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Fire MSBU Quarterly Update
-Reduction in “no response calls” attributed to stipend program-

A stipend program for the primarily volunteer firefighters at nine Santa Rosa County fire stations is helping to lower “no response” calls. No response calls, or calls where a fire department was unable to respond in their district and another fire station was called to provide mutual aid, has decreased in the last quarter. Municipal Service Benefit Units or fire MSBU, provides the funding for the stipend.

Stephen Cozart, chairman of the Santa Rosa County Emergency Services Advisory Committee, states the volunteer firefighter stipend plays a part in that reduction. He explains, “Not too long ago, the no response calls were straining our volunteer department resources. Now, there are almost never more than two no response calls in a month. This is a huge accomplishment and our local firefighters should be commended. The two-tier emergency response system now runs more efficiently and ultimately makes everyone in the county safer.” ESAC members are members of the community, one appointed by each of the five commissioners who are responsible for reviewing emergency services and providing commissioners with recommendations on improvements. The committee meets quarterly.

Fire MSBU’s are used for the primarily volunteer stations of Allentown, Bagdad, Berrydale, East Milton, Harold, Munson, Pace, Skyline, and Jay to improve fire and medical services by implementing a five-year plan created by the Santa Rosa County Fire Services Executive Group, while maintaining a “no subsidy” ambulance contract. The fire services executive group meets regularly to review progress and address concerns and consists of chiefs from the nine stations, two community representatives and the Santa Rosa County Emergency Services Coordinator. Holley-Navarre, Midway, Avalon and Navarre Beach are special taxing districts and not part of the MSBU fire group. Gulf Breeze and Milton fire services are provided by their municipalities.

Second Quarter Fire MSBU Update

From January 1- March 31, the nine MSBU stations responded to a total of 1,346 calls:

- 119 traffic accidents
- 767 calls for medical assistance
- 460 fires

In the second quarter of fiscal year 2008-2009, stations received new equipment that was approved by the fire services executive group during the first quarter. No expenditures were approved in January through March:

- Continued funding of four full-time firefighters/EMT personnel at the Pace and Skyline fire departments
- Continued stipend program for over 200 volunteer firefighters
- 1 Tanker/Pumper truck for Pace Fire/Rescue District
- 1 Rescue engine for Pace Fire/Rescue District
- 1 Rescue engine for Skyline Fire & Rescue District
- Rescue, extrication and fire equipment to outfit each response vehicle listed above