

6. BECKWOURTH FIRE DISTRICT

Beckwourth Fire District (Beckwourth FD) provides structural fire suppression, wildland fire suppression, emergency response, basic life support, advanced life support, rescue services and some limited fire prevention programs. A municipal service review was last completed for the District in 2010. Beckwourth FD is being included as part of this MSR to ensure consistency among the various fire service providers in the County.

The District's mission statement states that "the Beckwourth Fire District is committed to the protection of life and property using as our model; safety, teamwork and continuous education and training."⁷⁸

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Background

Beckwourth Fire Department was formed in 1948 and turned into a special district in 1949. The District started with "one 1937 Fire Engine and a small Fire House. The original Fire House has been improved and a second Fire Station was added in 2007. Beckwourth, sometimes erroneously listed as "Beckwith" on early census reports, was named for James "Jim" P. Beckwourth, an unsung, genuine American hero of mixed ancestry who created a lower, safer passage across the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the mid-1800s."⁷⁹

The District was formed to provide fire protection services to the residents of Beckwourth Township. Originally, its services were limited to structural fire and some brush fire. Now Beckwourth FD also has a large EMS force, more equipment and provides services on a larger scale, including wildland fires.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.⁸⁰ The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.⁸¹ Districts must apply and obtain LAFCo approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.

⁷⁸ <http://www.beckwourthfire.com/>

⁷⁹ John Gullixson, Beckwourth Fire District Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update, 2010, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

⁸¹ Health and Safety Code §13862.

Beckwourth FD is located in the eastern part of Plumas County, in the high Sierra Mountains. The District is adjacent to the City of Portola and Eastern Plumas Fire Protection District (EPRFPD) in the west and Sierra Valley Fire Protection District (SVVFD) in the east.

Boundaries

The Beckwourth FD boundary is entirely within Plumas County. The District’s boundary territory that consists of five non-contiguous areas encompasses approximately 13 square miles.⁸²

Plumas LAFCo, State Board of Equalization and tax records indicate that since its formation the District undertook five annexations. All recorded boundary changes are shown in Table 6-1. According to the Board of Equalization, the first annexation took place in 1954. The name of the annexation is unknown but the annexed territory included three tracts—a large area to the southwest of the original District and two smaller areas to the north and the east. The most recent annexation that started in 2003 and was recently finalized, included Sierra Health Foundation or Grizzly Creek Ranch. This was a complicated annexation process, because the SOI of the District had to be updated first to include the territory to be annexed. The SOI update took place in 2010 and annexation process has been finally completed. The Plank/Brenneman annexation of 2007 and the annexation of Sierra Health Foundation have also just been recently recorded by the BOE.

Figure 6-1: Beckwourth FD Boundary History

Sphere of Influence

The SOI for Beckwourth FD was first adopted in 1976⁸³. In 1982⁸⁴ it was revised and again changed in 1983⁸⁵. It was then amended in 2003 after the completion of the abbreviated MSR. The second SOI update was initiated in 2008. The MSR and the SOI

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Type of Action</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Agency</i>
Beckwourth Fire District	Formation	1949	SBOE
Unknown territory	Annexation	1954	SBOE
Schaffer (TRA 144)	Annexation	1994	Tax records
Grizzly Ranch	Annexation	2003	LAFCo, SBOE
Grizzly Road North/Sierra Valley	Annexation	2005	LAFCo, SBOE
Plank/Brenneman	Annexation	2007	LAFCo, SBOE
Sierra Health Foundation/Rocky Point Road	Annexation	2011	LAFCo, SBOE

⁸² Total agency area calculated in GIS software based on agency boundaries as of July 1, 2011. The data is not considered survey quality.

⁸³ LAFCo Resolution 76-44.

⁸⁴ LAFCo Resolution 82-07.06.

⁸⁵ LAFCo Resolution 83-33.

update were completed and adopted in 2010. The new SOI includes territory to the north in Red Clover Valley, residences in Dixie Valley, borders Sierra Valley FPD in the east, EPRFPD in the west and Sierra County in the south. The sphere contains about 190 square miles compared to 13 square miles of boundary area.

Extra-territorial Services

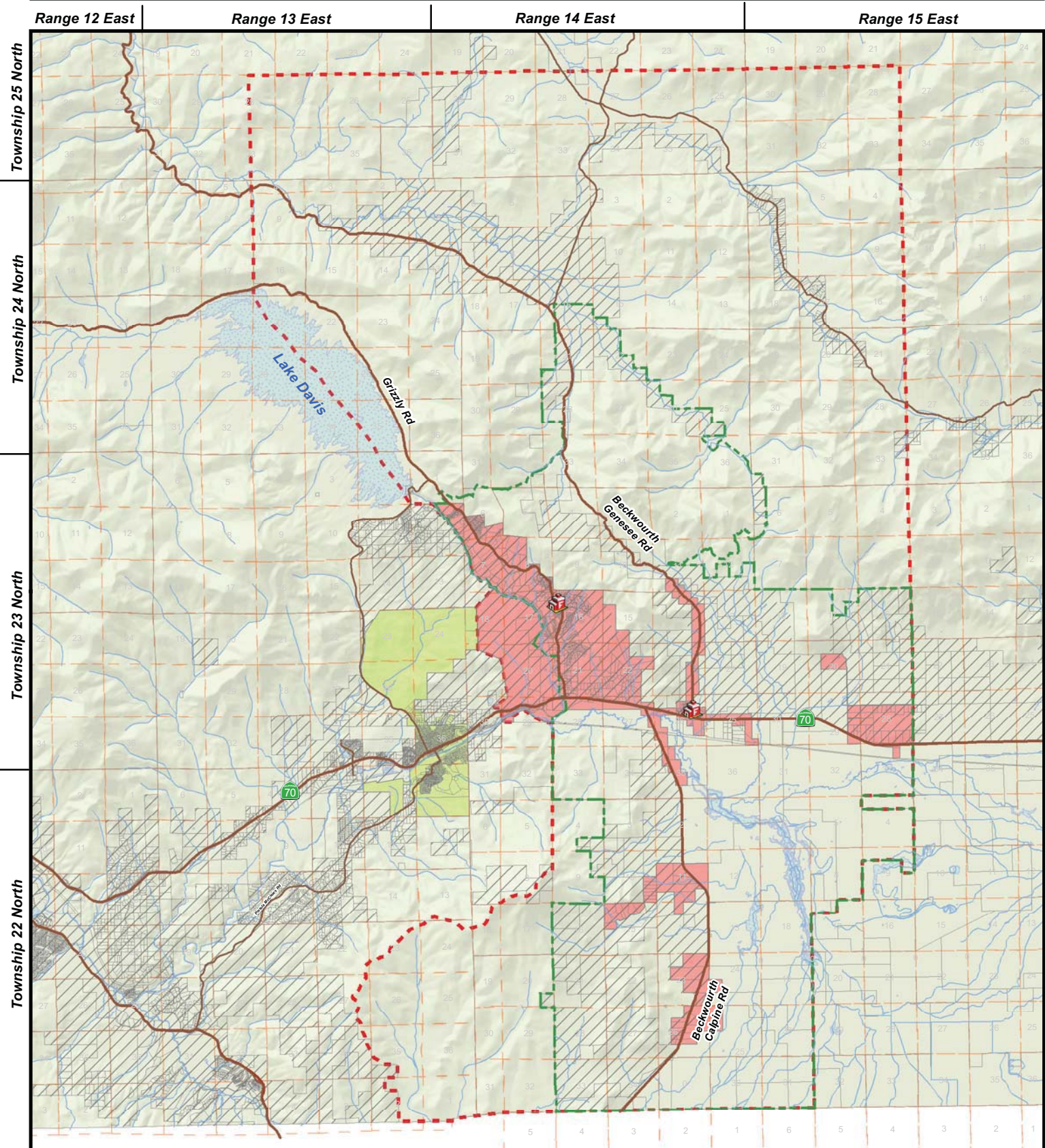
The District provides services outside its boundaries through out-of-area service agreements. Currently, Beckwourth FD has agreements with Curtis Hartwig property and USFS for the Fire Center that is currently being built near the airport. The Fire Center initially needs an OASA to obtain a fire permit. The District will be sharing the Fire Center facility with USFS.

The District also occasionally responds to wildland fires when requested. Response to a wildland fire in federal and state responsibility areas is reimbursed by the federal government. Fees are updated annually.

Through an informal agreement with the Sheriff's Office, which is discussed in more detail in the Fire Service Section of this chapter, the District responds outside of its boundaries to the areas to the north, south and east and encompasses approximately 79 square miles, which is about 6 times larger than the District's boundary area.

Areas of Interest

One area of interest for the District is the Maddalena Tree Farm. Currently, the area is within the boundaries of SVVFD, but Beckwourth FD would like to annex the area. Beckwourth FD reported that its stations were in closer proximity to the tree farm than the SVVFD stations. In addition, SVVFD has to go through Beckwourth FD territory to access the Maddalena Tree Farm, which makes it even more of a challenge to serve this territory.



Legend

- Major Roads
- CA State Highway
- Stream / River
- Waterbodies
- Fire Stations
- Parcels
- City of Portola Local Responsibility Area
- State Responsibility Area (Federal Responsibility lies outside hatched area.)

- Beckwourth FPD
- Beckwourth FPD (SOI)
- FPD Service Area
- Sectional Grid (MDB&M)



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Beckwourth FPD
Resolution:
Adopted: 11/9/1949

Beckwourth FPD (SOI)
Resolution: 2008-004
Adopted:

Source: Plumas LAFCo Map Created 4/3/2011

Accountability and Governance

The principal act orders that the governing body of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.⁸⁶ Beckwourth FD is governed by a five-member board of directors who are elected to staggered four-year terms. Four of the current board members were elected and one appointed. The last contested election took place in 2009. Board member names, positions, and term expiration dates are shown in Figure 6-3.

The Board meets on the third Thursday of every month at seven in the evening at Fire Station 1 in Beckwourth. Agendas and minutes are posted on the website and at Fire Station 1.

Figure 6-3: Beckwourth FD Governing Body

Beckwourth Fire District				
<i>District Contact Information</i>				
Contact:	Fire Chief, Greg McCaffrey RN			
Address:	180 Main St., Beckwourth, CA 96129			
Telephone:	(530)832-1008			
Email/website:	www.beckwourthfire.com , chiefmccaffrey@beckwourthfire.com			
<i>Board of Directors</i>				
Member Name	Position	Term Expiration	Manner of Selection	Length of Term
George Bundy	President	November 2011	Elected	4 years
Denisce Downs	Vice President	November 2011	Elected	4 years
Dean Maddalen	Member	November 2011	Appointed	2 year
Ralph Taylor	Member	November 2013	Elected	4 years
Martin Schaefer	Member	November 2011	Elected	4 years
<i>Meetings</i>				
Date:	Third Thursday of every month at 7pm.			
Location:	Beckwourth Station 1.			
Agenda Distribution:	Posted at the Station 1 and on the website.			
Minutes Distribution:	Posted at the Station 1 and on the website.			

In addition to the required agendas and minutes, the District does public outreach through its website and prevention programs that are described in more detail in the Fire and Emergency Services section of this chapter.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the District's services, the complaints may be submitted by calling the District. The two people who are responsible for handling complaints are the administrative secretary and the fire chief. According to the District,

⁸⁶ Health and Safety Code §13842.

there were no complaints in 2009 and 2010; however, there were many reports of appreciation from constituents.

Beckwourth FD demonstrated accountability and transparency in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Plumas LAFCo. The District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with the document requests.

Planning and Management Practices

Daily operations of the District are managed by the administrative secretary, while operations of the fire department are overseen by the chief. Beckwourth FD has five paid part-time personnel: an administrative secretary, an office assistant, a fire chief, a fire captain, and an engineer. In addition, there is one paid call staff member (a battalion chief) who gets called two to four times a month. The other 11 firefighters and a chaplain are volunteers. When volunteers respond to wildland fires they are entitled to reimbursement.

The administrative secretary and the chief are accountable to the Board of Directors. The secretary oversees the office assistant. The rest of the personnel are accountable to the fire chief. There are two division chiefs who oversee two battalion chiefs who manage two captains. Two engineers report to the captains and supervise firefighters.

The chief and the administrative secretary are to be evaluated by the Board of Directors; however, the Board currently does not do so. The chief evaluates his paid subordinates annually. Volunteers are not evaluated.

Beckwourth FD reported that it does not perform formal evaluations of overall District performance, such as benchmarking or annual reports. However, it informally compares itself to other neighboring providers and considers itself to be performing as well or better than others. The District does not track its employees' workload, but the chief does track the different tasks he has assigned to each his staff. In addition, maintenance logs are kept for the vehicles and equipment, and the District tracks the number of service calls to which it has responded.

The District's financial planning efforts include an annually adopted budget. The financial statements are done by the County and are audited once every two years. The latest audit took place for FY 09-10. The District provided the adopted budgets for FY 09-10 and FY 10-11. Beckwourth FD does not adopt other planning documents, such as a capital improvement plan or master plan.

Existing Demand and Growth Projections

The land uses within the District include residential, suburban, industrial, commercial, agricultural and wildland.⁸⁷ The area within the District's boundaries is approximately 10 square miles.

Population

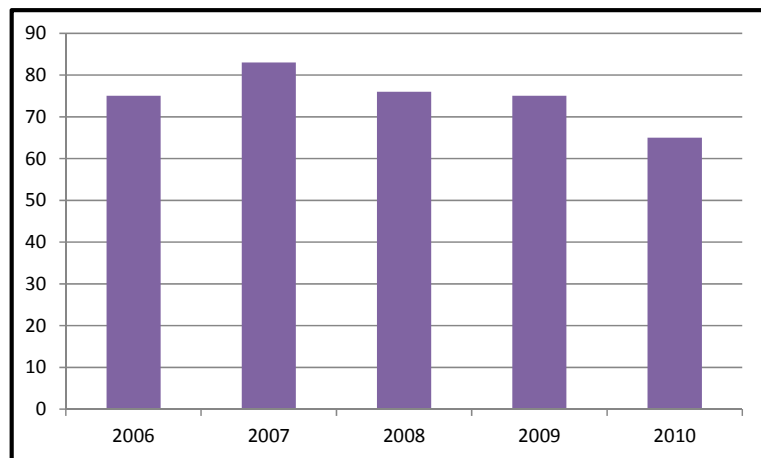
There are approximately 606 permanent residents within the District, based on census block population in the 2010 census.⁸⁸ Census block numbers used to calculate the population are from within the existing boundary area of Beckwourth FD, as of September 2011. . The District's population has grown in the last few years due to multiple annexations. It should also be noted that there is a significant seasonal variation in population.

Existing Demand

The District reports that the peak demand period for every service, including emergency medical, occurs during the summer months, due to the influx of tourists. The most service calls occur between noon and three in the afternoon.

The District reported that it has observed no significant change in service demand since 2006, as can be seen in Figure 6-4. In 2006, Beckwourth FD hired paid personnel and because of that the number of its service calls dramatically increased about five times from 2005.

Figure 6-4: Beckwourth FD Number of Calls (2006-10)



Projected Growth and Development

The District anticipates growth in population and similarly in service demand within the District in the next few years if the economy recovers; however, no formal population projections have been made by the District.

The State Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Plumas County will grow by five percent in the next 10 years. Thus, the average annual population growth

⁸⁷ Plumas County Parcel Application.

⁸⁸ Census Blocks 4412, 4428, 4572, 4570, 4434, 4471, 4435, 4763, 4569, 4575, 4567, 4560, 4692, 4441, 4432, 4440, 4430, 4439, 4443, 4463, 4442, 4446, 4455, 3002, 3048, 4556, 4732 in Tract 3, Block Group 4 in Plumas County.

in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.5 percent. Based on these projections, the District's population would increase from 385 in 2010 to approximately 405 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will increase minimally based on the DOF population growth projections through 2020.

The District reported that to their knowledge there are minimal planned developments within its boundaries. Grizzly Ranch has not reached its build out potential of 330 homes; empty lots are scattered throughout the community. There is a large planned development on Beckwourth-Genesee Road that consists of 280 potential homes and is currently on hold, due to the recession. Another area of potential development is located along County Road A-23. There are currently 50 homes, but there are plans to build more. It is not a single development, but instead multiple individually planned homes. Other potential growth areas consist of four to five lot zones that are scattered all over the District.

The District expects its service demand to go up when the large planned developments are fully constructed. Currently, Beckwourth FD reported that it does not have the capacity to serve these large developments. It plans to negotiate with the developers to build a new station when the need arises. The District identified an area in its future growth area that will be difficult to serve—future homes along County Road A-23 are too far away from the District's stations, which will lead to longer response times.

Growth Strategies

The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County.

The County enforces the codes that it has enforcement power over, which does not encompass all State fire codes. The County ensures that new construction meets the requirements of the latest adopted edition of the California Building Standards. The County enforces the County codes that have been adopted in lieu of the California Fire Safe regulations. The County does not have authority to enforce PRC 4291, which requires defensible space around structures; however, the County does have some enforcement authority over vegetation removal around buildings that was adopted prior to PRC 4291. In addition, the Board of Supervisors, through the adoption of the General Plan and county codes, regulates development standards to be followed in processing subdivisions, including fire protection.

The proposals for new developments are sent for review to the appropriate fire provider if a development is within district's boundaries. The County reported that as SOI maps have not been digitized, it has been challenging to ensure that proposals go to the appropriate district if a proposed development was within that district's SOI but outside its boundaries. The County and Plumas LAFCo are working together on a process to ensure that all appropriate districts are contacted for review of proposed developments. The County Board of Supervisors is discussing a possibility of hiring a fire marshal, part of

whose responsibilities may be code enforcement and building inspections. However, thus far, no decision has been made on the responsibilities of the position.⁸⁹

The County has several policies in the existing general plan, which impact the fire providers of new developments.

- 1) Turnouts are now required in every new development.⁹⁰
- 2) The County encourages development to be located adjacent to or within areas where fire services already exist or can be efficiently provided.⁹¹
- 3) The County requires new developments within areas not currently served by a fire provider to be annexed into an existing fire district or create a funding mechanism, such as a CSD, to cover the costs of fire service provision.⁹²
- 4) Sustainable timber and biomass production and harvesting as well as intensive forest management practices are encouraged to reduce the danger of catastrophic wildfires.⁹³
- 5) There is a minimum requirement of two roadway access points, which are maintained on a year-round basis by the County or the State.⁹⁴
- 6) Minimum public and private road standards: roads providing access to two or more lots have to conform to a two-lane standard of no less than 16-foot traveled way.⁹⁵
- 7) Bridges are required to be designed for an 80,000 pound vehicle load.⁹⁶
- 8) All access roads must be marked with an approved sign; and all lots must be identified by an address.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ Correspondence with Becky Herrin, Plumas County Senior Planner, September 8, 2011.

⁹⁰ Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 9 Section 9-4.604 (k).

⁹¹ Plumas County, *General Plan*, 1984, pp. 28 & 29.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

- 9) All developments within boundaries of a structural fire service provider may be required to contribute to the maintenance of the structural service proportionate to the increase in demand for fire service resulting from the development.⁹⁸
- 10) As a condition of development it is required to provide long-term maintenance of private roads to the standards of original improvements, including roadside vegetation management.⁹⁹
- 11) The County encourages biomass thinning programs in high fire risk areas.¹⁰⁰

The District reported concerns that new developments in the County were not being required to comply with existing requirements.¹⁰¹ The County reported that only one agency had come to the County regarding these concerns, which were unfounded at the time. No conjecture is made by the authors of this report as to the accuracy of these statements. It should be noted that one of the purposes of the newly formed Emergency Service Feasibility Group is to address these concerns.

The County is in the process of updating its general plan. The suggested new policies in the General Plan update that would impact fire service providers, but had not yet been adopted as of the drafting of this report, include:

- 12) The County shall review and update its Fire Safe ordinance to attain and maintain defensible space through conditioning of tentative maps and in new development at the final map or building permit stage.
- 13) The County will consult Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps during the review of all projects. The County will work with fire protection agencies to develop community fire plans and require appropriate building setbacks and fuel modification requirements within fire hazard zones.
- 14) In order for the new development to be approved, the County must conclude that adequate emergency water flow, fire access and firefighters and equipment are available.
- 15) New developments have to show that they have adequate access for emergency vehicles to access the site and for private vehicles to evacuate the area.
- 16) New developments within high and very high fire hazard areas are required to designate fuel break zones that comply with fire safe requirements.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 9 Section 9-4.601.

¹⁰⁰ Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 4 Section 4-2.101.

¹⁰¹ Profile comments from Chief Greg McCaffrey, May 3, 2011.

17)The County will work with Forest Service and fire districts in developing fire prevention programs, identifying opportunities for fuel breaks in zones of high and very high fire hazard and educating public.

18)Fire, law enforcement, EMS, resource management, and public health response partners are encouraged to conduct joint training exercises.¹⁰²

The County has not adopted the new standards for development yet. The revised General Plan may be adopted towards the end of 2012. County zoning code will then go through a revision process in order for the zoning code to implement the General Plan.

In 2007, the Board of Supervisors formed the Emergency Services Advisory Committee to “evaluate the funding feasibility of providing uniform and comprehensive emergency services to all of Plumas County.” The Committee attempted to look for opportunities to increase funding for emergency services, but faced a considerable challenge in the difficult economic times. Most recently, it focused on mitigating efforts through building and development standards improvements and the General Plan update process, and encouraging local fire service providers to share resources and realize economies of scale in preparing grant applications, conducting training and engaging in other joint programs.

According to the District, the County sends Beckwourth FD plans for proposed construction for review and input, but only for existing subdivisions and not for new developments.

The District reported that it was satisfied with its current SOI since it had been recently updated. But it would like to annex about eight more areas that are mainly located to the south of the boundary along SR 70 and on Beckwourth-Genesee road. The District is just starting to initiate the annexation process.

In 2010, Beckwourth FD conducted a consolidation study in which it explored the possibility of consolidating with EPRFPD. The conclusion reached was that although consolidation is inevitable in the future, right now all parties are not agreeable on various terms. If EPRFPD were to take on parcel fees, consolidation may be financially sound, as reported by Beckwourth FD.

Financing

The District reports that current financing levels are adequate to deliver services; however, Beckwourth FD reported that it is constantly in search of more income to be able to provide better services. It was also reported that the recent recession had a negative impact on the District’s revenue streams, as planned developments within its boundaries are on hold and the growth in assessed values for property taxes has been low.

¹⁰² Plumas County General Plan, Draft Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures, 2010.

The County keeps accounts for the District's finances and tracks revenues and expenditures. The District's total revenues for FY 09-10 were \$307,577. Revenue sources include property taxes (38 percent), benefit assessments (25 percent), federal aid (32 percent), state aid (two percent), charges for services (two percent), use of money (one percent) and other revenue (one percent). Benefit assessments are charged on properties recently annexed into the District. The federal aid income is a FEMA staffing grant, which is to be used to augment staffing levels by supplementing salaries. FY 09-10 was the second year of the five year grant.

Beckwourth FD charges fees for conducting inspections and responding to wildland fires. The District has a commercial, industrial and residential special inspection fee schedule. The service fees paid to the District for responding to wildland fires as a Cooperating Agency under Assistance by Hire are the same for all Districts that respond to a federal incident. The rates for the personnel responding to an incident are based on comparative salary survey of representative paid fire districts and departments and are updated annually. The District also charges for out-of-area service agreements. Sierra Health Foundation began contracting for services from the District at \$10,000 per year; contract payments are increased two percent annually. Their 2011 annual payment is \$11,486.86 quarterly. Hartwig pays \$3,000 per year with a two percent annual increase. There are no charges for services related to the Fire Center, as it is intended to be a shared facility with Beckwourth FD.

Figure 6-5: Beckwourth FD Revenues and Expenditures

<i>Income/Expenses</i>	<i>FY 09-10 Budgeted</i>		<i>FY 09-10 Actual</i>		<i>FY 10-11 Budgeted</i>	
<i>Income</i>						
Taxes	\$119,000	50%	\$116,483	38%	\$117,000	52%
Benefit Assessments	\$76,000	32%	\$76,090	25%	\$73,000	32%
Use of Money	\$2,500	1%	\$1,008	0%	\$2,000	1%
Federal Aid	\$25,350	11%	\$99,964	33%	\$16,200	7%
State Aid	\$600	0%	\$6,699	2%	\$600	0%
Charges for Services	\$10,400	4%	\$5,975	2%	\$10,250	5%
Other Revenue	\$5,200	2%	\$1,358	0%	\$6,200	3%
Total Income	\$239,050	100%	\$307,577	100%	\$225,250	100%
<i>Expenses</i>						
Salaries & Benefits	\$118,846	30%	\$110,753	34%	\$90,000	29%
Services & Supplies	\$227,657	57%	\$165,074	50%	\$158,250	52%
Capital Outlays	\$53,000	13%	\$44,743	14%	\$57,000	19%
Other Expenditures	\$0	0%	\$9,951	3%	\$0	0%
Total Expense	\$399,503	100%	\$330,521	100%	\$305,250	100%
Net Income	-\$160,453		-\$22,944		-\$80,000	
Notes:						
(1) While district budgets expenditures that exceed revenues, the District has historically spent significantly less than was budgeted and has maintained a fund balance of between \$65,000 and \$144,000 over the last five fiscal years.						

Beckwourth FD expenditures were \$330,521 in FY 09-10. Of this amount, 50 percent was spent on services and supplies, 27 percent on salaries and wages, 14 percent on fixed assets, six percent on employee benefits, and three percent on other expenditures. In FY 09-10, expenditures exceeded revenues by \$22,944, which was covered by the District's contingency fund balance. At the end of FY 09-10, the District's fund balance was \$81,997.

The District does not have a capital improvement plan, but plans its expenditures for capital improvement projects on an annual basis in the annual budgets. Capital improvements are financed through capital reserves which are set aside for specific projects and occasionally through loans. The District also does some fundraising through selling T-shirts and reflective signs. Every year, Beckwourth FD puts aside money for capital improvements in two categories—fire engine replacement that is allocated about \$20,000 a year and grounds improvements, which is allocated \$5,000 per year. The District is currently paying back a loan for a new truck; the funds to pay back this loan come out of the \$20,000 annually allocated to engine replacement capital savings; consequently, savings for future engine replacement have been lower. Once the loan is paid off in a few years, the engine replacement fund will continue receiving the full amount.

The District does not have a formal emergency reserve policy. However, it has a practice of putting money away for contingencies. Beckwourth FD tries to keep a minimum of \$50,000 in its contingency fund. As mentioned previously, the contingency fund balance at the end of FY 09-10 was approximately \$80,000. The District uses this to cover excess expenditures in any given year.

The District identified additional financing opportunities, one of which is to apply for more grants. Currently, Beckwourth FD has a pending grant application with CalFire for safety, fire and radio equipment and training.

Additionally, the township of Beckwourth, Tax Rate Area 53-138, does not have a parcel rate attached to it, therefore, BFD is not receiving property tax revenue from this tax rate area, although it was part of the District's original boundaries. The District is looking into the possibility of changing this situation. The District is also expecting extra income from future annexations.

The County reported that only those areas that had existing taxes in place prior to 1977 contribute a share of the property tax base to the Districts. Before the passage of Proposition 13, Districts had the ability to set the tax rate at will. With the passage of Proposition 13, the tax rate was frozen as of a certain date. Therefore, some Districts had existing taxes and some didn't. The County does not have a procedure for renegotiating tax sharing for existing developed areas, only for annexations on a case-by-case basis and only for a portion of any future tax increases, not for the base. Fire district law allows districts to hold parcel tax elections in order to raise tax revenue.

The District does not participate in any joint power authorities (JPAs) or joint financing mechanisms.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Service Overview

Beckwourth FD provides structural fire suppression, wildland fire suppression, emergency response, basic life support, advanced life support, rescue and limited fire prevention programs. Prevention programs include performing educational activities with children at a nearby summer camp, conducting inspections, issuing burn permits, patrolling and checking on burn permits, and putting up signs and warnings.

Collaboration

The District has mutual aid agreements with SVVFD, City of Loyalton FD, USFS, Sierra County FPD, EPRFPD, and EPHCD. It engages in joint trainings with fire departments from Plumas and other counties. The District is a member of the Fire Chief's Association, Special District Association of Plumas County, California Special District Association, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

The District also was involved in the County General Plan update and provided its input into the discussions about a countywide fire warden position.

Dispatch

The County Sheriff is the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP); consequently, most land line emergency calls (9-1-1 calls) are directed to the Sheriff. Most cell phone emergency calls (9-1-1 calls) are answered by CHP and redirected to the Sheriff. The Sheriff provides dispatching for most fire providers in the County except for the ones in the northern part of the County, which are served by the CHP Susanville Dispatch Center. The Forest Service has its own dispatch. The Sheriff Dispatch Center has a first responder map, which it uses to identify which provider to dispatch to an incident. All territory within the County has a determined first responder; although, many areas lie outside the LAFCo approved boundary of the districts and lack an officially designated fire provider.

The District reported that there were problems in the past with incorrect fire departments being paged quite frequently. Beckwourth FD started producing incident reports and sending them to the dispatch center. The County Board of Supervisors also became involved in the problem. The issue got resolved and currently dispatch mistakes occur only from time to time.

There are also a few issues with dispatch that are of concern to Beckwourth FD. The dispatchers need an updated ESNmap; fire districts should work with the Sheriff's Office to resolve any dispatch issues around the Lake Davis area. Another issue is that Beckwourth FD usually gets dispatched to Grizzly Way Avenue in the City of Portola, due to the fact that multiple streets within the District's service area contain the word Grizzly in their names. Beckwourth FD also sometimes gets mistakenly dispatched to the area west of Portola, although the territory belongs to either EPRFPD or Portola service areas; as a result, all

three providers arrive to an incident location. Another dispatch need includes the capability to detect a location from a cell phone call. More people are expected to start using cell phones instead of land lines over the next few years, and this detection capability will become increasingly more important.

The District reports that currently radio frequencies are shared with other providers in Plumas County, but Beckwourth FD is in the process of acquiring its own frequency.

When multiple providers respond to an incident in Beckwourth FD's service area, they use the incident command model. The chief assigns other service providers tasks as needed.

Staffing

Beckwourth FD has 16 sworn personnel—one fire chief, two division chiefs, two battalion chiefs, two captains, two engineers, one chaplain, and eight firefighters. Fire chief, fire captain and an engineer are paid personnel. One of the battalion chiefs is a call staff member who gets paid per call. The rest of the firefighters are entitled to compensation when they respond to wildland fires. The median age of the fire fighters is 50, with a range from 23 to 77.

The District reports that its staffing levels have not changed significantly in the last few years. Beckwourth FD tries to recruit more volunteers through word of mouth, banners on road sides and advertising at its booth at an annual event in Portola.

According to the California State Fire Marshal, all volunteer and call firefighters must acquire Firefighter I certification; however, there is no time limit as to how long they may work before attaining certification. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fireground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of volunteer or call experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.¹⁰³ Beckwourth FD has seven Firefighter I, five Firefighter II, one fire officer and 15 BLS I certified personnel.

The District conducts weekly trainings. On the first Monday of each month there is a business meeting, on the second and third Mondays there are fire trainings, and on the fourth they conduct EMS training. The District does not have a minimum required amount of training hours, but if a firefighter misses three months of training he or she becomes inactive.

¹⁰³ State Fire Marshall, *Course Information and Required Materials*, 2007, p. 44

Facilities and Capacity

Beckwourth FD operates two fire stations. Station 1 is located in Beckwourth and was built in 1948. The last addition to the station was done in 2003-04. Station 2, on Grizzly Road, was built in 2006. The District owns both stations. Station 1 is staffed from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon. There are always two to three people at a time staffing the station, including administrative personnel. Station 2, shared with USFS, is staffed from nine in the morning till seven in the afternoon in summer months and from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon during the rest of the year. Five people, all of whom are USFS personnel, usually staff the station. Station 2 is also operated by Beckwourth FD volunteers who typically respond from their work or residence.

Station 1, which is the main station, was reported to be in good condition. It is used to house vehicles, for training purposes and as an administrative office. Station 2 was reported to be in excellent condition.¹⁰⁴ It is shared with USFS, which has a small office and a wildland engine there. Station 1 houses one Type 1 engine, two Type 3 engines, two Type 4 engines, and one Type 1 water tender. Station 2 is used to store one Type 1 engine, one Type 4 engine, and one Type 3 engine that belongs to USFS. There is also a command vehicle, which is used by the chief and is usually kept at his place of residence.

“The Beckwourth Fire District has access to fire flows of 1,000 gpm from fire hydrants. The water pressure for the service area is 60 psi. The total water storage accessible to the District for fire suppression is two million gallons.”¹⁰⁵

Currently, the District has the capacity to provide adequate services within its boundary area. However, it is anticipated that as large planned developments are completed, Beckwourth FD will need additional stations.¹⁰⁶

Infrastructure Needs

Station 1 requires upgrades. It needs new asphalt that would cost approximately \$80,000-\$100,000 and replacement of a portion of the roof that is estimated to be about \$10,000. There are currently no specific plans to address these needs.

A new facility (the Fire Center) is currently being constructed near the airport. The facility will be shared by Beckwourth FD with USFS. Other new facilities will be constructed in the future as needed.

¹⁰⁴ Facility condition definitions: Excellent-relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. Good- provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. Fair-operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. Poor- cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

¹⁰⁵ John Gullixson, Beckwourth Fire District Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update, 2010, p. 18.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Beckwourth FD fire chief, 4/26/2011.

Station 2 is brand new and does not require any upgrades. The District does not have any vehicle needs. A majority of the vehicles have been replaced recently. The command vehicle is aging, but there are currently no plans to replace it.

Challenges

The District reported several challenges to providing adequate services:

- ❖ A residence on Cub Lane is extremely difficult to get to during an incident. There is an easement instead of a driveway, and only a pickup truck is able drive up to the house.
- ❖ A similar challenge exists at a residence off of Grizzly Road. The driveway is at a 45 degree angle and none of the larger engines can drive up to the house.
- ❖ The District does not have the ability to provide full hazardous materials service. It is only able to contain a threat and wait for the hazmat team.
- ❖ Due to the recession, the District's tax income has been reduced and planned developments are presently on hold.

Some of the opportunities for service improvement mentioned by the District include looking for additional grants and pursuing possible consolidation with other fire providers in the future.

Service Adequacy

While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. Beckwourth FD has an ISO rating of 5/7/10. Grizzly Ranch, Grizzly Creek Ranch and Crocker Estates have a rating of 5, the southern area of County Road A-23 has a rating of 10, and the remainder of the District has a rating of 7. The ISO rating was last updated in 2010. The rating of 5 is achieved in the mentioned communities because of the three water service providers operating within them, Grizzly Ranch CSD, Grizzly Creek Ranch/Sierra Health Foundation and Grizzly Lake CSD, and consequently the additional water supply.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Telephone interview with the chief, 4/26/2011.

The guideline established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for fire response times is six minutes at least 90 percent of the time, with response time measured from the 911-call time to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. The fire response time guideline established by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (formerly the Commission on Fire Accreditation International) is 5 minutes 50 seconds at least 90 percent of the time.¹⁰⁸

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response has to be. The California EMS Agency established the following response time guidelines: five minutes in urban areas, 15 minutes in suburban or rural areas, and as quickly as possible in wildland areas. The District's response zones includes the rural and wilderness classifications. The District tracks each incident's response time. Sometimes it takes a minute to respond, but other times it may take more than ten depending on the time of day and the area. The average response time is five minutes. An area that Beckwourth FD can improve upon is calculating its median and 90th percentile response times.

The service area size¹⁰⁹ for each fire station varies between fire districts. The median fire station in eastern Plumas serves approximately 20 square miles. Sierra Valley FPD serves the most expansive area, with 111 square miles served per station on average. Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, the average service area for the City of Portola is 3.8 square miles. By comparison, each fire station in Beckwourth FD serves approximately 39.5 square miles.

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another indicator of level of service; however, it is approximate. The providers' call firefighters may have differing availability and reliability. A district with more firefighters could have fewer resources if scheduling availability is restricted. Staffing levels in eastern Plumas vary from eight call firefighters per 1,000 residents in City of Portola service area to 42 in Beckwourth FD.

¹⁰⁸ Commission on Fire Accreditation International, 2000.

¹⁰⁹ Service area refers to the area that the agency will respond to, based on a first responder map used by the Sherriff's office.

Figure 6-6: Beckwourth Fire District Fire Profile

Fire Service					
Facilities					
Firestation	Location	Condition	Staff per Shift	Vehicles	
Station 1	180 Main Street, Beckwourth CA	Good	2-3 District staff including administrative personnel	1 Type 1 engine, 2 Type 3 engines, 2 Type 4 engines, 1 Type 1 water tender.	
Station 2	4076 Grizzly Road, Portola, CA 96122	Excellent	5 USFS staff	1 Type 1 engine, 1 Type 4 engine, 1 Type 3 engine that belongs to USFS.	
Facility Sharing					
Current Practices: The District shares Station 2 with USFS. Its meeting hall is used by various groups for community events. The hospital uses the meeting hall for an annual vaccination clinic.					
Future opportunities: The District will share the Fire Center facility near the airport.					
Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies					
Station 1 needs new asphalt and roof repairs. Command vehicle needs to be replaced in the near future.					
District Resource Statistics		Service Configuration		Service Demand	
Staffing Base Year	2010	Configuration Base Year	2010	Statistical Base Year	2010
Fire Stations in District	2	Fire Suppression	Direct	Total Service Calls	65
Stations Serving District	2	EMS	Direct	% EMS	50%
Sq. Miles Served per Station ¹	40	Ambulance Transport	EPHCD	% Fire/Hazardous Materials	31%
Total Staff ²	18	Hazardous Materials	Direct	% False	6%
Total Full-time Firefighters	0	Air Rescue/Ambulance Helicopter	CareFlight	% Misc. emergency	5%
Total Call Firefighters	16	Fire Suppression Helicopter	USFS, CalFire	% Non-emergency	8%
Total Sworn Staff per Station ³	8	Public Safety Answering Point	Sheriff	% Mutual Aid Calls	18%
Total Sworn Staff per 1,000	42	Fire/EMS Dispatch	Sheriff	Calls per 1,000 people	169
Service Adequacy			Service Challenges		
Response Time Base Year	2010	Two houses have limited access. The District does not perform hazmat services. The recent recession negatively affected the District's finances.			
Median Response Time (min)	NP	Training			
90th Percentile Response Time (min)	NP	Firefighters train every Monday. On the first Monday of each month they have a business meeting, on the second and third Mondays they conduct fire trainings and on the fourth Monday is EMS training. If a firefighter misses three months of training he or she becomes inactive.			
ISO Rating	5/7/10				
Mutual & Automatic Aid Agreements					
The District has mutual aid agreements with SVVFD, City of Loyalton FD, USFS, Sierra County FPD, and EPHCD.					
Notes: 1) Primary service area (square miles) per station. 2) Total staff includes sworn and non-sworn personnel. 3) Based on ratio of sworn full-time and call staff to the number of stations. Actual staffing levels of each station vary.					

BECKWOURTH FPD DETERMINATIONS

Growth and Population Projections

- ❖ Over the past few years the District has experienced an increase in population due to multiple annexations.
- ❖ Despite economic difficulties and stalled developments, the population of the District is expected to grow if the planned annexations of eight more territories go through.

Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

- ❖ The District's current facilities have the capacity to adequately serve current demand, but not future growth. When planned developments are constructed, the District will need additional stations.
- ❖ It is recommended that the County Sheriff's Office work with the fire districts to update the ESN map that is used for dispatching, in order to adequately address any communication concerns and recent boundary changes.
- ❖ The District identified a need for new asphalt and replacement of a portion of the roof at Station 1. The command vehicle will need to be replaced in the near future.
- ❖ Currently, capital improvement projects are identified in the annual budget. The District should consider adopting a capital improvement plan to identify financing needs and sources for these needs.
- ❖ An area that Beckwourth FD could improve upon is tracking and calculating its median and 90th percentile response times.

Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

- ❖ The District reports that current financing levels are adequate to deliver services.
- ❖ Beckwourth FD is searching for additional revenue sources to provide enhanced service levels.
- ❖ The District hopes to increase its funding by applying for grants, ensuring all parcels are contributing property taxes and annexing additional territories.

Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

- ❖ Beckwourth FD collaborates with other fire providers in Plumas County, and outside of it, through mutual aid agreements and memberships in the Fire Chiefs Association, Special District Association of Plumas County, California Special District Association, and NFPA.
- ❖ The District shares its Station 2 with USFS, and provides its meeting hall for community and hospital events.
- ❖ The District will be sharing the Fire Center facility with USFS, which is being constructed near the airport.

Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

- ❖ Beckwourth FD demonstrated accountability and transparency by disclosing financial and service related information in response to LAFCo requests.
- ❖ The County of Plumas is considering hiring a countywide fire marshal whose responsibilities may include enforcing fire code and conducting building inspections.
- ❖ A governmental structure option is consolidation with other neighboring fire service providers, which offers opportunities for shared resources and finances.
- ❖ Beckwourth FD conducted a consolidation study, which explored the possibility of consolidation with EPRFPD. The conclusion reached was that although consolidation is inevitable in the future, presently, all parties are not agreeable on various terms.
- ❖ The District is currently initiating the annexation of eight more territories.
- ❖ The District hopes to improve its operational efficiency through applying for more grants.