



## **BCFD Memo**

**DATE** : January 30, 2017  
**TO** : Baker County Fire Protection District Fire Chiefs  
**FROM** : Tom Wills, Baker City Fire Chief  
**SUBJECT** : Federal SAFER Grant Assistance

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Dear Chiefs,

First off let me start by apologizing for not meeting with each of you individually prior to this letter. As the newest Fire Chief in this area I have the benefit of observing our response model more objectively than others. After observing and learning about our ambulance service area (ASA) it has quickly come to my attention that Baker City Fire and Rescue is extremely understaffed for the current response model that we provide to Baker City proper and to our neighboring agencies.

Currently BCFD staffing levels prevent us from complying with basic NFPA 1710 staffing standards. In order to better comply with the standard and to provide a more efficient and effective response model, BCFD is seeking a SAFER Staffing Grant through the Federal Government for 3 additional daily peak-period Firefighter Paramedics. Unfortunately BCFD will have difficulty in meeting the matching fund requirements for all three years of the grant and later if additional funding mechanisms are not found.

The addition of 3 more peak period personnel would allow BCFD to better meet the current and projected emergency response needs of not only Baker City but Baker County. Adding 3 peak period personnel will provide for up to 7-8 members during peak times every day and will provide for greater coverage and flexibility when staffing evenings and weekends.

BCFD alone does not comply with NFPA 1710 staffing recommendations for Initial Attack (IA) of 10 members per 500-1,000 people per Suburban area mile squared and 6 members per 1,000 people per Rural area mile squared. Eight personnel per peak period day and additional personnel from Mutual Aid agencies will increase BCFD's ability to meet current NFPA 1701 Standards for "Initial Attack (IA) 80-90% of the time. It will also increase our ability to meet

current NFPA 1710 Standards for “Fire Suppression Operations” and allows BCFD to comply with NFPA 1710 “Effective Firefighting Force” of 14 members 80-90% of the time.

I’m asking for your support for BCFD in our effort to improve our ALS/EMS service to your communities. Based on our incident data from the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s Office, we’re requesting your assistance with meeting the required matching funds for the additional three positions.

An average annual Entry-Level 40 hour Firefighter salary including benefits is \$76,775. Our SAFER grant request is for three (3) 40 hour positions. Based on the Federal matching requirements of 25%, 25% and 65% the annual costs impact us as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> year	\$19,193.75 per position x 3 positions = \$57,581.25
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	\$19,193.75 per position x 3 positions = \$57,581.25
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	\$49,903.75 per position x 3 positions = \$149,711.25

We are proposing over the next three years Baker City Fire Department shall pay 50% of the required matching funds and the remaining 50% shall be divided among the nine (9) Fire Districts based on district size, administrative oversight, call demand, etc. An example of monthly costs is as follows:

### **Monthly Cost Sharing between Baker City and Neighboring Fire Protection Districts**

<b>1. Baker City</b>	<b>\$3,678.75 per month</b>
2. Baker Rural	\$1,958.00 per month
3. Haines	\$694.50 per month
4. Keating	\$333.50 per month
5. Sumpter	\$250.00 per month
6. Bowen Valley	\$111.00 per month
7. North Powder	\$111.00 per month
8. Medical Springs	\$69.50 per month
9. Powder River	\$69.50 per month
10. Granite	\$69.50 per month

That being said I realize that I am the new guy! But the current regional Fire/EMS response system as I see it is in jeopardy of becoming unsustainable within the next five to ten years. One of the most crucial parts of that system is the ALS/EMS component for which BCFD is a key provider. The reason we are seeking a staffing grant is so that we can continue providing excellent service to Baker City and our surrounding neighbors.

This 3 year grant period will allow BCFD to bridge the deficiency gap that now exists. Affording us time to explore those discussions of ASA financial agreements or fire district consolidation, either way there is an immediate need to at a minimum maintain our current levels of service and to develop an improvement plan that will benefit all of our communities.

With this memo I'm hoping to develop a dialogue with each of you so that together we can take the steps to meet our future needs. Please respond back to me or we can discuss as an agenda item during the upcoming Fire Defense Board meeting on February 9.

I look forward to meeting all of you.

Respectfully

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