2010-2011 EMS BUDGET: \$11,677,977

2010-2011 TOTAL: \$45,079,922

#(Char Co MSBU sites says \$23,569,729.00 to be collected)

2010-2011 FIRE ASSESSMENT RATES: \$150.71 per residence + additional rates for business and commercial, vacant lots, acreage, etc.

2010-2011 EMS TAXING RATES: - Not available because countywide ad valorem tax revenue plus user fees support it.

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 16

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,817,495

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 4 in areas with hydrants on approved water systems and class 9 and 10 in all others.

Previous to 1981, fire protection was provided by six special districts, to wit:

Port Charlotte-Charlotte Harbor Fire Control District (independent)

Charlotte County South Fire Control District (independent)

Harbour Heights Fire Control District (independent)

Alligator Creek Fire District (county-dependent)

East Charlotte Fire District (county-dependent)

El Jobean – Gulf Cove Fire District. (county-dependent)

In January of 1981, Charlotte County abolished its three dependent fire districts and created Charlotte County Fire-Rescue. In 1985, the Port-Charlotte-Charlotte Harbor and Charlotte County South independent districts were abolished and transferred to county control, and in 1991, Harbour Heights Fire Control District was abolished and merged with the county fire and rescue department.

FISCAL YEAR	CO FIRE	IND. DISTRICT FIRE	FIRE TOTAL	CO EMS
1976-1977	161,447	118,700	280,147	43,399
1977-1978	70,310	149,774	220,084	46,246
1978-1979	144,583	302,179	446,762	117,420
1979-1980	150,249	612,025	762,274	60,000
1980-1981	339,590	807,729	1,147,319	128,418
1981-1982	432,421	882,099	1,314,520	828,616
1982-1983	739,780	850,058	1,589,838	888,749
1983-1984	501,559	1,030,281	1,531,840	982,332
1984-1985	659,731	1,210,797	1,870,528	1,076,623
1985-1986	174,332	1,405,047	1,579,379	1,544,312
MERGER: ALL DISTRICTS EXCEPT HARBOR HEIGHTS ABOLISHED				
1986-1987	2,167,339	339,619	2,506,958	1,623,500
1987-1988	3,032,021	135,227	3,167,248	1,729,046
1988-1989	2,960,488	206,854	3,167,342	2,540,329
1989-1990	4,129,414	293,880	4,423,294	2,480,640
1990-1991	4,597,941	352,476	4,950,416	3,171,640
MERGER: HARBOUR HEIGHTS FIRE DISTRICT ABOLISHED				
1991-1992	4,672,301	N/A	4,672,301	2,882,186
1992-1993	5,136,975	N/A	5,136,975	3,238,594
1993-1994	6,009,723	N/A	6,009,723	3,182,304
1994-1995	6,336,571	N/A	6,336,571	3,865,065
1995-1996	9,691,474	N/A	9,691,474	no report
1996-1997	9,063,972	N/A	9,063,972	4,200,825
1997-1998	7,881,657	N/A	7,881,657	4,797,684
1998-1999	7,852,553	N/A	7,852,553	5,091,234
1999-2000	8,714,251	N/A	8,714,251	5,431,614
2000-2001	9,355,426	N/A	9,355,426	6,696,559
2001-2002	11,318,361	N/A	11,318,361	7,916,577
2002-2003	12,122,023	N/A	12,122,023	9,428,309
2003-2004	15,285,446	N/A	15,285,446	9,248,690
2004-2005	15,901,880	N/A	15,901,880	unknown
2005-2006	31,048,502	N/A	22,898,818	12,062,408
2006-2007	27,939,662	N/A	27,939,662	14,298,405
2007-2008	21,571,714	N/A	21,571,714	13,201,965
2008-2009	18,479,188	N/A	18,479,188	13,257,505
2009-2010	29,468,651 (both fire & EMS)			

Note: All figures from the Office of Florida Comptroller except 1996-1997, which were provided by Charlotte County Property Appraiser Dept.

Note: Charlotte County EMS provides ambulance service to the entire county and is funded through countywide general revenue. In effect, Charlotte County Fire Rescue and EMS are the same agency except they are funded separately. The reason for this is because the City of Punta Gorda, The Englewood Area Fire Control District and the Boca Grande Fire Control District own and operate their own fire departments. The county fire levy applies to all areas of the county outside of these three jurisdictions.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

ORGANIZATION: - A county-dependent special district of Dade County since 1957, this department serves unincorporated Miami-Dade County plus twenty-one of the total twenty-six municipalities within the county. The cities of Miami, Miami Beach, Hialeah, Coral Gables and the Village Of Key Biscayne own and operate their own fire and rescue departments. Miami-Dade County department has ALS and paramedics but does not transport. Private ambulance services are contracted with the county for this service.

2010-2011 TAXING RATES: 2.5753 Mills for levy of \$292,333,284

TOTAL REVENUE 2010-2011 – 404,054,000

TOTAL ADOPTED BUDGET 2010-2011 – 394,092,000 which is earmarked for:

- 21,788,000 – Administration
- 46,013,000 – Support service
- 2,824,000 – Training
- 19,863,000 – Technical Support Services
- 303,604,000 – Suppression and Rescue

TAX MILLAGE APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 61

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$6,460,525

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4 in areas with hydrants.

FISCAL YEAR	ACTUALLY SPENT
1976-1977	13,941,003
1977-1978	19,728,421
1978-1979	22,983,000
1979-1980	26,586,000
1980-1981	34,542,000
1981-1982	40,141,000
1982-1983	46,232,000
1983-1984	52,682,000

1984-1985	58,392,000	
1985-1986	61,588,000	
1986-1987	71,147,000	
1987-1988	78,070,000	
1988-1989	85,873,000	
1989-1990	99,383,000	
1990-1991	100,388,000	
1991-1992	113,249,000	
1992-1993	118,990,000	
1993-1994	119,086,000	
1994-1995	128,982,941	
1995-1996	137,000,000*	
1996-1997	144,488,000*	
1997-1998	167,776,420	
1998-1999	164,680,702	
1999-2000	187,567,931	
2000-2001	188,128,401	
2001-2002	206,967,988	
2002-2003	216,506,186	
2003-2004	234,465,289	
2004-2005	265,034,471	
2005-2006	295,056,000*	(Budgeted figure)
2006-2007	360,931,912	EMS is another 14,342,470
2007-2008	382,980,070	EMS is another 13,506,789
2008-2009	382,259,312	EMS is another 13,023,151
2009-2010	408,332,000	(Budget Dept)

*Note: These figures from Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser. All other figures are from Office of Florida State Comptroller.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

ORGANIZATION: - A county funded and controlled agency providing fire protection to unincorporated Hillsborough County, and EMS ambulance service to the same area plus to the city of Plant City by inter-local agreement. The other incorporated communities of Tampa and Temple Terrace own and operate their own fire and rescue departments. Department has both paid and volunteer fire stations.

2010-2011 FIRE/EMS BUDGET: \$ 116,640,889

2010-2011 FIRE/EMS TAXING RATE: This information is not available from the government of Hillsborough County. This is because funding comes from the Hillsborough County Unincorporated Area MSTU (Municipal Service Taxing Unit). That unit includes the tax levy to support all municipal services in the unincorporated area of the county – including the fire and rescue department.

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 41

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,844,900

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 5 with hydrants on an approved system.

FISCAL YEAR	FIRE	EMS	TOTAL
1976-1977	1,858,586	3,581,762	5,440,348
1977-1978	2,269,315	4,069,439	6,338,754
1978-1979	2,705,162	no report	incomplete
1979-1980	3,467,434	5,137,946	8,605,380
1980-1981	3,891,146	5,784,946	9,676,132
1981-1982	4,341,108	7,688,936	12,030,044
1982-1983	5,096,096	5,928,849	11,024,945
1983-1984	5,754,409	6,946,976	12,701,385
1984-1985	6,868,057	7,130,542	13,998,599
1985-1986	9,119,920	7,988,294	17,108,214
1986-1987	10,768,563	7,787,257	18,555,820
1987-1988	13,331,255	7,420,662	20,751,917
1988-1989	14,679,117	7,325,295	22,094,412
1989-1990	18,760,803	9,921,760	28,682,563
1990-1991	18,693,974	8,873,841	27,567,815
1991-1992	19,747,562	9,432,509	29,180,071
1992-1993	21,252,533	unknown	incomplete
1993-1994	23,686,663	unknown	incomplete
1994-1995	24,947,197	unknown	incomplete
1995-1996	25,637,769*	9,886,982*	35,504,751*
1996-1997	27,092,783*	11,558,958*	38,651,741*
1997-1998	32,062,631	11,707,971	43,770,602
1998-1999	34,450,067	11,611,637	46,061,704
1999-2000	COMBINED REPORTING		51,104,873
2000-2001	COMBINED REPORTING		54,420,772
2001-2002	COMBINED REPORTING		60,137,957
2002-2003	COMBINED REPORTING		69,173,421
2003-2004	COMBINED REPORTING		76,704,200
2004-2005	COMBINED REPORTING		85,736,358
2005-2006	COMBINED REPORTING		89,234,832
2006-2007	98,152,976	5,371,003	103,523,979
2007-2008	96,398,599	16,670,381	113,068,980
2008-2009	86,340,240	24,948,877	111,289,177
2009-2010			114,733,868*

*Note: These figures from Hillsborough County Budgeting Department. All others are from the Office of Florida State Comptroller.

INDEPENDENT FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICTS IN LEE COUNTY

ALVA FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized by the people of Alva as a volunteer fire department (incorporated on June 2, 1964) and incorporated as an independent special fire district by referendum in that community in 1976. Provides a fire suppression and control service, code enforcement, plans review, development review as well as non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) service. Part paid career and part volunteer department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$279,362,136 x 3.0 mills = \$838,086

MILLAGE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$838,086

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 9 (no water system)

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY			
1976-1977	N/A	All amounts from Lee County Property Appraiser except		
1977-1978	22,310	where noted otherwise.		
1978-1979	27,402			
1979-1980	28,109			
1980-1981	35,288			
1981-1982	44,355			
1982-1983	62,805			
1983-1984	64,256			
1984-1985	140,461			
1985-1986	146,195			
1986-1987	155,405			
1987-1988	174,340			
1988-1989	191,138			
1989-1990	194,475			
1990-1991	224,722			
1991-1992	243,770			
1992-1993	228,950			
1993-1994	230,006			
1994-1995	231,388			
1995-1996	235,200			
1996-1997	239,477	COMPTROLLER		
1997-1998	230,641	COMPTROLLER		
1998-1999	256,778	COMPTROLLER		
1999-2000	262,332	COMPTROLLER		
2000-2001	268,610	COMPTROLLER	2005-2006	940,530
2001-2002	493,204	COMPTROLLER	2006-2007	1,030,494
2002-2003	378,521	COMPTROLLER	2007-2008	1,093,262
2003-2004	568,581	COMPTROLLER	2008-2009	1,206,235
2004-2005	632,286	COMPTROLLER	2009-2010	1,025,689

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized by the people of Bayshore as a volunteer fire department (incorporated December 11, 1967) and incorporated as an independent special fire district by referendum in that community in 1976. Provides fire suppression and control services, code enforcement, plans review, development review as well as a non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Part paid career and part volunteer department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$333,099,611 x 3.5 mills = \$1,165,849

2010-2011 TAXING RATE: 3.5 mils

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.5

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,165,849

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 3 with hydrants

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	N/A	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless			
1977-1978	20,727	noted otherwise.			
1978-1979	29,269				
1979-1980	30,104				
1980-1981	39,349				
1981-1982	80,652				
1982-1983	114,199				
1983-1984	115,938				
1984-1985	114,263				
1985-1986	139,324				
1986-1987	149,621				
1987-1988	165,911				
1988-1989	298,346				
1989-1990	344,350				
1990-1991	366,773				
1991-1992	376,819				
1992-1993	380,615				
1993-1994	394,027				
1994-1995	412,820				
1995-1996	421,425				
1996-1997	721,268	COMPTROLLER			
1997-1998	597,423	COMPTROLLER			
1998-1999	735,165	COMPTROLLER	2004-2005	917,244	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	534,844	COMPTROLLER	2005-2006	1,134,272	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	NO REPORT		2006-2007	1,313,696	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	563,676	COMPTROLLER	2007-2008	2,029,098	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	536,277	COMPTROLLER	2008-2009	1,699,309	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	745,038	COMPTROLLER	2009-2010	1,755,124	AUDITOR GEN.

BOCA GRANDE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Boca Grande and incorporated as an independent special fire district by referendum in that community in 1943.

Provides fire suppression and control service, code enforcement, plans review, development review as well as a non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Part paid career and part volunteer department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$1,495,017,213 x 1.180 mills = \$1,764,120

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,764,120

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 5

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	53,248	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless			
1977-1978	35,523	noted otherwise.			
1978-1979	46,140				
1979-1980	48,164				
1980-1981	53,741				
1981-1982	59,383				
1982-1983	66,810				
1983-1984	49,334				
1984-1985	48,064				
1985-1986	58,985				
1986-1987	55,467				
1987-1988	51,873				
1988-1989	49,597				
1989-1990	78,352				
1990-1991	75,000				
1991-1992	87,850				
1992-1993	86,651				
1993-1994	86,358				
1994-1995	102,093	COMPTROLLER			
1995-1996	121,786	COMPTROLLER			
1996-1997	417,111	COMPTROLLER			
1997-1998	196,269	COMPTROLLER			
1998-1999	286,360	COMPTROLLER			
1999-2000	385,519	COMPTROLLER	2005-2006	1,367,968	LEVY
2000-2001	557,527	COMPTROLLER	2006-2007	1,909,547	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	1,079,241	COMPTROLLER	2007-2008	2,028,233	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	2,083,966	COMPTROLLER	2008-2009	2,550,269	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	3,104,523	COMPTROLLER	2009-2010	no info yet	
2004-2005	1,511,596	COMPTROLLER			

BONITA SPRINGS FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Bonita Springs and incorporated as an independent special fire district by referendum in that community in 1965. Provides fire suppression, fire prevention, plans review, code enforcement, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Co-operative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$7,873,883,636 x 1.999 mills = \$15,739,893
 TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0
 NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5
 RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,147,979
 I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.	
1976-1977	85,715		
1977-1978	99,808		
1978-1979	106,054		
1979-1980	143,650		
1980-1981	167,791		
1981-1982	297,554		
1982-1983	340,899		
1983-1984	429,453		
1984-1985	477,003		
1985-1986	624,968		
1986-1987	855,750		
1987-1988	1,343,640		
1988-1989	1,474,364		
1989-1990	1,847,866		
1990-1991	2,228,465		
1991-1992	2,533,949		
1992-1993	2,824,169		
1993-1994	3,126,488		
1994-1995	3,577,156		
1995-1996	3,752,868		
1996-1997	4,295,175	COMPTROLLER	
1997-1998	4,607,313	COMPTROLLER	
1998-1999	4,941,419	COMPTROLLER	
1999-2000	5,071,214	COMPTROLLER	2004-2005 15,898,746 COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	7,648,651	COMPTROLLER	2005-2006 17,874,110 LEVY
2001-2002	9,387,860	COMPTROLLER	2006-2007 22,103,860 COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	10,302,063	COMPTROLLER	2007-2008 18,898,460 COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	16,540,255	COMPTROLLER	2008-2009 20,879,219 COMPTROLLER
			2009-2010 no info yet

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Captiva Island and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1955 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression services, code enforcement, plans review, development review and non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Part paid career and part volunteer department.

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 10.0

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,229,864

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY
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2009-2010 1,259,669 AUDITOR GEN.

ESTERO FIRE RESCUE

Organized by the people of Estero (The Estero Precinct 12 Volunteer Fire Company Number One, Inc. on November 6, 1964) and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1976 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, development review, code enforcement, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid dept.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$ 5,194,938,022 x 2.0 mills = \$10,389,876

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.0 mills

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 4

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,597,469

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	N/A	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.
1977-1978	13,931	
1978-1979	19,144	
1979-1980	19,519	
1980-1981	21,980	
1981-1982	45,428	
1982-1983	48,250	
1983-1984	174,063	
1984-1985	152,903	
1985-1986	211,706	
1986-1987	265,827	
1987-1988	281,729	
1988-1989	323,691	
1989-1990	448,485	
1990-1991	580,786	
1991-1992	637,070	
1992-1993	640,856	
1993-1994	669,503	
1994-1995	693,153	
1995-1996	789,635	
1996-1997	1,125,259	COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	728,108	COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	1,828,390	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	2,514,023	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	5,131,037	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	9,470,384	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	6,753,018	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	6,028,376	COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	9,335,043	COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	8,403,411	LEVY
2006-2007	10,160,008	COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	15,283,272	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	11,348,853	COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	no info yet	

FORT MYERS BEACH FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Fort Myers Beach in 1949 and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1951 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, development review, code enforcement, transporting ALS rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$3,232,467,806 x 2.58 mills = \$8,339,767

MILLAGE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,779,922

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 4

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	311,581	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.
1977-1978	367,124	
1978-1979	472,215	
1979-1980	551,577	
1980-1981	707,355	
1981-1982	1,096,431	
1982-1983	1,425,493	
1983-1984	904,964	
1984-1985	1,767,572	
1985-1986	1,885,426	
1986-1987	1,774,702	
1987-1988	2,078,305	
1988-1989	2,453,032	
1989-1990	2,331,588	
1990-1991	2,887,294	
1991-1992	3,055,892	
1992-1993	3,167,768	
1993-1994	3,340,043	
1994-1995	3,572,080	
1995-1996	3,680,868	
1996-1997	3,877,833	
1997-1998	4,496,076	
1998-1999	3,964,963	
1999-2000	4,064,626	
2000-2001	4,718,576	
2001-2002	5,646,447	
2002-2003	6,195,420	
2003-2004	6,402,021	
2004-2005	7,407,535	
2005-2006	9,538,396	
2006-2007	12,985,607	
2007-2008	14,415,403	
2008-2009	12,012,726	
2009-2010	9,662,465	

FORT MYERS SHORES FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized by the people of Fort Myers Shores and Olga and incorporated on October 18, 1961 as "Fort Myers Shores Volunteer Fire Company Number 1 of The Fort Myers Shores Fire Department, Inc." and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1976 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review and non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$1,180,312,602 x 2.0 mills = \$2,360,625

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes - by referendum. Maximum is 2.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,360,615

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4 with hydrants

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	N/A	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.
1977-1978	117,612	
1978-1979	127,656	
1979-1980	137,289	
1980-1981	156,197	
1981-1982	172,849	
1982-1983	202,574	
1983-1984	208,475	
1984-1985	217,973	
1985-1986	243,731	
1986-1987	254,026	
1987-1988	268,865	
1988-1989	229,695	
1989-1990	246,551	
1990-1991	259,082	
1991-1992	556,707	
1992-1993	578,052	
1993-1994	599,506	
1994-1995	623,573	
1995-1996	622,414	
1996-1997	NO REPORT - COMPTROLLER	
1997-1998	702,079	COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	697,825	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	731,307	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	721,700	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	772,305	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	1,102,066	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	1,335,678	COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	1,437,094	COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	2,160,302	LEVY
2006-2007	2,839,188	COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	2,290,030	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	2,349,391	COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	2,336,632	FLORIDA AUDITOR GENERAL

IONA-McGREGOR FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Iona and McGregor on April 20, 1965 (Incorporated September 20, 1965) and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1975 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, development review, code enforcement, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$6,218,803,794 x 2.5 mills = \$15,547,009

2010-2011 TAXING RATE: 2.50 Mills

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.5

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,109,402

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 4

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY
1976-1977	unknown
1977-1978	unknown
1978-1979	unknown
1979-1980	unknown
1980-1981	321,099 COMPTROLLER
1981-1982	398,418 COMPTROLLER
1982-1983	456,746 COMPTROLLER
1983-1984	634,706 COMPTROLLER
1984-1985	1,437,276
1985-1986	1,919,533
1986-1987	2,117,046
1987-1988	2,705,258
1988-1989	2,685,740
1989-1990	2,981,447
1990-1991	3,367,237
1991-1992	3,585,885
1992-1993	3,664,283
1993-1994	3,729,969
1994-1995	3,804,093
1995-1996	3,948,078
1996-1997	3,864,396 COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	4,318,096 COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	4,694,244 COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	4,996,196 COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	5,235,172 COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	6,229,538 COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	8,193,863 COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	11,911,546 COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	11,816,060 COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	13,703,695 LEVY
2006-2007	15,844,029 COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	16,665,015 COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	21,464,358 COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	no info yet

LEHIGH ACRES FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Lehigh Acres and incorporated on January 4, 1962. Incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1965 by referendum in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, code enforcement, development review, transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$2,514,013,656 x 3.0 mills = \$7,542,041
TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0
NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5
RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,508,408
I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 4

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY
1976-1977	unknown
1977-1978	unknown
1978-1979	unknown
1979-1980	unknown
1980-1981	402,140
1981-1982	575,393
1982-1983	754,376
1983-1984	1,117,974
1984-1985	1,093,623
1985-1986	1,247,491
1986-1987	1,578,955
1987-1988	2,023,258
1988-1989	2,135,459
1989-1990	2,293,138
1990-1991	2,729,152
1991-1992	2,610,820
1992-1993	3,004,414
1993-1994	3,056,658
1994-1995	3,340,642
1995-1996	3,384,115
1996-1997	3,647,103
1997-1998	4,483,967
1998-1999	5,043,992
1999-2000	4,814,637
2000-2001	6,677,697
2001-2002	5,273,149
2002-2003	6,815,569
2003-2004	6,905,167
2004-2005	8,767,070
2005-2006	12,248,783 LEVY** From Lee County Property Appraiser.
2006-2007	23,489,637
2007-2008	26,465,608
2008-2009	16,824,065
2009-2010	no info yet

MATLACHA – PINE ISLAND FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Incorporated as a volunteer fire department by the people of Matlacha and the communities of Bokeelia, St. James and Pine Island Center on January 18, 1962 and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1963 by referendum held in these communities. Provides fire prevention and suppression, plans review, development review, code enforcement, non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Part paid career and part volunteer department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$1,335,306,656 x 3.0 mills = \$4,005,920

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,335,307

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 6

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	116,634	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.
1977-1978	111,124	
1978-1979	120,508	
1979-1980	166,679	
1980-1981	238,517	
1981-1982	263,030	
1982-1983	303,412	
1983-1984	292,728	
1984-1985	261,677	
1985-1986	324,547	
1986-1987	373,555	
1987-1988	336,392	
1988-1989	606,713	
1989-1990	705,729	
1990-1991	838,888	
1991-1992	985,609	
1992-1993	1,070,743	
1993-1994	1,100,367	
1994-1995	1,129,058	
1995-1996	1,148,725	
1996-1997	1,157,643	COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	1,218,909	COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	1,301,247	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	1,282,025	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	2,115,596	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	1,824,040	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	NO REPORT	
2003-2004	2,421,985	COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	3,068,050	COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	3,408,700	COMPTROLLER
2006-2007	4,297,044	COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	6,361,544	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	5,077,075	COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	no info yet	

NORTH FORT MYERS FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of North Fort Myers in 1948 and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1955 by referendum in that community. Fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review and non-transporting BLS (Basic Life Support) rescue service. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$2,241,965,206 x 2.5 mills = \$5,604,913

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.5

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 4 stations but Station 1 temporarily closed.

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,868,304*

*Note: Based upon 3 stations actually providing service to the public as of this writing.

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 5

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1876-1977	225,191	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.
1977-1978	188,762	
1978-1979	381,390	
1979-1980	406,799	
1980-1981	508,760	
1981-1982	721,818	
1982-1983	924,767	
1983-1984	1,010,887	
1984-1985	1,076,616	
1985-1986	1,250,317	
1986-1987	1,338,786	
1987-1988	1,903,884	
1988-1989	2,031,216	
1989-1990	2,214,366	
1990-1991	2,383,069	
1991-1992	2,585,743	
1992-1993	2,605,560	
1993-1994	2,722,632	
1994-1995	2,849,247	
1995-1996	2,872,512	
1996-1997	2,828,147	COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	3,038,069	COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	3,150,653	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	3,270,381	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	3,293,468	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	3,877,109	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	3,492,418	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	4,827,607	COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	5,076,327	COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	6,323,502	LEVY
2006-2007	6,844,958	COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	7,523,790	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	8,779,288	COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	no info yet	

SAN CARLOS PARK FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

San Carlos Park Volunteer Fire Company #1 was incorporated July 2, 1964 and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1976 by referendum held in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$2,812,391,186 x 3.0 mills = \$8,437,174

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,812,391

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

FISCAL YEAR	TAX LEVY	
1976-1977	N/A	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless
1977-1978	30,774	noted otherwise.
1978-1979	42,591	
1979-1980	48,001	
1980-1981	69,824	
1981-1982	199,499	
1982-1983	290,271	
1983-1984	394,267	
1984-1985	468,728	
1985-1986	653,499	
1986-1987	747,163	
1987-1988	894,483	
1988-1989	985,923	
1989-1990	1,205,751	
1990-1991	1,349,629	
1991-1992	1,511,395	
1992-1993	1,593,717	
1993-1994	1,674,654	
1994-1995	1,758,333	
1995-1996	1,926,349	
1996-1997	2,259,126	COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	2,270,439	COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	2,566,661	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	2,839,711	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	3,313,527	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	3,921,449	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	7,061,618	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	4,994,498	COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	5,491,523	COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	6,556,189	COMPTROLLER
2006-2007	8,297,541	COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	10,691,617	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	9,353,255	COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	no info yet	

SANIBEL FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Sanibel Island and incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1955 by referendum held in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, Advanced Water Rescue. Part paid/career and part volunteer department. (28 career and 12 volunteer)

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$4,336,098,035 x 0.9446 mills = \$4,095,878

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 10 .0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 2

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,047,939

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 6

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	414,838	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.
1977-1978	161,865	
1978-1979	339,262	
1979-1980	387,179	
1980-1981	378,746	
1981-1982	384,722	
1982-1983	505,853	
1983-1984	502,333	
1984-1985	525,727	
1985-1986	578,366	
1986-1987	595,069	
1987-1988	608,435	
1988-1989	607,391	
1989-1990	653,426	
1990-1991	728,964	
1991-1992	918,583	
1992-1993	1,126,587	
1993-1994	1,242,576	
1994-1995	1,399,159	
1995-1996	1,502,735	
1996-1997	1,487,114	COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	1,592,414	COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	1,759,514	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	1,910,175	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	2,193,986	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	2,427,235	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	3,268,656	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	4,581,159	COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	6,345,513	COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	3,996,784	COMPTROLLER
2006-2007	4,004,145	COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	3,991,713	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	3,610,531	ANNUAL AUDIT
2009-2010	no info yet	

SOUTH TRAIL FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

Incorporated as the South Trail Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad Of Lee County on November 23, 1965. Incorporated as a county-dependent special district by referendum in 1970 and re-incorporated as an independent special fire district in 1976 by referendum held in that community. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, non-transporting ALS (Advanced Life Support) rescue service, USAR Task Force 6, Employment Testing Cooperative of Southwest Florida. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$5,110,477,017 x 2.0 mills = \$10,220,954

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 2.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 4

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,555,239

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	186,468	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.
1977-1978	208,862	
1978-1979	263,969	
1979-1980	332,648	
1980-1981	456,910	
1981-1982	751,723	
1982-1983	824,522	
1983-1984	985,630	
1984-1985	1,105,843	
1985-1986	1,391,944	
1986-1987	1,603,219	
1987-1988	1,887,850	
1988-1989	2,113,085	
1989-1990	2,778,991	
1990-1991	3,138,342	
1991-1992	3,445,772	
1992-1993	3,537,044	
1993-1994	3,664,204	
1994-1995	3,730,445	
1995-1996	3,874,577	COMPTROLLER
1996-1997	4,710,640	COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	4,572,205	COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	5,018,950	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	4,877,108	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	6,088,323	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	6,844,403	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	7,813,995	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	7,489,771	COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	8,357,514	COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	9,415,359	COMPTROLLER
2006-2007	11,703,189	COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	11,974,151	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	12,563,540	COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	no info yet	

TICE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

This fire department was originally created by the Lee County Commissioners as "Lee County Fire Control Operations Center" in October of 1971. Through the general revenue fund of the county plus surplus funds from the Sanibel Causeway Administration, all county taxpayers funded it until an MSTU (municipal service taxing unit) was created for the Tice community in 1975. Voters in Tice approved the incorporation of the Tice Fire Protection & Rescue Service District at a referendum held in September of 1976. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, non-transporting BLS rescue service. Fully paid career department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$737,853,089 x 3.0 mills = \$2,213,559

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. Maximum is 3.0

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 2

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,106,780

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	169,317	All figures from Lee County Property Appraiser unless noted otherwise.
1977-1978	209,295	
1978-1979	261,268	
1979-1980	269,968	
1980-1981	329,392	
1981-1982	505,236	
1982-1983	552,566	
1983-1984	592,234	
1984-1985	636,297	
1985-1986	686,628	
1986-1987	836,870	
1987-1988	945,909	
1988-1989	1,022,893	
1989-1990	1,148,816	
1990-1991	977,970	
1991-1992	1,005,831	
1992-1993	1,031,799	
1993-1994	1,055,727	
1994-1995	1,336,612	
1995-1996	1,420,663	
1996-1997	1,578,792	COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	1,517,325	COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	1,646,467	COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	1,667,563	COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	1,719,313	COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	2,075,069	COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	2,357,882	COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	2,310,316	COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	2,852,148	COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	3,599,012	COMPTROLLER
2006-2007	3,632,815	COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	3,853,867	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	3,707,543	COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	no info yet	

UPPER CAPTIVA FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

This independent special fire district was created by a vote of the people of Upper Captiva Island in a referendum in 1990. Provides fire suppression and non-transporting BLS rescue service. Volunteer fire department.

2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$194,075,529 x 2.996 mills = \$581,450

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum. 3.75 is maximum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$581,450

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 7

FISCAL YEAR	LEVY
1992-1993	97,297 LEE CO PROPERTY APPRAISER
1993-1994	100,484 LEE CO PROPERTY APPRAISER
1994-1995	118,463 LEE CO PROPERTY APPRAISER
1995-1996	492,961 COMPTROLLER
1996-1997	138,766 COMPTROLLER
1997-1998	153,047 COMPTROLLER
1998-1999	181,138 COMPTROLLER
1999-2000	183,227 COMPTROLLER
2000-2001	211,299 COMPTROLLER
2001-2002	269,557 COMPTROLLER
2002-2003	280,146 COMPTROLLER
2003-2004	526,917 COMPTROLLER
2004-2005	413,408 COMPTROLLER
2005-2006	403,602 COMPTROLLER
2006-2007	524,279 COMPTROLLER
2007-2008	560,917 COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	529,607 COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	no info yet

COLLIER COUNTY

COLLIER COUNTY FIRE

This category includes the Ochopee Fire Control MSTU, the Isle of Capri Fire MSTU and, until FY 1982-1983, the former Golden Gate Fire MSTU. Golden Gate voters approved the creation of the independent Golden Gate Fire Control District in 1982 and is recorded as a separate government beginning FY 1983-1984. All numbers from Florida Dept of Finance (Comptroller) unless otherwise noted.

TAX MILLAGE RATE – COUNTY FIRE CONTROL	1.252	\$336,200
TAX MILLAGE RATE – ISLE OF CAPRI FIRE UNIT:	2.000	\$1,736,800
TAX MILLAGE RATE – OCHOPEE FIRE UNIT:	4.000	\$1,867,100
2010-2011 TOTAL COUNTY FIRE BUDGET:		\$3,940,100

The above taxing rates from Collier County Property Appraiser

1980-1981	335,393	1990-1991	1,179,182	2000-2001	1,618,231
1981-1982	460,673	1991-1992	1,238,838	2001-2002	1,702,907
1982-1983	453,092	1992-1993	no report	2002-2003	1,955,318
1983-1984	297,768	1993-1994	937,171	2003-2004	2,228,480
1984-1985	498,509	1994-1995	977,905	2004-2005	2,671,162
1985-1986	470,809	1995-1996	1,096,949	2005-2006	3,467,251
1986-1987	568,799	1996-1997	1,089,481	2006-2007	3,284,750
1987-1988	886,660	1997-1998	1,034,570	2007-2008	3,565,053
1988-1989	996,260	1998-1999	1,376,275	2008-2009	4,017,563
1989-1990	1,172,554	1999-2000	1,298,733	2009-2010	4,618,600#

COLLIER COUNTY EMS 2010-2011 BUDGET: \$22,670,200

1980-1981	315,432	1990-1991	1,797,265	2000-2001	15,576,173
1981-1982	no report	1991-1992	1,101,200	2001-2002	16,900,147
1982-1983	1,578,591	1992-1993	no report	2002-2003	19,260,119
1983-1984	1,841,930	1993-1994	8,323,005	2003-2004	23,156,875
1984-1985	1,906,194	1994-1995	8,442,064	2004-2005	24,106,810
1985-1986	541,194	1995-1996	9,360,814	2005-2006	25,712,595
1986-1987	177,312	1996-1997	10,315,145	2006-2007	30,926,772
1987-1988	418,878	1997-1998	11,361,369	2007-2008	33,311,777
1988-1989	418,825	1998-1999	11,825,420	2008-2009	29,997,255
1989-1990	751,942	1999-2000	13,625,195	2009-2010	22,974,800#

#Co Budget Dept. All other from Florida State Comptroller.

BIG CORKSCREW ISLAND FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2010-2011 BUDGET: 6,576,083

2010-2011 TAX MILLAGE RATE: 2.0 mills

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 2

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,288,042

I.S.O. RATING: Class 5 with hydrants/Class 9 no hydrants

All figures from Florida State Comptroller unless otherwise noted

1980-1981	9,724	1990-1991	no report	2000-2001	863,356
1981-1982	18,698	1991-1992	no report	2001-2002	1,371,709
1982-1983	37,866	1992-1993	404,774	2002-2003	1,721,360
1983-1984	23,804	1993-1994	335,924	2003-2004	1,808,802
1984-1985	56,036	1994-1995	376,467	2004-2005	2,362,165
1985-1986	81,850	1995-1996	438,521	2005-2006	3,683,915
1986-1987	162,885	1996-1997	427,483	2006-2007	3,856,011
1987-1988	368,187	1997-1998	526,862	2007-2008	4,581,031
1988-1989	242,394	1998-1999	608,751	2008-2009	4,747,804
1989-1990	265,541	1999-2000	797,627	2009-2010	no info yet

EAST NAPLES FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$18,115,010

2010-2011 TAX MILLAGE RATE: 1.5 mills

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,623,002

I.S.O. RATING: Class 4 with hydrants/Class 9 no hydrants

1980-1981	571,271	1990-1991	4,058,604	2000-2001	6,435,509
1981-1982	704,987	1991-1992	no report	2001-2002	6,877,381
1982-1983	813,473	1992-1993	3,767,601	2002-2003	8,331,793
1983-1984	1,061,699	1993-1994	3,864,365	2003-2004	9,529,119
1984-1985	1,471,912	1994-1995	3,969,518	2004-2005	14,806,216
1985-1986	1,594,449	1995-1996	4,238,329	2005-2006	15,233,352
1986-1987	1,975,810	1996-1997	5,002,000	2006-2007	16,480,713
1987-1988	2,622,974	1997-1998	5,074,038	2007-2008	18,412,305
1988-1989	3,055,141	1998-1999	5,368,276	2008-2009	17,345,526
1989-1990	3,392,717	1999-2000	6,101,428	2009-2010	no info yet

GOLDEN GATE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$11,065,558

2010-2011 TAX MILLAGE RATE: 1.5 mills

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 4

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,766,389

I.S.O. RATING: Class 4 with hydrants/Class 10 no hydrants & beyond 5 miles from station.

1980-1981	n/a	1990-1991	1,457,836	2000-2001	2,664,267
1981-1982	n/a	1991-1992	1,005,860	2001-2002	4,599,055
1982-1983	n/a	1992-1993	983,422	2002-2003	6,798,178
1983-1984	278,133	1993-1994	1,133,284	2003-2004	12,844,896
1984-1985	352,491	1994-1995	1,417,327	2004-2005	6,723,704
1985-1986	416,012	1995-1996	1,297,566	2005-2006	11,156,486
1986-1987	511,572	1996-1997	1,348,919	2006-2007	12,609,317
1987-1988	665,537	1997-1998	1,863,309	2007-2008	18,412,305
1988-1989	966,310	1998-1999	1,636,655	2008-2009	17,345,526
1989-1990	1,015,528	1999-2000	2,658,494	2009-2010	no info yet

IMMOKALEE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2010-2011 BUDGET: 2,885,343

2010-2011 TAX MILLAGE RATE: 3.0 mills

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$961,781

I.S.O. RATING: Class 5 with hydrants/Class 9 no hydrants

1980-1981	23,955	1990-1991	573,344	2000-2001	848,910
1981-1982	29,846	1991-1992	583,267	2001-2002	1,011,057
1982-1983	24,462	1992-1993	681,625	2002-2003	1,218,473
1983-1984	no report	1993-1994	775,133	2003-2004	1,468,712
1984-1985	58,809	1994-1995	921,117	2004-2005	1,438,727
1985-1986	249,786	1995-1996	no report	2005-2006	1,552,956
1986-1987	161,507	1996-1997	778,242	2006-2007	1,797,498
1987-1988	178,458	1997-1998	841,145	2007-2008	2,922,804
1988-1989	277,981	1998-1999	661,961	2008-2009	2,245,233
1989-1990	421,928	1999-2000	1,165,060	2009-2010	no info yet

LITTLE HICKORY – BONITA SHORES FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

This district is now defunct.

1980-1981	no report	1990-1991	82,952
1981-1982	12,466	Note: After FY 1990-1991, the district was dissolved and merged by referendum into the district limits of the North Naples Fire Control District.	
1982-1983	25,934		
1983-1984	no report		
1984-1985	7,745		
1985-1986	11,679		
1986-1987	29,985		
1987-1988	63,167		
1988-1989	34,586		
1989-1990	40,359		

MARCO ISLAND FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT/CITY OF MARCO ISLAND FIRE

The Marco Island Fire Control District became defunct as a result of the referendum to incorporate the City of Marco Island in 1999. The district's assets and liabilities were transferred to the city at that time.

2010-2011 BUDGET: 4,678,035

NUMBER OF STATIONS: - 1

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$4,678,035

ISO RATING:

1980-1981	341,371	1990-1991	1,846,678	2000-2001	2,690,618	city
1981-1982	460,134	1991-1992	5,583,972	2001-2002	2,683,913	city
1982-1983	427,607	1992-1993	2,113,356	2002-2003	2,601,028	city
1983-1984	693,068	1993-1994	2,499,619	2003-2004	2,529,754	city
1984-1985	794,800	1994-1995	2,153,717	2004-2005	3,371,921	city
1985-1986	771,676	1995-1996	2,280,947	2005-2006	2,871,196	city
1986-1987	1,100,093	1996-1997	2,933,159	2006-2007	3,553,820	city
1987-1988	980,654	1997-1998	no report	2007-2008	3,780,794	city
1988-1989	1,314,673	1998-1999	3,382,566 city	2008-2009	4,274,725	city
1989-1990	1,511,975	1999-2000	2,335,698 city	2009-2010	no info yet	

NAPLES FIRE DEPARTMENT (City)

Municipal fire department – fully paid. 3 fire stations.

ISO RATING: – Class 2. .

2010-2011 BUDGET: unknown – combined with Police Dept budget

		2000-2001	3,558,210
		2001-2002	4,093,542
		2002-2003	4,869,603
1993-1994	2,723,712	2003-2004	4,876,406
1994-1995	2,951,106	2004-2005	7,485,181
1995-1996	2,490,746	2005-2006	7,519,162
1996-1997	2,939,359	2006-2007	7,385,244
1997-1998	2,947,782	2007-2008	8,403,085
1998-1999	3,140,361	2008-2009	9,303,543
1999-2000	3,874,767	2009-2010	no info yet

NORTH NAPLES FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2010-2011 TAX LEVY: \$24,557,000 (adopted budget)

2010-2011 TAXING RATE: 1.0 Mills

MILLAGE APPROVED BY VOTERS? Yes – by referendum.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 7

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,508,143

I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

1980-1981	615,668	1990-1991	4,477,616	2000-2001	13,068,551
1981-1982	736,027	1991-1992	no report	2001-2002	14,791,739
1982-1983	1,467,924	1992-1993	4,972,830	2002-2003	16,200,604
1983-1984	1,730,233	1993-1994	5,199,407	2003-2004	15,398,546
1984-1985	1,506,897	1994-1995	6,456,790	2004-2005	20,596,401
1985-1986	1,519,059	1995-1996	6,583,688	2005-2006	25,994,040
1986-1987	3,482,483	1996-1997	7,329,361	2006-2007	32,343,857
1987-1988	2,536,013	1997-1998	10,302,179	2007-2008	25,562,192
1988-1989	3,035,575	1998-1999	11,932,914	2008-2009	27,881,160
1989-1990	3,810,028	1999-2000	12,016,720	2009-2010	26,779,448*

* Adopted budget

MANATEE COUNTY

Like Lee and Collier counties, Manatee County has experienced high growth and urbanization during the past 30 years. Independent special fire control districts were organized decades ago by area voters who wanted fire protection and were willing to tax themselves for it at the community level. BLS rescue service provided in all districts.

Over the years, there have been numerous fire district mergers in Manatee County. The former Samoset and Oneco-Tallevast fire control districts were merged into a new entity called "Southern Manatee Fire Control District" in 1990. In addition, The Palmetto and Ellenton fire control districts merged to become the "North River Fire District" in 1988. In 1999, the Anna Maria and Westside fire control districts merged to become the "West Manatee Fire Control District. On October 1, 2007, the Whitfield Fire Control District was annexed into and merged with the Cedar Hammock Fire Control District.

MANATEE COUNTY EMS 2010-2011 BUDGET: \$12,854,363

#Co Budget Dept: All else from Florida State Comptroller.

1980-1981: 1,648,286	1990-1991: 4,648,407	2000-2001: 8,192,709
1981-1982: no report	1991-1992: 5,783,429	2001-2002: 9,780,565
1982-1983: 2,792,372	1992-1993: no report	2002-2003: 10,286,369
1983-1984: 2,949,916	1993-1994: 5,475,410	2003-2004: 11,403,085
1984-1985: 3,264,934	1994-1995: 5,427,653	2004-2005: 12,790,460
1985-1986: 3,813,702	1995-1996: 6,009,993	2005-2006: 13,630,259
1986-1987: 3,865,032	1996-1997: 7,452,733	2006-2007: 14,177,053
1987-1988: 3,506,888	1997-1998: 6,677,572	2007-2008: 15,043,601
1988-1989: 3,888,852	1998-1999: 6,705,378	2008-2009: 14,577,627
1989-1990: 4,412,304	1999-2000: 7,411,281	2009-2010: 12,764,319 #

ANNA MARIA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT: Now defunct

This former district was merged with the Westside Fire Control District in 1999 into the new West Manatee Fire-Rescue District.

1980-1981	230,711	1990-1991	888,766
1981-1982	114,832	1991-1992	531,986
1982-1983	97,707	1992-1993	667,846
1983-1984	110,131	1993-1994	808,444
1984-1985	160,767	1994-1995	943,496
1985-1986	290,337	1995-1996	985,456
1986-1987	410,690	1996-1997	1,105,190
1987-1988	893,825	1997-1998	1,243,758
1988-1989	373,453	1998-1999	1,208,487
1989-1990	570,036	1999-2000+	see West Manatee Fire & Rescue District

BRADEN RIVER FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT – renamed EAST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT IN 1995.

BRADENTON FIRE DEPARTMENT – City

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$7,394,758

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 3

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,464,919

I.S.O. RATING: - Class 4

1993-1994: 3,232,083	1999-2000: 4,023,774	2005-2006: 6,907,860
1994-1995: 2,898,482	2000-2001: 4,751,666	2006-2007: 7,083,750
1995-1996: 3,192,596	2001-2002: 4,674,961	2007-2008: 8,512,199
1996-1997: 3,103,251	2002-2003: 5,447,648	2008-2009: 7,122,395
1997-1998: 3,203,923	2003-2004: 5,941,561	2009-2010: no info yet
1998-1999: 3,649,154	2004-2005: 6,216,532	

All the above from Florida Comptroller/Dept of Financial Services except current budget.

CEDAR HAMMOCK FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2010-2011 Budget 7,872,529

2010-2011 Levy: 2,237,938 1 mill special tax

+5,634,591 special assessment (142.94 base rate – per residence)#

Total: 7,872,529 -

NOTE#: Other assessments for commercial, vacant lots, etc are also levied.

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? - Yes – by referendum.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 4

RELATIVE ANNUAL COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,968,132

ISO RATING: Class 3

1980-1981 525,497	1990-1991: 2,738,702	2000-2001: 4,914,224
1981-1982 541,138	1991-1992: 2,470,500	2001-2002: 4,929,209
1982-1983 1,208,478	1992-1993: 2,455,756	2002-2003: 5,066,197
1983-1984 1,372,058	1993-1994: 2,520,650	2003-2004: 6,748,967
1984-1985 1,209,924	1994-1995: 2,872,874	2004-2005: 8,250,003
1985-1986 no report	1995-1996: 2,825,655	2005-2006: 6,826,133
1986-1987 1,700,129	1996-1997: 2,861,089	2006-2007: 7,136,129
1987-1988 1,791,583	1997-1998: 3,059,232	2007-2008: 7,829,077
1988-1989 2,038,639	1998-1999: 3,571,588	2008-2009: 7,069,370
1989-1990 1,992,239	1999-2000: 3,922,844	2009-2010: 7,636,516#

#Actual tax/assessment levy. All other figures from Florida State Comptroller.

DUETTE FIRE - RESCUE DISTRICT

Volunteer fire company organized in 1982. Became a district in 2006 by referendum.

RESIDENTIAL ASSESMENT RATE: \$150.00 per residence + additional rates

for other types of property.

2010-2011 BUDGET OR LEVY: not known at time of compilation

2007-2008	118,136
2008-2009	144,150
2009-2010	no info yet

EAST MANATEE FIRE RESCUE DISTRICT

This district was originally named "BRADEN RIVER FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT" and is reported to the Florida State Comptroller that way until FY 1993-1994. Re-named by Legislature in 1995.

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$17,300,000

2010-2011 TAXING RATE: 0.8 Mills

2010-2011 RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT RATE: \$69.00 for first 1,000 sq feet + .05 per square foot thereafter. Other rates apply for other types of property.

TAX LEVY APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? - Yes – By Referendum

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS – 6

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,883,333

ISO RATING: Class 4

1980-1981	N/A	1990-1991	309,140	2000-2001	3,223,021
1981-1982	82,777	1991-1992	no report	2001-2002	4,112,861
1982-1983	no report	1992-1993	658,006	2002-2003	3,103,311
1983-1984	no report	1993-1994	612,388	2003-2004	3,290,901
1984-1985	141,312	1994-1995	887,388	2004-2005	4,865,542
1985-1986	no report	1995-1996	2,001,550	2005-2006	8,926,708
1986-1987	216,577	1996-1997	979,804	2006-2007	7,328,493
1987-1988	483,817	1997-1998	1,378,616	2007-2008	9,471,853
1988-1989	465,054	1998-1999	2,275,387	2008-2009	8,178,226
1989-1990	348,150	1999-2000	2,427,891	2009-2010	9,134,243

ELLENTON FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT *Now defunct*

This former district was merged with the Palmetto Fire Control District to make the new North River Fire-Rescue District.

1980-1981:	179,043
1981-1982:	128,102
1982-1983:	154,192
1983-1984:	174,924
1984-1985:	291,726
1985-1986:	285,871
1986-1987:	511,589
1987-1988:	422,283
1988-1989:	merged into North River Fire-Rescue District

MYAKKA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT (Dependent)

2010-2011 BUDGET – no info at time of compilation

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: - 2

RELATIVE ANNUAL COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: no info

ISO RATING: - no info at time of compilation

All amounts below from Florida Financial Services/Office of State Comptroller except *

2000-2001:	no report	2003-2004:	654,950	2006-2007:	555,370	2009-2010:	1,094,294*
2001-2002:	295,568	2004-2005:	845,453	2007-2008:	964,163		
2002-2003:	338,456	2005-2006:	788,688	2008-2009:	1,521,184		

* Florida Auditor General

NORTH RIVER FIRE DISTRICT

The North River Fire-Rescue District was incorporated in 1988 by the merger of the Ellenton and Palmetto fire control districts.

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$5,100,000

ASSESSMENT LEVY: \$135.21 RESIDENTIAL BASE RATE + ADDITIONAL
RATES FOR OTHER TYPES OF PROPERTY.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 5

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,020,000

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 5/9

1988-1989: 1,393,276	1990-1991: 1,431,857	2000-2001: 2,868,352
1989-1990: 1,372,353	1991-1992: 2,041,299	2001-2002: 4,013,095
	1992-1993: 1,728,641	2002-2003: 3,547,370
	1993-1994: 1,920,981	2003-2004: 3,696,284
	1994-1995: 2,085,464	2004-2005: 3,970,682
	1995-1996: 2,463,159	2005-2006: 4,374,407
	1996-1997: 2,380,923	2006-2007: 5,253,681
	1997-1998: 2,457,196	2007-2008: 6,955,983
	1998-1999: 2,562,402	2008-2009: 6,383,479
* FL Auditor General	1999-2000: 2,646,352	2009-2010: 5,307,625*

ONECO-TALLEVAST FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT *Now defunct*

This former district merged with the Samoset Fire Control District in 1990 to create the new Southern Manatee Fire & Rescue District.

1980-1981:	245,784
1981-1982:	279,244
1982-1983:	435,804
1983-1984:	489,107
1984-1985:	587,337
1985-1986:	839,754
1986-1987:	2,255,994
1987-1988:	1,804,623
1988-1989:	no report
1989-1990:	1,613,732

PAMETTO FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT Now defunct

This former district included both the entire City of Palmetto plus additional unincorporated areas surrounding it. The district, along with the former Ellenton Fire Control District was merged and absorbed into the new North River Fire & Rescue District in 1988.

1980-1981:	223,391
1981-1982:	305,698
1982-1983:	340,421
1983-1984:	683,786
1984-1985:	507,850
1985-1986:	621,036
1986-1987:	836,947
1987-1988:	981,959
1988-1989:	merged into North River Fire-Rescue District

PARRISH FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Part paid/part volunteer fire and rescue department.

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$1,000,000.

ASSESSMENT LEVY: \$171.62 RESIDENTIAL BASE RATE + ADDITIONAL RATES FOR OTHER TYPES OF PROPERTY.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 1

RELATIVE COST-PER-STATION: \$1,000,000

ISO INSURANCE RATING 5/9

1980-1981:	N/A	1990-1991:	87,090	2000-2001:	451,087
1981-1982:	N/A	1991-1992:	56,286	2001-2002:	438,108
1982-1983:	8,149	1992-1993:	87,289	2002-2003:	488,254
1983-1984:	7,467	1993-1994:	65,904	2003-2004:	534,686
1984-1985:	10,099	1994-1995:	242,500	2004-2005:	531,979
1985-1986:	11,857	1995-1996:	151,958	2005-2006:	646,511
1986-1987:	20,972	1996-1997:	193,322	2006-2007:	733,233
1987-1988:	9,196	1997-1998:	497,239	2007-2008:	906,740
1988-1989:	40,855	1998-1999:	645,574	2008-2009:	943,752
1989-1990:	56,725	1999-2000:	370,827	2009-2010:	974,018*

* Florida Auditor General

SAMOSET FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT Now Defunct

The Samoset Fire Control District was merged with the Oneco-Tallevast Fire Control District in 1990, creating the new Southern Manatee Fire & Rescue District.

1980-1981:	49,721
1981-1982:	86,367
1982-1983:	70,869
1983-1984:	92,410
1984-1985:	101,346
1985-1986:	103,650
1986-1987:	259,956
1987-1988:	219,275
1988-1989:	282,228
1989-1990:	579,025

SOUTHERN MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT

The merger of the former Oneco-Tallevast and Samoset fire control districts created this district in 1988. Five fire stations. Fully paid department.

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$12,600,000

ASSESSMENT RATE – RESIDENTIAL BASE: \$89.27 on first 1,000 sq ft and then an additional \$0.0547 per sq foot there after.

NUMBER OF STATIONS: 5

COST PER STATION: \$2,520,000

ISO: Class 3

1980-1981:	N/A	1990-1991:	2,278,122	2000-2001:	5,683,207
1981-1982:	N/A	1991-1992:	2,698,715	2001-2002:	4,704,675
1982-1983:	N/A	1992-1993:	2,210,069	2002-2003:	5,558,884
1983-1984:	N/A	1993-1994:	2,567,373	2003-2004:	11,064,150
1984-1985:	N/A	1994-1995:	2,640,635	2004-2005:	13,162,803
1985-1986:	N/A	1995-1996:	2,656,373	2005-2006:	11,758,705
1986-1987:	N/A	1996-1997:	3,017,359	2006-2007:	11,241,551
1987-1988:	N/A	1997-1998:	2,634,792	2007-2008:	12,079,224
1988-1989:	3,153,661	1998-1999:	3,223,948	2008-2009:	13,529,531
1989-1990:	575,664	1999-2000:	4,168,506	2009-2010:	12,599,262#

Budget figure from fire district

TRAILER ESTATES FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$50,000

RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT RATE: \$75.00 + other rates for other types of property.

NUMBER OF STATIONS – 1

RELATIVE ANNUAL COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$50,000

ISO RATING:

1980-1981:	12,110	1990-1991:	63,733	2000-2001:	89,645
1981-1982:	19,478	1991-1992:	66,095	2001-2002:	56,749
1982-1983:	18,564	1992-1993:	30,998	2002-2003:	47,706
1983-1984:	no report	1993-1994:	22,031	2003-2004:	57,982
1984-1985:	18,809	1994-1995:	174,830	2004-2005:	66,134
1985-1986:	21,294	1995-1996:	74,455	2005-2006:	74,312
1986-1987:	45,544	1996-1997:	no report	2006-2007:	49,023
1987-1988:	16,705	1997-1998:	49,429	2007-2008:	133,574
1988-1989:	20,940	1998-1999:	53,945	2008-2009:	78,082
1989-1990:	51,683	1999-2000:	59,884	2009-2010:	no info yet

WEST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT

The merger of the Anna Maria and Westside fire control districts created the new West Manatee Fire & Rescue District in 2000. (Chapter 2000-401, Laws of Florida)

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$5,289,044

RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT RATE: \$125.00 FOR FIRST 1,000 SQ FEET + 75 CENTS PER SQUARE FOOT THEREAFTER.

NUMBER OF STATIONS – 3

RELATIVE ANNUAL COST-PER-STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$1,763,015

I.S.O. RATING: Class 4

1980-1981:	406,001	1990-1991:	2,222,524	2000-2001:	2,906,499
1981-1982:	313,233	1991-1992:	1,739,044	2001-2002:	3,383,089
1982-1983:	465,057	1992-1993:	1,559,820	2002-2003:	3,732,818
1983-1984:	445,870	1993-1994:	1,733,890	2003-2004:	3,812,652
1984-1985:	601,942	1994-1995:	2,955,340	2004-2005:	4,738,230
1985-1986:	694,172	1995-1996:	1,948,831	2005-2006:	4,446,961
1986-1987:	945,225	1996-1997:	2,102,637	2006-2007:	5,879,167
1987-1988:	1,416,621	1997-1998:	2,279,349	2007-2008:	5,346,497
1988-1989:	986,783	1998-1999:	2,336,144	2008-2009:	5,623,055
1989-1990:	1,203,261	1999-2000:	3,268,596	2009-2010:	no info yet

The figures written in *italics* represent the combined expenditures of both the former Anna Maria and Westside fire control districts prior to the 2000 merger.

WESTSIDE FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT *Now Defunct*

This former district merged with the Anna Maria Fire Control District to incorporate the new West Manatee Fire & Rescue District in 1999.

1980-1981:	175,290	1990-1991:	1,333,758
1981-1982:	198,401	1991-1992:	1,207,058
1982-1983:	367,350	1992-1993:	891,974
1983-1984:	335,739	1993-1994:	925,446
1984-1985:	441,175	1994-1995:	2,011,844
1985-1986:	403,835	1995-1996:	963,375
1986-1987:	534,535	1996-1997:	997,447
1987-1988:	522,796	1997-1998:	1,035,591
1988-1989:	613,330	1998-1999:	1,127,657
1989-1990:	633,225		

WHITFIELD FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT *Now defunct*

The former district was dissolved, territorially annexed into and made part of the Cedar Hammock Fire Control District on October 1, 2007.

1980-1981:	29,038	1990-1991:	51,879	2000-2001:	236,854
1981-1982:	33,497	1991-1992:	59,454	2001-2002:	192,978
1982-1983:	53,383	1992-1993:	57,991	2002-2003:	219,197
1983-1984:	34,216	1993-1994:	105,786	2003-2004:	348,004
1984-1985:	41,157	1994-1995:	298,023	2004-2005:	290,007
1985-1986:	41,887	1995-1996:	123,353	2005-2006:	301,458
1986-1987:	no report	1996-1997:	132,926	2006-2007:	398,343
1987-1988:	40,713	1997-1998:	150,471		
1988-1989:	55,866	1998-1999:	229,525		
1989-1990:	47,964	1999-2000:	183,374		

ORANGE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

ORGANIZATION: A county owned and operated fire-rescue department which serves all of unincorporated Orange County – less and except the Reedy Creek Improvement District at Disneyworld – plus the municipalities of Belle Isle, Edgewood and Oakland by inter-local agreement. It is said to be the third largest fire department in the state. Provides fire prevention and suppression, transporting and non-transporting ALS rescue (although the county contracts with Rural-Metro Services, Incorporated for ambulance service), Haz-Mat (Hazardous Materials handling), USAR Task Force 4 providing rope rescue, confined space rescue, trench rescue, structural collapse rescue and vehicle extrication. Fully paid career department.

Previous to 1981, unincorporated Orange County was served by fourteen county-dependent fire control districts – all operating and existing under a single special act of the Legislature. (Chapter 26460 Laws of Florida 1949) They were:

Apopka Fire Control District	Lockhart Fire Control District
Conway Fire Control District	Orlo Vista Fire Control District
Goldenrod Fire Control District	Pine Castle Fire Control District
Holden Heights Fire Control District	Pine Hills Fire Control District
Killarney Fire Control District	Taft Fire Control District
Lake Barton Fire Control District	Union Park Fire Control District
Lake Sue Fire Control District	Zellwood Fire Control District

Efforts to consolidate the fire districts into a single county fire department were opposed by the voters who soundly rejected the proposal at a 1976 referendum. In 1980, area legislators sponsored a bill to repeal the districts enabling act and transfer them to county government without a referendum. (Chapter 80-557 Laws Of Florida)

2010-2011 BUDGET: \$175,298,829

2010-2011 TAXING RATE: 2.2437 Mills - \$101,405,846

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 41

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$4,275,582
 I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	7,466,012.00	Dependent fire district totals
1977-1978	7,946,933.00	Dependent fire district totals
1978-1979	8,999,575.00	Dependent fire district totals
1979-1980	10,045,559.00	Dependent fire district totals
1980-1981	12,680,770.00	Dependent fire district totals
MERGER: THE FIRE DISTRICTS ARE CONSOLIDATED		
1981-1982	14,897,644.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1982-1983	15,316,882.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1983-1984	17,601,178.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1984-1985	18,704,447.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1985-1986	22,608,268.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1986-1987	23,999,031.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1987-1988	29,149,650.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1988-1989	34,708,033.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1989-1990	41,709,960.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1990-1991	45,195,677.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1991-1992	44,912,393.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1992-1993	47,486,127.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1993-1994	53,545,120.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1994-1995	56,264,750.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1995-1996	48,566,211.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1996-1997	51,826,175.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1997-1998	57,726,395.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1998-1999	67,517,566.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
1999-2000	75,881,394.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2000-2001	85,750,215.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2001-2002	86,317,140.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2002-2003	89,407,324.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2003-2004	106,397,682.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2004-2005	114,507,386.00	Orange Co Fire Rescue
2005-2006	150,694,227.00	(Orange County Budget Dept)
2006-2007	175,244,407.00	(Orange County Budget Dept) All other figures from Florida Comptroller
2007-2008	136,031,135.00	COMPTROLLER
2008-2009	139,907,920.00	COMPTROLLER
2009-2010	186,716,612.00	(Orange County Budget Dept)
2010-2011	175,298,829.00	(Orange County Budget Dept)

PALM BEACH COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

A county owned and operated fire rescue department. Provides fire prevention and suppression, ALS rescue service with transport service for ALS type emergencies only: BLS transport service provided by private ambulance company under contract (American Medical Response, Inc.), Hazardous Materials (Haz-Mat), fire inspections and investigations and building plans review. Serves all of unincorporated Palm Beach County plus the municipalities of Belle Glade, Cloud Lake, Glen Ridge, Haverhill, Juno Beach, Jupiter, Lake Clarke Shores, Lake Park, Lake Worth, Lantana, Manalapan, Pahokee, Palm Springs, Royal Palm Beach, South Bay, South Palm Beach and Wellington.

Previous to 1984, ten county-dependent fire control districts provided fire protection – all operating under the same enabling act of the Legislature. (Chapter 59-1700 and Chapter 63-1747, Laws of Florida. They were:

Del Trail Fire Control District	Southwest Fire Control District
Canal Point Fire Control District	Jupiter-Tequesta Fire Control District
Old Dixie Fire Control Tax District	Juno Beach Fire Control District
Military Park Fire Control District	Trail Park Fire Control District
Reservation Fire Control District	Palm Beach International Airport Fire

The 1983 Florida Legislature repealed these special acts. (Chapter 83-495 Laws of FL)

2010-2011 TOTAL BUDGET: \$356,627,601

2010-2011 ADJUSTED BUDGET: \$340,753,220#

Note:# - This figure does not include \$6,881,392 for “Fire Aviation” nor \$14,777,060 for “Fire-Rescue Dispatch.”

2010-2011 TAXING RATES:

(a.) URBANIZED AREA EXCEPT IN JUPITER:	3.4581 Mills (\$179,472,261)
(b.) WITHIN TOWN OF JUPITER ONLY:	2.2489 Mills (\$16,080,105)
(c.) RURAL AREAS (GLADES MSTU):	unknown

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 45

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: 7,572,293

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 4

FISCAL YEAR LEVY

1976-1977	3,696,888	dependent fire district totals	
1977-1978	4,364,133	dependent fire district totals	
1978-1979	no report		
1979-1980	6,166,384	dependent fire district totals	
1980-1981	8,202,360	dependent fire district totals	
1981-1982	11,639,119	dependent fire district totals	
1982-1983	14,792,920	dependent fire district totals	
1983-1984	18,120,437	dependent fire district totals	
1984-1985	19,548,096	dependent fire district totals	
MERGER – THE FIRE DISTRICTS ARE CONSOLIDATED			
1985-1986	24,118,736	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1986-1987	28,218,864	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1987-1988	42,157,595	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1988-1989	35,554,511	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1989-1990	39,217,446	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1990-1991	47,106,092	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1991-1992	51,882,863	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1992-1993	55,045,071	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1993-1994	59,462,268	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1994-1995	61,143,599	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1995-1996	66,672,022	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1996-1997	80,045,452	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1997-1998	83,054,314	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1998-1999	83,111,225	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
1999-2000	93,467,881	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2000-2001	109,569,785	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2001-2002	122,387,687	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2002-2003	134,579,799	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2003-2004	146,756,188	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2004-2005	163,543,619	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2005-2006	246,000,000	Operating Budget without capital	Palm Beach Co Property Appraiser
2006-2007	274,594,303	Operating Budget without capital	Palm Beach Co Property Appraiser
2007-2008	238,209,994	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2008-2009	231,132,609	Palm Beach Co Fire Rescue	
2009-2010	No info yet		

All figures from the Office of Florida State Comptroller except as noted otherwise.

SARASOTA COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

A county owned and operated fire rescue department. Provides fire prevention and suppression service to the city of Sarasota and the unincorporated area less and except within the Englewood Area Fire Control District and within the community of Nokomis. Transporting ALS rescue service to the cities of Sarasota, Venice and to the unincorporated area. (The cities of North Port and Longboat Key own and operate their own ambulance service.) Fully paid career department within the Urban Service Area and volunteer firefighters outside of the Urban Service Area.

Prior to 1985, fire protection in the urbanized unincorporated areas outside the city limits of Sarasota was provided by three independent special fire control districts, namely: South Trail Area Fire Control District, Northeast Area Fire Control District and Fruitville Area Fire Control District. In 1985, these three special districts were consolidated into a single new independent district called the Metropolitan Sarasota County Fire & Rescue District by special act – without a referendum. (Chapter 85-498, Laws of Florida). The following year, another special act of the Legislature dissolved this district and transferred its assets and liabilities to the government of Sarasota County – without a referendum. (Chapter 86-346, Laws of Florida). The act was effective February 1, 1987. By 1991, the South Venice Fire District and the Pinecraft Fire Control Districts were also dissolved and transferred to county fire operations. On January 1, 1996, the City of Sarasota gave its fire department to Sarasota County.

2010-2011 FIRE-RESCUE BUDGET: \$74,166,046

This is the adopted budget total for the county fire and EMS system in place, and does not include Emergency Communications, Beach-Pool Safety and Emergency Management funding.

2010-2011 FIRE TAXING RATES IN URBAN SERVICE AREA:

Residential: Minimum of \$208.32 per residence plus additional assessments for vacant lots, acreage, business and commercial properties, mobile home spaces and other types of properties.

2011-2011 FIRE TAXING RATES OUTSIDE URBAN SERVICE AREA:

Not available at time of compilation.

2010-2011 FIRE TOTAL LEVY: \$32,896,305

2010-2011 EMS TAX LEVY: \$23,904,727

2010-2011 EMS TAXING RATE: 0.6600 Mills

TAXING RATES APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – approved by county commissioners.

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 21

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$3,531,716

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3 in Urban Service Area only.

FISCAL YEAR	IND. DISTRICTS FIRE	CO. FIRE	CO. EMS
1976-1977	1,206,904	25,639	236,526
1977-1978	1,378,760	9,412	298,277
1978-1979	1,644,529	61,682	430,532
1979-1980	3,956,960	9,412	514,697
1980-1981	4,482,566	348,338	588,310
1981-1982	5,863,420	no record	540,045
1982-1983	6,214,292	9,624	1,313,491
1983-1984	8,816,662	10,912	1,270,381
1984-1985	5,161,834	191,214	1,369,540
MERGER: NORTHEAST, FRUITVILLE & SO TRAIL AREA CONSOLIDATED			
1985-1986	5,693,200	10,912	2,109,490
1986-1987	8,152,607	10,912	2,017,517
MERGER: NEW METRO SARASOTA CO FIRE DISTRICT ABOLISHED			
1987-1988	15,850	8,256,176	2,227,462
1988-1989	18,055	10,140,647	no record
1989-1990	15,336	9,471,251	2,018,801
1990-1991	20,019	10,958,507	2,356,355
MERGER: PINECRAFT FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT ABOLISHED			
1991-1992	N/A	12,465,594	2,390,914
1992-1993	N/A	14,345,858	no record
1993-1994	N/A	14,552,145	no record
1994-1995	N/A	15,761,005	no record
MERGER: CITY OF SARASOTA GIVES THEIR FIRE DEPT TO COUNTY			
1995-1996	N/A	21,812,295	2,816,620
1996-1997	N/A	27,681,283	3,010,947
1997-1998	N/A	28,659,796	2,925,796
1998-1999	N/A	30,185,452	3,112,571
1999-2000	N/A	31,401,277	3,398,004
2000-2001	N/A	31,967,954	3,489,028
2001-2002	N/A	34,519,732	3,314,153
2002-2003	N/A	39,327,066	3,212,190
2003-2004	N/A	26,213,252	21,487,118
2004-2005	N/A	32,239,876	25,124,248
2005-2006	N/A	28,551,835	26,645,195
2006-2007	N/A	33,459,613	29,908,192
2007-2008	N/A	28,154,092	34,270,110
2008-2009	N/A	34,270,110	37,561,342
2009-2010	N/A	no info yet	no info yet

All figures provided by Office Of Florida State Comptroller.

BUDGET & SPENDING GROWTH IN LEE COUNTY

CITY FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Although there are five incorporated municipalities in Lee County, only two of them – Fort Myers and Cape Coral – own and operate fire & rescue departments. Service in the other three municipalities – Bonita Springs, Fort Myers Beach and Sanibel Island are provided by independent special fire districts, which predate the incorporation of these communities.

FORT MYERS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Fort Myers in 1901. Became a fully paid career department in 1963. Provides fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, Hazardous Materials program (HAZMAT), non-transporting ALS rescue service. Current budget is \$15,817,100 including capital improvement spending. **If the Fort Myers Fire Department budget were supported entirely by a non-homestead tax millage levy, it would be 3.3504 mills.*

**2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$4,720,956,889 x 3.3504 mills = \$15,817,337*

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? No – Within 10 mill city tax cap

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 6

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,636,183

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

Growth in the City of Fort Myers budget and/or expenditures over the past thirty years involve new fire station construction and the required additional firefighters, paramedics and equipment.

ANNEXATIONS: - Prior to 1988, unincorporated area annexed to the City of Fort Myers continued to be served (and taxed) by the original serving fire district in the area. A special act of The Legislature in 1988 ended fire district taxing and service to annexed properties. As a result, budgeted expenditures of the Fort Myers Fire Department have increased accordingly to serve the annexed areas. The City of Fort Myers and the South Trail Fire Protection & Rescue Service District currently employ an inter-local agreement whereby South Trail provides fire and rescue services to annexed areas that the Fort Myers Fire Department is unable to quickly reach.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: - The responsibilities of the Fort Myers Fire Department are somewhat different from other area fire departments in that much of the city is composed of commercial and industrial properties. These properties require specialized (and often more costly) fire protection services than the more suburban or rural areas do.

The commercial and industrial property owners in the City of Fort Myers got a break in their fire insurance premiums when the I.S.O. lowered their rating from Protection Class 4 to Protection Class 3 on February 1, 1998. While this improvement did not have any effect upon homeowner's insurance premiums, it reduced fire insurance premiums for business and commercial properties within the city.

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES: - The budget and/or expenditures of the Fort Myers Fire Department for the past 35 fiscal years are included on pages 65-66.

CAPE CORAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

Organized as a volunteer fire department by the people of Cape Coral in 1961 and incorporated as an independent special district in 1963. The people of Cape Coral voted to incorporate their community as a city in 1970, and the following year, residents of the district voted to abolish the fire district and transfer its assets and liabilities to the newly incorporated City of Cape Coral. Includes ten fire stations, fire prevention and suppression, code enforcement, plans review, development review, non-transporting ALS rescue service. Current 2010-2011 budget is \$26,530,706. **If The Cape Coral Fire Department budget were supported entirely by a non-homestead tax levy, the millage rate would be 2.4480 mills.*

**2010-2011 ASSESSED VALUE & LEVY: \$10,837,978,223 x 2.4480 mills = \$26,531,371*

TAXING RATE APPROVED BY VOTERS? No - Within 10 mill city tax cap

NUMBER OF FIRE STATIONS: 10

RELATIVE COST PER STATION THIS FISCAL YEAR: \$2,653,071

I.S.O. FIRE INSURANCE RATING: Class 3

No incorporated municipality on Florida's west coast has experienced the tremendous growth Cape Coral has over the past thirty years. That growth is well documented by The U.S. Census Bureau, however, the Cape Coral Fire Department has grown from two stations in 1976 to ten stations by 2011. With over 150,000 residents as of the last U.S. Census, Cape Coral is the third largest city on Florida's gulf coast.

BUDGET AND/OR EXPENDITURES: The budget and/or expenditures of the Cape Coral Fire Department for the past 35 fiscal years are included on pages 65-66.

LEE COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

Previous to 1969, ambulance service in Lee County was provided by several volunteer fire departments and funeral homes. There were no emergency medical technicians or paramedics at that time and it was considered sufficient that those who operated an ambulance have basic first aid training. That year, the Lee County Commissioners contracted with Southern Ambulance Service – a firm owned by a Mr. Ray Dean. Three years later, the county bought Mr. Dean's business and the Lee County Ambulance Service came into being. By 1975, the name was changed to Lee County Emergency Medical Services. Today, Lee County EMS operates 31 ALS ambulances, two twin-engine helicopters, two ALS non-transport units and on-call bicycle paramedics.

BUDGET AND/OR EXPENDITURES: The budget and/or expenditures of Lee County Emergency Medical Services for the past 35 fiscal years are included on pages 65-66.

LEE COUNTY FIRE CONTROL

This budgetary category has had several different meanings over the years.

The 1945 Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 23383, Laws of Florida, creating the "Lee County Fire Control District." Its boundaries included all of Lee County except for territory within the City of Fort Myers and within the Boca Grande Fire Control District – the only two communities in the county to have their own fire departments in 1945. The Board of County Commissioners was the governing body of the district and was authorized - but not mandated – to create a county fire department. The act also permitted Lee County to pay the City of Fort Myers to provide county fire control services if the County Commissioners chose not to create its own fire department.

The latter happened, and Lee County began to make annual payments to the City of Fort Myers in the amount of \$15,000.00 for county fire control. In 1957, the annual payment was increased to \$25,000 and increased again to \$67,460 in 1962. By 1968, the figure rose to \$98,425.00. When the City Council requested the payment be increased to \$131,565.00 in 1971, the County Commissioners balked and voted to create a county fire department in Tice instead. By then, sixteen additional Lee County communities had organized their own fire departments.

From 1971 to 1975, \$686,739.00 in surplus funds from the Sanibel Causeway Administration funded the county fire control station in Tice. An MSTU (Municipal Service Taxing Unit) was created by the County Commissioners for the Tice community in 1975. At the same time, another MSTU was created to fund the volunteer fire companies in Alva, Bayshore, Fort Myers Shores, Estero, San Carlos Park, and Iona-McGregor.

In Fiscal Year 1976-1977, it was used to fund volunteer fire departments in Alva, Bayshore, Estero, Fort Myers Shores and San Carlos Park just before voters in those communities approved creation of independent fire districts in those communities. County MSTU taxing units were used to fund the now defunct Alico Fire MSTU prior to that community voting to be annexed into the South Trail Fire Protection & Rescue Service District. For the past 15 years or so, this category has represented three county fire MSTU taxing units, namely – Maravilla Fire MSTU, Burnt Store Fire MSTU and Useppa Island Fire MSTU.

The Maravilla Fire MSTU is used to buy fire protection from the City of Fort Myers Fire Department. Maravilla is a very small unincorporated area completely surrounded by the city. The Burnt Store Fire MSTU serves a similar purpose in that it is used to buy fire protection from the City of Cape Coral Fire Department in the Burnt Store Marina community. The Useppa Island Fire MSTU funds the volunteer fire department there. The Lee County Commissioners set the taxing rates for the following fire MSTUs:

Burnt Store Fire MSTU 2010-2011 Taxing Rate: 1.9027 mills
 Maravilla Fire MSTU 2010-2011 Taxing Rate: 4.0000 mills
 Useppa Island Fire MSTU 2010-2011 Taxing Rate: 2.3000 mills

INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY FIRE CONTROL DISTRICTS

The growth and development rate of the past thirty-five years in the seventeen communities served by the independent special fire districts has been far greater than the combined growth of the cities of Fort Myers and Cape Coral. No other county on Florida's southern gulf coast has experienced the tremendous growth and development as experienced in Lee County. Fire district expenditures reflect that growth as more communities shed their rural and suburban status to become more urbanized. Fully paid career departments have replaced volunteer departments in Bonita Springs, Estero, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers Shores, Iona-McGregor, Lehigh Acres, North Fort Myers, San Carlos Park, South Trail and Tice during the past thirty years. In addition, the number of special district fire stations has increased from seventeen in 1976 to forty-six in 2010.

BUDGET AND/OR EXPENDITURES: The combined budgets and/or expenditures of the 17 independent fire control districts for the past 35 years are listed below.

BUDGET GROWTH IN LEE COUNTY SINCE 1976

FISCAL YEAR	FT MYERS FIRE	CAPE CORAL FIRE	CO FIRE	CO EMS	FIRE DISTRICTS
1976-1977	997,769	337,701	944,788	768,311	1,261,477
1977-1978	1,372,335	410,631	660,184	802,009	1,527,090
1978-1979	1,316,413	457,382	599,903	1,027,899	2,858,736
1979-1980	1,557,156	758,403	261,319	unknown	3,288,567
1980-1981	1,772,105	738,882	12,050	2,196,989	3,971,147
1981-1982	2,013,637	1,095,383	8,582	2,481,866	5,232,096

FISCAL YEAR	FT MYERS FIRE	CAPE CORAL FIRE	CO FIRE	CO EMS	FIRE DISTRICTS
1982-1983	2,688,066	915,469	22,079	2,998,505	6,881,400
1983-1984	3,096,275	1,234,499	63,914	3,201,750	8,360,473
1984-1985	3,276,259	1,326,282	164,458	3,622,471	9,677,882
1985-1986	3,317,648	1,949,674	210,905	4,189,595	11,587,193
1986-1987	3,484,139	2,342,048	236,528	4,781,381	13,521,804
1987-1988	3,884,314	2,990,104	301,717	5,649,205	15,037,855
1988-1989	3,982,430	3,866,081	318,428	6,556,683	17,822,949
1989-1990	4,074,694	4,065,719	352,116	7,553,578	22,512,592
1990-1991	4,931,947	5,355,198	697,549	7,136,890	24,435,430
1991-1992	5,420,222	5,951,618	774,389	7,246,850	24,770,065*
1992-1993	5,189,408	6,124,667	831,904	7,864,511	25,818,182*
1993-1994	5,483,984	6,403,901	843,927	7,839,346	27,009,109*
1994-1995	5,485,071	6,417,686	967,099	8,431,378	28,743,927*
1995-1996	5,849,540	7,916,249	871,523	10,245,482	29,839,608*
1996-1997	6,033,562	9,724,130	922,690	10,600,000	31,193,103*
1997-1998	6,265,737	9,186,257	516,623	13,502,781	32,890,697*
1998-1999	7,833,758	10,608,414	1,920,616	16,526,318	38,480,376
1999-2000	7,663,997	10,102,689	2,715,199	26,306,230	39,840,930
2000-2001	7,892,182	11,513,872	2,520,296	16,218,786	incomplete
2001-2002	8,624,904	11,559,442	2,663,957	20,503,084	60,668,000
2002-2003	9,206,769	12,776,439	570,754	25,697,735	incomplete
2003-2004	10,403,283	15,447,730	587,413	32,219,006	81,296,852
2004-2005	12,319,295	22,181,690	885,295	31,024,304	90,136,409
2005-2006	15,841,720	30,557,754	867,779	30,738,380	101,834,652*
2006-2007	18,349,380	29,569,250	838,530	36,671,258	131,526,193*
2007-2008	19,817,794	29,776,584	872,450	38,299,103	144,961,220
2008-2009	22,550,833	27,784,758	771,840	36,606,198	134,850,074
2009-2010	*#16,772,815	no info yet	960,119#	34,735,046#	incomplete
2010-2011	***15,817,100	**** 26,530,706	877,248#	32,490,757#	100,076,978**

Note:* Lee Co Property Appraiser

Note:** From Florida Department of Revenue (tax levies)

Note: *** Budget figure from City of Fort Myers Finance Dept.

Note: **** Budget figure from City of Cape Coral Finance Department.

Note: # Lee Co Budget

Note: *# From City Of Fort Myers Annual Audit of FY 2009-2010

All other figures from Florida Dept of Financial Services (Florida State Comptroller)

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO

TOTAL AVERAGES ALL 17 FIRE CONTROL DISTRICTS IN LEE COUNTY – 2010-2011:

Current combined revenue from tax millage levy: \$100,076,978
 Average fire tax millage rate: 2.3619
 Number of Fire Stations: 45
 Average Relative Cost Per Fire Station: \$2,223,933

TOTAL AVERAGES ALL 5 FIRE CONTROL DISTRICTS IN COLLIER COUNTY – 2010 – 2011:

Current combined budgets from tax millage levy: \$63,198,994
 Average fire tax millage rate: 1.8
 Number of Fire Stations: 21
 Average Relative Cost Per Fire Station: \$3,009,476

TOTAL AVERAGES ALL FIRE CONTROL DISTRICTS IN MANATEE COUNTY – 2010-2011:

(Independent fire districts only)

Current combined budgets from levy: \$49,211,573 (not counting Duette)
 Average fire tax millage rate: N/A
 Number of Fire Stations: 25 (not counting Duette)
 Average Relative Cost Per Fire Station: \$1,968,463

RELATIVE COST PER FIRE STATION IN CURRENT FISCAL YEAR:

Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue -	\$7,572,293.00	2010-2011
Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue -	\$6,460,525.00	2010-2011
Broward County Fire-Rescue -	\$5,206,485.00	2010-2011
Orange County Fire-Rescue -	\$4,275,582.00	2010-2011
Sarasota County Fire-Rescue -	\$3,532,716.00	2010-2011
Collier Fire Districts Average -	\$3,009,476.00	2010-2011
Charlotte County Fire-Rescue -	\$2,817,495.00	2010-2011
Hillsborough Co Fire-Rescue -	\$2,844,900.00	2010-2011
Lee Fire Districts Average -	\$2,223,933.00	2010-2011
Manatee Fire Districts Average -	\$1,968,463.00	2010-2011

RELATIVE COST PER FIRE STATION ALL PLACES IN REPORT IN CURRENT FISCAL YEAR:

PLACE OR DEPT. RATING	STATIONS	COST PER STATION	I.S.O. INSURANCE
Palm Beach County	45	\$7,572,293.00	Class 4
Miami-Dade County	61	\$6,460,525.00	Class 4
Broward County	13	\$5,206,485.00	Class 3
Orange County	41	\$4,275,582.00	Class 4
East Naples Fire District	5	\$3,623,002.00	Class 4
Sarasota County	21	\$3,531,716.00	Urban Service Area Class 3
North Naples Fire Dist	7	\$3,508,143.00	Class 3
Big Corkscrew Is. Fire Dist	3	\$3,288,042.00	Class 5
Bonita Springs Fire District	5	\$3,147,979.00	Class 3
Iona-McGregor Fire Dist	5	\$3,109,402.00	Class 4

RELATIVE COST PER FIRE STATION ALL PLACES IN REPORT IN CURRENT FISCAL YEAR:

PLACE OR DEPT.	STATIONS	COST PER STATION	I.S.O. INSURANCE RATING
(Collier Fire Distr average)	21	\$3,009,476.00	
East Manatee Fire Distr	6	\$2,883,333.00	unknown
Hillsborough County	41	\$2,844,900.00	Class 5
Charlotte County	16	\$2,817,495.00	Class 4 with hydrants
San Carlos Park Fire Dist	3	\$2,812,391.00	Class 3
Fort Myers Beach Fire Distr	3	\$2,779,922.00	Class 4
Golden Gate Fire Distr	4	\$2,766,389.00	Class 4
Cape Coral City	10	\$2,653,071.00	Class 3
Fort Myers City	6	\$2,636,183.00	Class 3
Estero Fire District	4	\$2,597,469.00	Class 3
South Trail Fire Distr	4	\$2,555,239.00	Class 4
Southern Manatee Fire Distr	5	\$2,520,000.00	unknown
Ft Myers Shores Fire Dist	1	\$2,360,615.00	Class 4
(Lee Fire Districts Average)	45	\$2,223,933.00	
Sanibel District	2	\$2,047,939.00	Class 6
(Manatee Fire Dist Average)	25	\$1,968,463.00	
Cedar Hammock Fire Distr	4	\$1,968,132.00	Class 3
North Ft Myers Fire Dist	3	\$1,868,304.00	Class 5
Lehigh Acres Fire Dist	5	\$1,508,408.00	Class 4
North River Fire Distr	4	\$1,275,000.00	Class 5
Boca Grande District	1	\$1,764,120.00	Class 5
Matlacha-Pine Is. Fire Dist	3	\$1,335,307.00	Class 6
West Manatee Fire Distr	4	\$1,322,261.00	unknown
Captiva Island District	1	\$1,229,864.00	Class 4
Bayshore Fire District	1	\$1,165,849.00	Class 3
Tice Fire District	2	\$1,106,780.00	Class 4
Parrish Fire Distr	1	\$1,000,000.00	Class 5
Immokalee Fire Distr	3	\$961,781.00	Class 5
Alva District	1	\$838,086.00	Class 9
Upper Captiva District	1	\$581,450.00	Class 7
Trailer Estates Fire Distr	1	\$50,000.00	unknown

TAXING RATES IN CURRENT FISCAL YEAR

PLACE OR DEPT	MILLAGE RATE	APPROVED BY VOTERS?
Maravilla Fire MSTU	4.0	No – approved by county commissioners
Ochopee Fire Control MSTU	4.0	No – approved by county commissioners
Bayshore District	3.5	Yes – by referendum
Palm Beach Co Fire (except Jupiter)	3.4581	No – approved by county commissioners
*Fort Myers City Fire	3.3504	No – approved by City Council
Alva District	3.0	Yes – by referendum
Matlacha-Pine Island Fire Distr	3.0	Yes – by referendum
Tice District	3.0	Yes – by referendum
Immokalee Fire Contr District	3.0	Yes – by referendum
Lehigh Acres District	3.0	Yes – by referendum
San Carlos Park Fire District	3.0	Yes – by referendum
Upper Captiva District	2.996	Yes – by referendum
Ft Myers Beach District	2.58	Yes – by referendum
Miami-Dade County	2.5753	No – approved by county commissioners
Broward Co Fire Rescue#	2.5224	No – approved by county commissioners
Iona-McGregor District	2.5	Yes – by referendum
North Ft Myers District	2.5	Yes – by referendum
*Cape Coral City Fire	2.4480	No – approved by City Council
Fire Districts Average in Lee County	2.3619	Yes – by referendum – all
Useppa Island Fire MSTU	2.3	No – approved by county commissioners
Palm Beach Co Fire (in Jupiter only)	2.2489	No – approved by county commissioners
Orange County Fire	2.2437	No – approved by county commissioners
Big Corkscrew Is Fire District	2.0	Yes – by referendum
Estero District	2.0	Yes – by referendum
Fort Myers Shores District	2.0	Yes – by referendum
Isle of Capri Fire MSTU	2.0	No – approved by county commissioners
South Trail District	2.0	Yes – by referendum
East Naples Fire Distr	2.0	Yes – by referendum
Bonita Springs District	1.999	Yes – by referendum
Burnt Store Fire MSTU	1.907	No – approved by county commissioners
Fire Districts Average in Collier County	1.8	Yes – by referendum
Golden Gate Fire Distr	1.5	Yes – by referendum
Boca Grande District	1.180	Yes – by referendum
North Naples Fire Contr District	1.0	Yes – by referendum
Cedar Hammock Fire Control Distr #	1.0	Yes – by referendum
Sanibel Island District	0.9446	Yes – by referendum
Captiva Island District	0.954	Yes – by referendum
East Manatee Fire Rescue District#	0.8	Yes – by referendum

Note: Additional taxes or assessments apply.

*Note: If a specific or special non-homestead millage were levied to support fire department.

RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT RATES (Other rates for commercial, vacant lots, etc also apply)

Broward Co Fire-Rescue \$190.00 per single family residence + 2.5224 tax millage levy
Average home value in unincorporated area served is \$80,396. Add \$212 millage levy
+ \$190.00 fire assessment = \$402.00

Charlotte Fire-Rescue \$150.71 per single family residence
In addition, the EMS (ambulance) portion is part of countywide tax revenue and not a separate millage rate.

East Manatee Fire-Rescue District: \$69.00 for first 1,000 sq feet + .05 per square foot thereafter.

North River Fire District: \$135.21 residential base rate + other assessments for other types of property.

Parrish Fire Control District: \$171.62 residential base rate + other assessments for other types of property.

Sarasota County Fire-Rescue
Urban Service Area: - \$208.32 minimum + EMS millage of 0.66

Hillsborough County Fire & Rescue is supported by a tax millage, however, it is part of the Hillsborough Unincorporated Area MSTU and generates revenue for all public services – including fire and rescue. It is not a separate taxing millage – accordingly, officials at the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser’s Office have been unable to provide a specific fire taxing rate. The taxing millage rate for the MSTU is approved by county commissioners and not subject to referendum by voters.

***The budget of the Fort Myers Fire Department** is supported by the general-purpose citywide tax levy in that community and not by a separate or special millage or assessment rate. Accordingly, it is approved by the City Council and not subject to a referendum by voters. If the Fort Myers Fire Department were supported entirely by a specific or special non-homestead tax millage levy, that levy would be 3.3504 mills – based upon a total budget of \$15,817,100.00 and an assessed value of \$4,720,956,889.

***The budget of the Cape Coral Fire Department** is supported by the general-purpose citywide tax levy in that community and not by a separate or special millage or assessment rate. Accordingly, it is approved by the City Council and not subject to a referendum by the voters. If the Cape Coral Fire Department were supported entirely by a specific or special non-homestead tax millage levy, that levy would be 2.4480 mills – based upon a total budget of \$26,532,040.00 and an assessed value of \$10,837,978,223.

The budget of the Lee County EMS is supported by countywide general revenue and not by a separate or special millage or assessment rate. Accordingly, it is approved by the County Commissioners and not subject to a referendum by voters.

CHAPTER THREE

TAXING RATES IN LEE COUNTY AND THE EFFECT OF A UNIFORM MILLAGE

The following does not represent the actual cost of establishing and operating a consolidated fire and rescue department. Centralized management incorporates its own inherent costs that are not reflected here. Chapter Three only considers the effect of a uniform fire protection taxing millage if that were used to support the existing seventeen community fire districts instead of the separate millages currently levied by the elected boards in each community.

The elected boards of fire district commissioners in each of the seventeen community fire control districts levy their own fire-rescue tax millage. This is done after the public hearings to establish the annual budget have been concluded and the new fiscal year begins. In no event can the elected district board levy a millage rate higher than the maximum levy (tax cap) approved by the voters. In the current fiscal year (2010-2011), the total district tax levies of all seventeen districts add up to \$100,076,978. Although the tax millage rates vary from community to community, the average fire district tax millage is 2.3619 mills.

	Millage rate	Assessed Value	Levy
Alva	3.0000 mills	279,362,136	838,086
Bayshore	3.5000 mills	333,099,611	1,165,849
Boca Grande	1.1800 mills	1,495,017,213	1,764,120
Bonita Springs	1.9990 mills	7,873,883,636	15,739,893
Captiva	0.9540 mills	1,289,165,738	1,229,864
Estero	2.0000 mills	5,194,938,022	10,389,876
Fort Myers Beach	2.5800 mills	3,232,467,806	8,339,767
Fort Myers Shores	2.0000 mills	1,180,312,602	2,360,625
Iona-McGregor	2.5000 mills	6,218,803,794	15,547,009
Lehigh Acres	3.0000 mills	2,514,013,656	7,542,041
Matlacha-Pine Is.	3.0000 mills	1,335,306,656	4,005,920
North Fort Myers	2.5000 mills	2,241,965,206	5,604,913
San Carlos Park	3.0000 mills	2,812,391,186	8,437,174
Sanibel	0.9446 mills	4,336,098,035	4,095,878
South Trail	2.0000 mills	5,110,477,017	10,220,954
Tice	3.0000 mills	737,853,089	2,213,559
Upper Captiva	2.9960 mills	194,075,529	581,450
		46,379,230,932	100,076,978

If the current total fire district levies were supported by a single uniform tax millage, that levy would be 2.1578 mills – generating a total revenue of \$100,077,105 based upon the current assessed value of all properties within the fire districts which totals \$46,379,230,932. A uniform fire tax millage of 2.1578 would cause fire taxes to increase in some communities and decrease in others:

The Communities, which would experience a **tax decrease**, are as follows:

Place	Value	Millage 2.1578	Amount	Subsidy	Total
Alva -	279,362,136	x 2.1578 =	602,808	+ 235,278 from other areas =	838,086
Bayshore -	333,099,611	x 2.1578 =	718,762	+ 447,087 from other areas =	1,165,849
Ft Myers Beach -	3,232,467,806	x 2.1578 =	6,975,019	+ 1,364,748 from other areas =	8,339,767
Iona-McGregor -	6,218,803,794	x 2.1578 =	13,418,935	+ 2,128,074 from other areas =	15,547,009
Lehigh Acres -	2,514,013,656	x 2.1578 =	5,424,739	+ 2,117,302 from other areas =	7,542,041
Matlacha-Pine Is	1,335,306,656	x 2.1578 =	2,881,325	+ 1,124,595 from other areas =	4,005,920
North Ft Myers -	2,241,965,206	x 2.1578 =	4,837,712	+ 767,201 from other areas =	5,604,913
San Carlos Park -	2,812,391,186	x 2.1578 =	6,068,578	+ 2,368,596 from other areas =	8,437,174
Tice -	737,853,089	x 2.1578 =	1,592,139	+ 621,420 from other areas =	2,213,559
Upper Captiva -	194,075,529	x 2.1578 =	418,776	+ 162,674 from other areas =	581,450
	19,899,338,669	x 2.1578 =	42,938,793	+ 11,336,975 from other areas =	54,275,768

The Communities that would experience a **tax increase** are as follows:

Place	Value	Millage	Amount	Less Original Levy	Donation
Boca Grande	1,495,017,213	x 2.1578 =	3,225,948 -	1,764,120	= 1,461,828 to other areas
Bonita Springs	7,873,883,636	x 2.1578 =	16,990,266 -	15,739,893	= 1,250,373 to other areas
Captiva -	1,289,165,738	x 2.1578 =	2,781,762 -	1,229,864	= 1,551,898 to other areas
Estero	5,194,938,022	x 2.1578 =	11,209,637 -	10,389,876	= 819,761 to other areas
Ft Myers Shores	1,180,312,602	x 2.1578 =	2,546,879 -	2,360,625	= 186,254 to other areas
Sanibel -	4,336,098,035	x 2.1578 =	9,356,432 -	4,095,878	= 5,260,554 to other areas
South Trail -	5,110,477,017	x 2.1578 =	11,027,387 -	10,220,954	= 806,433 to other areas
	26,479,892,263	x 2.1578 =	57,138,312 -	45,801,210	= 11,337,101 to other areas

Thus a uniform fire tax millage of 2.1578 would generate the same amount of money in all 17-fire district communities – raising taxes in some communities while lowering taxes in others. In all, some \$11,337,101 would be taken from the communities of Boca Grande, Bonita Springs, Captiva, Estero, Fort Myers Shores, Sanibel, and South Trail to subsidize fire protection in the remaining areas.

SANIBEL

The highest tax increase under the above situation applies on Sanibel Island with \$5,260,554 in fire tax revenues generated on the island being spent to supplement fire protection costs elsewhere in Lee County.

It is highly unlikely that Sanibel voters would allow this to happen. They would most likely reject fire district consolidation or merge their fire district with the Sanibel city government to prevent its being absorbed into a larger system. By doing this, Sanibel Islanders would keep their fire tax money on Sanibel Island and avoid the tax increase any consolidated fire system would impose.

With the loss of Sanibel Island's tax base, however, the uniform fire tax base is reduced by \$4,336,098,035 – leaving a net remaining tax base of \$42,043,132,897 to support a remaining \$95,981,100 combined budget from taxes for the sixteen remaining fire district communities. It also creates a new higher uniform tax millage levy of 2.2829 mills.

A uniform fire tax millage of 2.2829 would increase taxes in some communities and reduce taxes in others.

The communities that would experience a **tax decrease** are as follows:

Place	Value	Millage	Amount	Subsidy	Total
Alva -	279,362,136	x 2.2829 =	637,756 +	200,330 from other areas	= 838,086
Bayshore -	333,099,611	x 2.2829 =	760,433 +	405,416 from other areas	= 1,165,849
Ft Myers Beach -	3,232,467,806	x 2.2829 =	7,379,401 +	960,366 from other areas	= 8,339,767
Iona-McGregor -	6,218,803,794	x 2.2829 =	14,196,907 +	1,350,102 from other areas	= 15,547,009
Lehigh Acres -	2,514,013,656	x 2.2829 =	5,739,242 +	1,802,799 from other areas	= 7,542,041
Matlacha-Pine Is	1,335,306,656	x 2.2829 =	3,048,372 +	957,548 from other areas	= 4,005,920
N. Ft Myers -	2,241,965,206	x 2.2829 =	5,118,182 +	486,731 from other areas	= 5,604,913
San Carlos Pk -	2,812,391,186	x 2.2829 =	6,420,408 +	2,016,766 from other areas	= 8,437,174
Tice -	737,853,089	x 2.2829 =	1,684,445 +	529,114 from other areas	= 2,213,559
Upper Captiva -	194,075,529	x 2.2829 =	443,055 +	138,395 from other areas	= 581,450
	19,899,338,669	x 2.2829 =	45,428,200 +	8,847,567 from other areas	= 54,275,768

The communities that would experience a **tax increase** are as follows:

Place	Value	Millage	Amount	Less	Original Levy	Donation
Boca Grande -	1,495,017,213	x 2.2829 =	3,412,975	-	1,764,120	= 1,648,855 to other areas
Bonita Springs	7,873,883,636	x 2.2829 =	17,975,289	-	15,739,893	= 2,235,396 to other areas
Captiva -	1,289,165,738	x 2.2829 =	2,943,036	-	1,229,864	= 1,713,172 to other areas
Estero -	5,194,938,022	x 2.2829 =	11,859,524	-	10,389,876	= 1,469,648 to other areas
Ft Myers Shores	1,180,312,602	x 2.2829 =	2,694,536	-	2,360,625	= 333,911 to other areas
South Trail -	5,110,477,017	x 2.2829 =	11,666,708	-	10,220,954	= 1,445,754 to other areas
	22,143,794,228	x 2.2829 =	50,552,068	-	41,705,332	= 8,846,736 to other areas

Thus a uniform fire tax millage of 2.2829 would generate the same amount of money in all remaining 16 fire district communities – raising taxes in some communities while lowering taxes in others. In all, some \$8,846,736 would be taken from the communities of Boca Grande, Bonita Springs, Captiva, Estero, Fort Myers Shores and South Trail to subsidize fire protection in the remaining areas. Whether or not voters in these communities would feel compelled to support this concept remains to be seen.

LEE INDEPENDENT DISTRICT FIRE TAXING MILLAGE RATES SINCE 1997

District voters approved all taxing rates of the independent fire districts by referendum.

Community	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
Alva	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000
Bayshore	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000	3.5000	3.5000	3.5000	3.4000
Boca Grande	0.3195	0.4049	0.7560	0.7065	1.1091	0.9269	1.4173	0.9828	0.9839	1.0043
Bonita Springs	1.6499	1.6097	1.6097	1.6860	1.9800	2.3000	2.3000	2.3000	2.3000	1.9800
Captiva	0.6907	0.7499	0.6744	0.5664	0.5873	0.5158	0.5414	0.5143	0.6725	0.6725
Estero	2.0000	2.0000	1.9700	1.7900	1.7900	1.7900	1.7900	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Ft Myers Beach	2.7122	2.8000	2.8000	2.8000	2.8000	2.8000	2.7000	2.6500	2.6500	2.6500
Ft Myers Shores	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	1.8684	2.0000	2.0000
Iona-McGregor	1.6300	1.6200	1.6200	1.6600	1.6800	1.7500	2.1800	2.1800	2.1800	2.1800
Lehigh Acres	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	2.7969	2.4969
Matlacha-Pine I.	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.5000	2.4500	2.3200	2.2900	2.5000	2.3000	2.5000
N. Ft Myers	2.0000	1.9763	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000
San Carlos Park	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.2500	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000	2.4000
Sanibel	0.7170	0.8474	0.8326	0.7518	0.7841	0.8381	0.8258	0.8300	0.9370	0.8258
South Trail	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	1.8199
Tice	2.6500	2.8000	2.9000	2.9000	2.9000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000
Upper Captiva	1.9768	2.1254	2.0703	2.0703	2.0703	2.0703	2.0703	2.0703	2.0659	2.0900
Community	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11						
Alva	2.8937	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000						
Bayshore	3.4000	3.4500	3.5000	3.5000						
Boca Grande	0.9720	1.0233	1.0850	1.1800						
Bonita Springs	1.7685	1.8569	1.7950	1.9990						
Captiva	0.5675	0.6399	0.8768	0.9540						

Community	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11
Estero	1.7868	1.9037	2.0000	2.0000
Ft Myers Beach	2.0014	1.9980	2.3017	2.5800
Ft Myers Shores	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Iona-McGregor	2.0300	2.0300	2.3242	2.5000
Lehigh Acres	2.7517	2.7517	3.0000	3.0000
Matlacha-Pine I.	2.5000	2.8500	2.8500	3.0000
N. Ft Myers	2.4250	2.5000	2.5000	2.5000
San Carlos Park	1.9777	2.0628	2.5000	3.0000
Sanibel	0.7736	0.8114	0.8794	0.9446
South Trail	1.8199	1.8760	1.8760	2.0000
Tice	2.5993	2.7958	3.0000	3.0000
Upper Captiva	2.0900	2.2900	2.5430	2.9960

SUCCESSFUL FIRE TAX MILLAGE REFERENDUM ELECTIONS

Alva voters approved increasing their millage cap from 2.0 to 3.0 mills on November 5, 2002.
 Bayshore voters approved increasing their millage cap from 2.5 to 3.5 mills on June 10, 2003.
 Iona-McGregor voters approved increasing their millage cap from 1.75 to 2.5 mills on May 6, 2003.
 Matlacha-Pine Island voters approved increasing their millage cap from 2.0 to 3.0 mills on June 6, 2000.
 North Ft Myers voters approved increasing their millage cap from 2.0 to 2.5 mills on November 5, 2002.
 San Carlos Park voters approved increasing their millage cap from 2.0 to 3.0 mills on November 2, 1999.
 Tice voters approved increasing their millage cap from 2.0 to 3.0 mills on November 2, 1993.

UNSUCCESSFUL FIRE TAX MILLAGE OR ASSESSMENT REFERENDUM ELECTIONS

Alva voters rejected increasing their millage cap on November 3, 1998.
 San Carlos Park voters rejected increasing their millage cap on November 3, 1998.
 Matlacha-Pine Island voters rejected increasing their millage cap on March 14, 2000
 Fort Myers Shores voters rejected increasing their millage cap on May 25, 2010.
 Iona-McGregor voters rejected a special assessment on August 24, 2010.
 Bayshore voters rejected increasing their millage cap on November 2, 2010.
 Fort Myers Shores again rejected increasing their millage cap on November 2, 2010.
 Tice voters rejected increasing their millage cap on November 2, 2010.

COUNTY FIRE MSTU TAXING MILLAGE RATES SINCE 1997

The information below shows fire taxing millage rates imposed by the Lee County Commissioners upon the three MSTU (Municipal fire taxing units) under their jurisdiction. Fire taxing millage referendum elections are not held in these communities.

	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
Burnt Store	2.8308	2.7436	1.7420	2.1334	1.7102	1.4367	1.5872	1.7492	1.3479	1.0091
Maravilla	5.3648	5.1424	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000	6.0000
Useppa Island	3.3019	3.2036	3.0141	3.2203	2.4740	2.4322	2.4504	2.1633	2.3662	1.8982
	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11						
Burnt Store	0.9554	0.9554	1.5947	1.9027						
Maravilla	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	4.0000						
Useppa Island	1.6724	1.6724	2.6595	2.3000						

CHAPTER FOUR

“LITTLE FIEFDOMS & BIG EMPIRES”

The arguments for fire district consolidation and a review of these mergers in Charlotte, Orange, Palm Beach and Sarasota Counties.

To the best of my knowledge, the first public official in Lee County to refer to the community fire districts as “little fiefdoms” was a former Lee County commissioner shortly before his commission was revoked by the Governor. Prior to that time, fire district detractors referred to them as “*little kingdoms*.” Those who oppose the concept of independent community fire districts generally favor their consolidation into a much larger county controlled agency which, they say, will “save money”, “lower taxes” and be “better.” It is noteworthy that the push for consolidation has always come from special interests and ideologues - and not from fire district taxpayers.

Over the years, these detractors have included the editorial staffers of the Fort Myers News-Press and a number of reporters, several firefighter union officials, various area land developers and building contractors and political figures within county government who wished to control the fire departments and their tax monies. This chapter considers their arguments for fire district consolidation.

When the last populated communities of Lee County voted to create their own fire districts in 1976, the opponents to this concept were out in full force – urging a “no” vote. The Fort Myers News-Press featured an editorial to that effect, saying, “***centralized county fire management is superior... to local sympathetic taxing districts.***” The Lee County Protective Services Division Director said “***the price of autonomy is high and I don’t think this will answer the fire defense problems in Lee County.***”

The referendum was overwhelmingly approved in all seven communities where the question appeared on the ballot. By 1976, there was no longer the question of whether or not property should be taxed for fire protection – fire taxes had already been imposed by the county commissioners without a referendum. Instead, it was a matter of “how much” would be paid and to whom. Given the choice of being taxed by the county government or by themselves as a community fire district, the voters opted for local control, and soundly rejected the consolidation option. By doing this, all fire tax monies stayed in the community where they were generated, and have remained there ever since. In the years that followed, tax millages were increased in these communities, but then only by referendum election after the need was justified to the voting public.

During the 1980’s, consolidated county fire systems were created in Charlotte, Orange, Palm Beach and Sarasota counties. Without exception, these systems were advocated to “*save money, reduce the cost of the service, improve service and cut taxes,*” – even in high growth areas. These fire department mergers allow us to review budget growth in those areas as shown in Chapter Two of this report – both before consolidation took place and afterward. History shows us that in every event, costs went up - not down - after the fire departments were consolidated. So did budgets and expenditures as reflected in the Florida State Comptroller’s annual reports over the years. Taxes went up as well – without a referendum vote.

Most of the consolidated fire system communities examined in this report enjoy an insurance rating of I.S.O. Public Protection Class 4. If those areas had poorer ratings before fire consolidation, then their goal of “improving service” was successfully reached. On the other hand, the following Lee County communities also hold a Class 4 or better rating at this time:

Bayshore district - Class 3
Bonita Springs district - Class 3
Cape Coral city – Class 3
Captiva Island district – Class 4
Estero district – Class 3
Fort Myers city – Class 3
Fort Myers Beach district – Class 4
Fort Myers Shores district – Class 4
Iona-McGregor district – Class 4
Lehigh Acres district – Class 4
San Carlos Park district – Class 3
South Trail district – Class 4
Tice district – Class 4

The above communities represent the overwhelming majority of people who live in Lee County. Inasmuch as most of the remaining communities hold only slightly poorer ratings of Class 5 and Class 6, the “improving service” argument does not appear to be a valid one.

MYTHS AND FACTS

As previously shown, those favoring fire department consolidation in Lee County make many claims and promises. Regardless of the intent, some myths and claims surface more than others. The following are among the more popular ones:

MYTH: - *County taxpayers are paying for 19 fire departments.*

FACT: -County taxpayers do not support a fire department - taxpayers in 19 communities tax themselves for this service.

MYTH: - *Fire Department consolidation will save taxpayers money.*

FACT: - Refer to Chapter Two of this report to determine the “savings” to taxpayers in the consolidated fire system areas. In every event, costs went up, not down, as a result of fire consolidation. Higher costs mean higher taxes.

MYTH: - *Even if there is no savings at the outset, eventually taxpayers will save money “down the road.”*

FACT: - Again refer to Chapter Two of this report. Particularly, examine the budget

and expenditure figures before fire department mergers and then afterward. Today, more than twenty-five years later, no one apparently knows just how long the road to savings is.

MYTH: - *The per-capita costs of fire protection would be reduced with fire department consolidation.*

FACT: - The per-capita argument attempts to figure fire protection costs for each man, woman and child. The argument is invalid because *people* are not taxed for fire protection – *property* is.

MYTH: - *Fire consolidation will reduce administrative costs by eliminating seventeen fire chief positions and appointing a single Lee County Fire Chief.*

FACT: - Administrative costs would skyrocket here – just as they have everywhere else fire consolidation happened – and for exactly the same reasons. Merge the seventeen fire districts into a single county fire department and it would be one of the largest fire department organizations in the State of Florida today. It would own, for example, the 46 fire stations currently owned by the 17 community fire districts, and it would be a bigger fire department organization than the present consolidated fire departments of Broward, Charlotte, Hillsborough, Orange, Palm Beach or Sarasota counties.

An organization that large could not be effectively operated or managed from a fire station (as they are now) any more than the Lee County School system could be run from a school. A new centralized fire system requires a new system of centralized management. A new fire safety (or public safety) administration building would need to be constructed, probably in or near downtown Fort Myers, at a cost yet to be determined. That building would house most of the offices, agencies and bureaus needed to operate a system of that size. They would include but not be limited to the following:

- County Fire Chief
- County Assistant Fire Chief
- Legal Department
- Risk Management
- Human Resources Department
- County Emergency Medical Chief
- County Fire Training Chief
- County EMS Training Chief
- Chief of Communications
- Property Management Division
- Master Mechanic
- Data Processing Department
- Fire Code Enforcement Department
- Plans and Development Review Department
- Purchasing Department
- Budget Analysis and Finance Department

Labor Relations Division
Public Relations Chief
Fire Prevention Bureau and Chief.....

...plus the salaries, benefits, pensions and perks of their secretaries, their assistants (and their secretaries), clerks, custodians and other office staffers needed to manage the larger organization. As the system grows in size, more departments, bureaus and divisions will be added as needed until it is time to expand the administration building itself or relocate to a new facility elsewhere – much as the Lee County School Board recently did.

A new management structure created by fire consolidation replaces the current community fire chiefs with a new system of division chiefs and battalion chiefs to actually run the fire stations, unless the consolidated fire officials in charge are willing to rely upon persons of lesser training, experience and certification.

MYTH: - *Fire consolidation will provide an equal level of service on a countywide basis.*

FACT: - None of the consolidated fire systems considered in this report were able to achieve “an equal level of service on a countywide basis.”

MYTH: - *Rural fire district stations provide a substandard level of service due to budgetary restraints.*

FACT: - Rural fire stations – regardless of funding method - protect fewer people and less property than urban fire district stations do, however, their rural status does not arbitrarily render their services “substandard.” For example, the Bayshore and Fort Myers Shores fire districts serve mostly rural areas yet both of those communities enjoy the same I.S.O. insurance ratings as Miami-Dade, Orange County, Palm Beach County and the more urbanized cities and fire districts here in Lee County. The rural fire district stations in Lee County include paid fire fighters and modern fire apparatus and equipment.

MYTH: *Fire District consolidation would eliminate hundreds of miles of boundary lines and provide service from the closest station.*

FACT: Here the argument is made against the political or corporate limit lines of fire districts and cities. While these boundaries would be eliminated with consolidation, they would be replaced with new station service boundary lines that would closely resemble most of the existing boundary lines. Mutual aid and automatic aid agreements between jurisdictions already overcome that objection.

MYTH: *Taxpayers would have a “better voice” with fire consolidation.*

FACT: Taxpayers would be silenced with fire consolidation:

- (1.) – Fire District Commissioners: Without community fire districts, there is no need for fire district commissioners. Total authority would rest with the County Commissioners and the appointed County Manager.
- (2.) – Losing one's fire district also means losing the fire district tax cap. In most districts, the taxing cap is 2.0 or 2.5 mills. Under county control, there are no more fire tax elections because the County Commissioners decide what the tax millage rate will be. Under Chapter 125, Florida Statutes, that millage rate can be as high as 10 mills – without a referendum.

MYTH: *Independent fire districts are not accountable to anyone.*

FACT: Fire District Commissioners are elected officials - are bonded, subject to suit and/or recall for mismanagement, must reside and vote in the district and are subject to the state "Government In The Sunshine" open meetings laws as well as the state Code of Ethics for Public Officials. In addition, the financial activities of all districts are subject to an annual independent audit as provided by law. Annual financial reporting to the Office Of Florida State Comptroller/Department of Financial Services is also required.

MYTH: *Firefighters serving on the elected boards overpay their fellow firefighters.*

FACT: (1.) – Firefighters may hold public office in the community fire district in which they reside – just as any other citizen may do – provided they are not not employed by that fire district.
(2.) – There is no evidence that firefighters are being "overpaid."

MYTH: *Even if it is legal, firefighters shouldn't be elected as fire district commissioners.*

FACT: That is a matter of opinion. Similarly, there are some who feel that it's a bad idea to elect attorneys to the State Legislature – fearing a supposed collusion to thwart attempts at enacting tort reform. Others feel that electing someone who has expertise can do a better job than someone who does not. In any event, the voters are free to elect whomever they wish.

There are other myths which surface from time to time, however, the above appear to be the more common ones. Whatever the arguments or reasons given to merge fire departments in Charlotte, Sarasota, Orange and Palm Beach counties will probably remain unanswered because none of the county and fire officials who created those merged systems are in office any longer. They've moved on. While the post-consolidation experiences of those counties are similar, their situations deserve to be considered. The following takes some of these factors into consideration.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

The only urbanized area served by Charlotte County Fire-Rescue is the unincorporated community of Port Charlotte. Suburban communities include Harbour Heights, South Punta Gorda Heights, the Solana and Cleveland communities and the El Jobean/GulfCove/Placida area. In these areas, an improved I.S.O. fire insurance rating of Class 4 has been achieved where fire hydrants on an approved water system exist. The remainder of the county is rural forest, farm and rangeland. Charlotte County is therefore not comparable to Lee County in terms of population, density or urbanization.

When the majority of fire districts were merged in 1986, the combined levies of all fire districts totaled \$1,579,739 – roughly the same figure for the previous four or five years. By 1998, however, the merged fire budget was \$9,509,276 – not including the EMS budget. A January 25, 1996 Fort Myers News-Press article written by Mike Hoyem reported the Charlotte County Deputy Fire Chief as saying that he ***“couldn’t put a dollar figure on the savings”*** due to consolidation, but said he was ***“confident they’ve been substantial.”*** In the current fiscal year (2010-2011), the Charlotte County Fire-Rescue budget is \$33,401,905. When added with their EMS budget of \$11,677,977, a total organizational budget of \$45,079,882 is realized.

ORANGE COUNTY

The consolidation of fourteen county-dependent fire districts in 1981 was the subject of an article written by Rich Olsen and published in the April 1985 edition of “Fire Chief” – a fire service monthly magazine. In his article, Olsen elaborated on the progress of the consolidated Orange County Fire & Rescue Department:

“With all these improvements, it would be logical to conclude that fire/EMS protection costs the citizens of Orange County a lot more money. That is not true. While manpower and coverage have increased 25%, costs have remained constant and insurance rates have dropped.”

History shows that while Olsen was correct about the improvement in fire insurance ratings, he was highly mistaken about costs “remaining constant.” The combined fire district expenditures at the time of the merger in 1981 were \$12,680,770. By the time Olsen wrote his article in 1985, the merged county fire department was spending \$22,608,268 in that fiscal year. The current Orange County Fire-Rescue levy is \$175,298,829 and of that figure, \$38,124,811 is for “administration.”

An article by Lawrence Lebowitz in the October 12, 1995 Orlando Sentinel goes into greater detail. It explains how the Orange County Fire-Rescue Department went broke with a \$53 million dollar budget and a \$9 million dollar budget gap. That event prompted a reorganization that cost 49 county fire department workers – including 23 fire fighters –

their jobs. As for the concept of centralized management, Lebowitz wrote: ***"Trapped between (county) commissioners and county administrators and the unionized rank and file, fire department managers tend to remain cloistered in "The Blue Roof Inn" – the new \$30 million dollar headquarters in Winter Park."***

PALM BEACH COUNTY

The merger of ten county-dependent fire districts in 1985 was the subject of an article written by Stephanie Smith and published in The Sun Sentinel on October 2, 1994. The article begins: ***"Unite ten county fire districts into one, and emergency services will be better, more uniform and cheaper"*** Palm Beach County residents were told ten years ago. Ten years later, many of those promises have been kept – but at what cost?"

County Fire Chief Herman Brice is also quoted in Smith's article. The article reads: ***"Brice, who was fire chief in Miami for six years before he took the job as Chief of the consolidated department, said he was the first to admit his department could not be both better and cheaper. "When I got up here, they said "we did this to save money." I said "guess what – that's not going to happen."*** History shows that Chief Brice was correct. At the time Smith wrote her article in 1994, the Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue Department was then beginning its new fiscal year in which \$61,143,599 was eventually spent. Three years later, their budget was \$100,823,096 and in the current fiscal year, their operating budget is \$340,753.220 and total budget is \$356,627,601.

In 1998, the uniform fire tax levy came to an end when the Town of Jupiter threatened to drop out of the county fire system and form its own fire department. In the end, the Town of Jupiter stayed in the county fire system but they demanded (and got) a lower tax millage rate. Currently, the county fire/EMS taxing rate in Jupiter is 2.2489 mills, however, the fire millage is 3.4581 for most of the remaining majority of residents served by the department.

SARASOTA COUNTY

There have been numerous fire department mergers since 1985:

- (1.) In 1985, the Fruitville Area, Northeast Area and South Trail Area independent fire control districts were consolidated into a single new independent district called the "Metropolitan Sarasota County Fire & Rescue District.
- (2.) In 1987, the Metropolitan Sarasota County Fire-Rescue District was abolished and its assets and liabilities transferred to the Sarasota County Commissioners.
- (3.) In 1990, the independent Pinecraft Fire Control District was abolished and its assets and liabilities transferred to county control.

(4.) On January 1, 1996, the City of Sarasota gave its fire department to Sarasota County.

On November 1, 1994, Sarasota City Manager David R. Sollenberger and Sarasota County Administrator John Wesley White submitted a report entitled "Consolidation of Sarasota and Sarasota County Fire-Rescue Departments." This report included the findings and recommendations of a citizens study committee that was formed to consider the consolidation option. A complete merger was recommended for the following reasons:

- (1.) – Improve the level of service. *
- (2.) – Reduce cost of service.
- (3.) – Lessen the negative effects of urbanization.

*Note: The improvement in service levels was to come from the elimination of political boundary lines for service delivery purposes so that service could come from the nearest fire station to the emergency.

The report had great expectations of saving taxpayer's money when it was published in 1994, however, history shows that did not happen. The report explains how these savings were to be realized: *"The most significant and obvious savings will occur from the relocation and/or deferral of capital costs associated with a fire station and various fire apparatus. Construction of a planned county fire-rescue station will be avoided through the consolidation because existing city fire –rescue stations can serve the same area as the planned station. Avoiding construction of the planned station will result in annual operational cost savings of \$771,000 in fiscal year 1997, \$818,000 in fiscal year 1998 and \$842,000 in fiscal year 1999 through fiscal year 2000."*

After the consolidation took place, however, county officials decided to build the station anyway, plus additional stations not previously considered.

The projected savings to taxpayers were featured in the Sarasota City-County fire consolidation report. These projections were based upon budget growth of the separate city and county fire departments. Bear in mind that these projections were calculated in 1994.

1996 PROJECTIONS

City Fire – without consolidation	\$9,686,685
County Fire – without consolidation	+\$16,148,610
Total city and county fire – without consolidation	\$25,835,295
Projected consolidated fire budget for 1996	-\$25,648,972
Total projected savings due to consolidation	\$186,323

1996 ACTUAL CONSOLIDATED FIRE BUDGET

Approved consolidated fire budget	\$26,400,000
<u>Projected consolidated fire budget</u>	<u>-\$25,648,972</u>
Total increased cost over original projections	\$751,018

The end result was that instead of saving \$186,323 as was projected in 1994, costs to taxpayers actually increased \$751,018 over the projected figure.

1997 PROJECTIONS

City Fire – without consolidation	\$10,186,866
<u>County Fire – without consolidation</u>	<u>+\$17,539,874</u>
Total city and county fire – without consolidation	\$27,726,740
<u>Projected consolidated fire budget for 1997</u>	<u>-\$26,769,417</u>
Total projected savings due to consolidation	\$957,323

1997 ACTUAL CONSOLIDATED FIRE BUDGET

Approved consolidated 1997 fire budget	\$32,890,363
<u>Projected consolidated 1997 fire budget</u>	<u>-\$26,769,417</u>
Total increased cost of original projections	\$6,120,946

The end result is that instead of saving \$957,323 as was projected in 1994, costs to taxpayers actually increased \$6,120,946 over the projected figure.

In a January 26, 1996 Fort Myers News-Press article by Mike Hoyem, Sarasota Finance Director Gibson Mitchell is quoted as having said he is “...***not promising savings at the outset, but he says he’s confident, “eventually, there will be savings.”***”

The 1994 fire study also addressed the I.S.O. fire insurance ratings then in effect. The City of Sarasota had a Class 2 rating while the unincorporated fringe areas carried a Class 4 rating. It was hoped that a consolidated fire department would carry a Class 3 rating overall. Eventually, The I.S.O. re-rated only the so-called “Urban Service Area” as Class 3 while the rural areas without a water system are rated as Class 9 and then only those areas within five road miles of a fire station. Therefore, while an “equal level of service” may exist in the urbanized areas served by the Sarasota County Fire & Rescue Department, it does not apply equally to the rural areas of the county. In the end, the City of Sarasota did indeed lose its Class 2 ISO rating.

THE LEE COUNTY 1998-1999 FIRE CONSOLIDATION STUDY

The February 28, 1997 Naples Daily News featured an article within which former Lee County Administrator (later Manager) Don Stillwell proposed consolidating fire districts while speaking at the Rotary Club of Bonita Springs. The article, in part, read as follows:

“We all want to save money,” he said, “yet in Lee County we have 17 different, individual fire districts plus three cities that have fire departments. Twenty different entities, 20 different fire chiefs, 20 fire captains, 20 sites. It’s a frenzy.” Consolidating into fewer districts would save money, Stillwell said. He said the current system is inefficient, noting the county pays \$54.2 million for fire services, plus another \$20 million for emergency medical services.

“We don’t have many fires anymore, he said. To spend \$54 million in this county for fire protection in my opinion is ludicrous. We would be better off with a volunteer fire department and a few paid people and go out and secure the house and let the house burn down and we’ll pay you for your house.”

Mr. Stillwell was not alone in his belief that a bigger fire department would be “better.” Area fire fighter union leaders also shared that belief, as did numerous area builders, contractors and developers, ideologues and the editorial staffers of the Fort Myers News-Press.

On February 19, 1997, the Lee County Board of Commissioners voted to have a study conducted on the matter. Its purpose was: *“To determine if emergency services, excluding law enforcement, can be delivered with a higher level of service for less cost.”*

The project was put out on bid on April 15, 1997 and awarded to David M Griffith & Associates (now DMG Maximus) on October 14, 1997 for \$185,000.00. By May 27, 1998, the first completed draft of the study was compiled. Several consolidation scenarios were shown – and each of them originally included the existing and proposed tax millage rates for each fire district. In most every scenario, tax millage rates were shown to increase as a result of consolidation. After that, all language dealing with actual tax millage rates was deleted from the final published study and replaced instead with “percentage” and “share” amounts.

On Monday, February 1, 1999, DMG Maximus consultant Richard Brady addressed the Lee County Commissioners, saying: *“It’s very difficult to make consolidation work if your major criteria is cost-effectiveness. It doesn’t work.”* The study concluded that a consolidated county fire department would cost \$9 million more than what was then being spent, but did not include administrative costs.

COLLIER COUNTY

The subject of merging fire districts has been an ongoing one in Collier County for the past few years, with its proponents promising tax savings and better service. Recent drops in real property values that have reduced tax revenues, plus a continuing issue with the County Medical Director led county commissioners to believe there was an opportunity to establish a consolidated metro-type fire system in the county. On November 2, 2010, voters in unincorporated Collier County approved the following straw-ballot proposal submitted to them by the county commissioners:

“Would you support consolidation of the five independent fire districts and two dependent fire districts into one independent fire district for unincorporated Collier County – provided that the consolidation will improve efficiency and promote a more cost-effective use of tax dollars?”

The results were as follows:

COMMUNITY	YES	NO
County area (Isles of Capri & Ochopee)	1,126	578
Big Corkscrew Island	2,479	1,040
East Naples	12,604	6,127
Golden Gate	12,532	4,622
Immokalee	734	497
North Naples	25,929	9,139
	55,404	22,003

The same day, however, the East Naples Fire Control Commission submitted its own straw ballot proposal that appeared on the official ballot in East Naples only:

“As a resident of the East Naples Fire Control and Rescue District, do you support the consolidation of your fire district with the other fire districts if the consolidation may result in higher taxes and decreases the efficiency and effectiveness of the emergency services currently being provided to you?”

YES - 4,508

NO - 14,259

Thus it appears that while East Naples voters favor “improved efficiency” and a “more cost-effective use of tax dollars,” they absolutely reject both “higher taxes” and “decreases in the efficiency” of the services they currently receive. It is highly likely that voters and taxpayers in the other districts share the same sentiment.

SUMMARY

From the outset one might assume that I am opposed to any and all fire district mergers and that would be a mistake. There have been several fire mergers here in Southwest Florida over the years and most of them made sense. The 1971 merger of the Cape Coral Fire Control District with the city made sense. The merger of the Marco Island Fire Control District with the new City of Marco Island made sense. Their boundaries were identical. When the Little Hickory Shores residents realized their community was geographically too small to generate the tax base needed to support a modern fire department, they and the voters of the North Naples Fire Control District voted for a merger. In addition, the Heights Fire Department was absorbed into the Iona-McGregor Fire District in 1975 and the Charleston Park Fire Department was absorbed into the Alva Fire District in 1976.

The above examples were very localized events that were handled locally and then only after much discussion, research and planning. Creating a larger countywide fire department agency is another matter entirely. History shows us that when large agencies such as consolidated fire departments are created, they tend to become empires unto themselves and politically well insulated from those they serve. History also shows that “*big empires*” are decidedly more expensive to operate than the so-called “*little fiefdom*” community districts are. Chapter Two of this report clearly demonstrates this fact.

When DMG Maximus presented its fire and EMS study to the Lee County Commissioners in February of 1999 and advised them that consolidating the fire districts would cost over \$9 million dollars more than what was then being levied, some of them expressed shock and disbelief. “*How can that be,*” they asked?

It is unrealistic to expect a big government to operate as efficiently as a smaller and more localized one. Community independent special districts have little administrative expenses because they are owned, controlled and operated by the local voters and taxpayers themselves. With no bureaucrats feeding at the public trough, significant savings are realized and funding is directed to providing service rather than to high administrative costs. The fire districts are a role model for efficiency and cooperation between local governments and it would do well for other local governments to study their operations.

Some have suggested creating a countywide independent special fire control district to replace the community fire districts, but if the prerequisite is “*lower cost and better fire protection,*” that won’t “work”, either. With a total of forty-six fire stations, it would still be too large an organization to operate efficiently and taxpayers would still be stuck with the cost of a new public safety administration building downtown, plus the cost of its administrative bureaucrats and their staffers - a horrific expense that our taxpayers have avoided by keeping their fire districts intact.

How high could fire administration costs be? Consider the Orange County Fire & Rescue Department's current budget of \$175 million dollars – with \$38 million dollars of it spent for administration expenses. And that doesn't include the \$30 million they spent to build their fire administration building sixteen years ago. Orange County fire officials are not being deliberately wasteful with tax money – the high administrative costs are simply required to operate a fire system of that size.

These costs are not unique to Orange County, Palm Beach County or the other consolidated fire systems in Florida - there is at least one local example of this here in Lee County. The new Lee County School Board Administration Complex in the former Metro Mall had a price tag of \$42.7 million – enough to build and equip a brand new state-of-the art high school, according to the April 13, 2005 News-Press. But the building is needed to accommodate over 600 “administrators, accountants, secretaries, clerks and other central office workers to manage the school system.”

QUALITY OF SERVICE FOR TAXES PAID

The I.S.O. is the nationally recognized agency which actually inspects each community's fire defenses – here and in 44 other states - and establishes public protection class ratings accordingly. The insurance ratings speak for themselves:

In Florida, there are only nine Class 1 communities. Of that number, none have consolidated fire departments.

In Florida, there are only thirty-one Class 2 communities. Of that number, none have consolidated fire departments.

In Florida, there are only eighty-three Class 3 communities. Of that number, only two – Broward County and Sarasota County – have consolidated county fire departments and the Class 3 rating only applies in a very limited area. Neither operates a countywide department.

The consolidated fire systems in Charlotte, Orange, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties enjoy a Class 4 rating. Most fire district communities also enjoy a Class 4 or better rating - but at a much lower cost. There are a total of 139 Class 4 communities in Florida – ALSO:

160 communities have a Class 5 rating,
117 communities have a Class 6 rating,
62 communities have a Class 7 rating,
19 communities have a Class 8 rating,
14 communities have a Class 8-B rating.
121 communities have a Class 9 rating,
.....and the rest of Florida is Class 10, un-rated or unprotected.

In fact, the overwhelming majority of fire district communities enjoy some of the best fire protection in the State of Florida at a cost that is lower and better than what is

paid elsewhere. The citizens of these communities, their elected district fire commissioners, chiefs and the fire fighters are to be congratulated for doing an exemplary job of providing for their own fire defenses and keeping taxes low. Some of the fire districts have gone as long as twenty years without having to ask the voters for a tax increase.

Some fire district detractors say that the reason the voters won't approve fire consolidation is because they take pride in seeing the name of their community painted on the fire engines. In my view, these communities have every reason to be proud of what they have accomplished. Increased annual spending has been a reflection of growth, but with independent fire districts, the community has something to show for the money they've spent.

The main reason fire district consolidation is not politically possible has to do with taxes and money. As it is, fire district residents own and operate their own fire and rescue departments – elect their own fire district commissioners and tax themselves for this service. But the voters in each fire district decided to limit the taxing millage rates. In most districts, the tax cap is 2 or 2.5 mills, and even their elected fire district commissioners may not levy more than that amount without voter approval at a referendum election.

County consolidated fire systems are a different matter. In those systems, the County Commissioners decide what the fire tax millage rates will be and Chapter 125, Florida Statutes allows them to levy up to 10 mills – without a referendum. If you think fire district voters would go for a deal like that, you'd better think again.

And it is the voters in all seventeen fire district communities who would need to approve dissolving their local fire districts to allow a new consolidated system. With some of the best fire departments in the state at the lowest tax millage of any urban area in Florida, that isn't likely to happen anytime soon.

“THE RIGHT THING TO DO....”

Not everyone supports the concept of low taxes and local control of them. Beginning with a feature entitled “Fire Flap” on July 29, 1973, the editorial staffers of the News-Press decided to promote the agenda that suggests fire district residents are incapable of owning and operating their own fire departments – even though they’ve been successfully doing that for decades – and that giving them (and the community’s fire taxing authority) to some larger consolidated agency would be a good thing. Numerous feature stories about fire districts have appeared over the years but the “message” is always the same. News-Press staffers continually insist that our fire districts are “*relics of the past*” and should be done away with. “Centralized county management is a better idea”, they say.

In late June of 2006, The News-Press launched yet another media campaign about fire districts. It was entitled “Fires and Money,” and they claimed that \$100 million could be saved if suburban taxpayers would give up their fire districts to a new consolidated fire agency. Without offering any proof of this claim, the staff writers urged readers to “*write and call your county commissioner and demand fire consolidation,*” because, they wrote, “*it’s the right thing to do!*”

The public was not fooled. While the sensational media blitz did generate a few phone calls to some of the county commissioners, it generated virtually no public response otherwise. A handful of citizens in only three of the seventeen districts attended the next fire district commissioners meetings, and then only to ask questions about the News-Press media campaign itself.

The reality, of course, is that the county commissioners do not have the authority to consolidate the independent fire districts because those municipal corporations belong to the people who live and pay taxes in them – not to the county. The laws of Florida do permit county governments to study any and all independent special districts that exist within their borders and to make recommendations for change – but the voters in each affected district would have to approve any proposed changes.

When the News-Press editorial staffers finally learned of the existence of *this* report, they were understandably unhappy – and they expressed their displeasure in an editorial on December 8, 2006. In it, they attempted to defend their media campaign as “*thorough and professional investigative reporting*” and dismissed this report as nothing more than “*an occasional outburst of opinion.*” Unfortunately for News-Press staffers, the information contained in this report is both a matter of public record as well as documented historical fact. They had absolutely no idea that anyone was actually keeping track of this subject for over 30 years and they were caught off-guard. Hopefully, they’ll learn to get their facts straight the next time they wish to write articles about fire protection, but their bias against the suburban taxpayer is deep-rooted and history tells me not to hold my breath anytime soon.

The News-Press claims to have conducted a four-month “fire study” which, they say, shows a \$100 million savings with consolidation, but the facts do not support this claim:

- (1.) – The total tax levy of all 17 fire districts was \$101 million to operate the 42 fire stations then in service. If \$100 million can be chopped off of that figure, I would very much like to see the plan.
- (2.) – Orange County has had a consolidated fire system since 1981. Palm Beach, Sarasota and Charlotte counties have had fire consolidation since 1985 – and in every event, taxes and budgets went up – not down. The same is true in Broward County and the rest. If none of the merged fire systems in Florida were able to provide “cheaper and better” fire protection after 25+ years, why would we expect to achieve this in Lee County? The truth is that we wouldn’t – for the same reasons they didn’t.
- (3.) – No one I know has ever actually seen the “News-Press Fire Study,” including any of our elected officials.

Although I support a free press, I think that any attempts to deceive the public are irresponsible and despicable. Newspapers are not required by law to be truthful, and yet I have to believe that other newspapers could be more objective. In my view, it is time for other regional dailies to assert themselves in this market.

I strongly suspect that the taxpayers and voters will continue to keep a tight grip on their fire districts and their tax dollars – as well they should. In the August 2006 edition of this report, I wrote that suburban voters would not be fooled – and they weren’t. With only one exception in Bonita Springs, all of the pro-consolidation fire district candidates in the following November’s election were soundly defeated.

Read the report. Do the math. Compare apples to apples. Double-check my sources if you wish. And by all means, ask questions. The best place to get straight answers is your community fire district. It is owned and operated by you – the voter and taxpayer – and its meetings are open to the public.

Yours for good government,

Brian R. Juntikka

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