



WVFA

WAY

CHARTER

Declaration of Intent

History is punctuated by examples of brave men and women who freely admit their personal shortcomings, who openly acknowledge their limitations and who fully understand that taking risks can lead to devastating outcomes. Among this group of men and women, are a smaller number who not only acknowledge their personal limitation and the potential cost of taking risk, but who visualize the future and take proactive, measured risks in an effort to prepare for the unknown.

We are one of those smaller groups. We acknowledge that we are imperfect individuals. We understand that the future is unknown and we understand that taking action involves risks. We resolve to be more than our fear and our imperfection. While we can't see the future, we study the past and accept its clues about tomorrow. We aim to prepare.

We envision the continued growth of the population in Marion County. We envision a continued struggle to fund public safety efforts under a growing demand and a shrinking resource pool. We envision a continued grounding in the ongoing and equal partnership between volunteer and paid personnel. We envision a continued reliance on cooperative efforts between agencies. We envision that many small public safety agencies will, over the coming decades, face institutional failure at no fault of their own. We believe that their communities will suffer a loss of service and will face greater personal and public losses because local emergency services are no longer available.

We acknowledge the risk of moving toward partnerships. Partnership requires compromise and poorly managed compromise can lead to a loss of identity. When motives lack purity and communication is not effective, unhealthy conflict can occur. This conflict can give way to dysfunction and failure. We acknowledge this risk and we acknowledge risks we have not yet seen.

We also insist that beyond these known and unknown risks, is a reward worth having. By working together with other organizations who share our values and priorities, we can create solid partnerships that lessen the impact of known challenges and unknown hurdles. We can surround ourselves with those who understand our concerns, share our passion and who commit to our shared efforts at maintaining a high level of community protection at an affordable price. This we believe.

We are bound together, not by identical beliefs and cultures, but by a unified embrace of our shared values and a solemn commitment to face the future together. Today, this shared commitment is young, yet we envision the growth that comes with tests and nurturing. One day, WVFRA will be old, solid, tested and mature. The following pages are an illustration of our shared sense of mission, our declared values and our commitment to our individual and corporate responsibilities.

We rely on this document not only for guidance in the immediate future. We rely on it to mark for those who follow us, the reasons for our choices today and our hopes for the future. This founding document is intended to shape our choices at all levels and at all times. May the future we cannot know unfold well in the hands of those who follow us. This is our hope and single desire.

Willamette Valley Fire & Rescue Authority Charter

*Established by the stakeholders and marked by signatures affixed to this charter
On this the 15th day, of April 2010*

Mission: “To support the viability of fire districts who positively impact their communities.”

Values

Our mission is accomplished through the application of organizational values to which each of us commits in the course of our work. We value...

- **Integrity** at every level of our organization.
- **Honesty** displayed in communications and actions that revere the truth.
- **Attitude** focused on a positive, realistic approach to all situations.
- **Accountability** that creates transparency at every level encourages the communities open view of their fire authority and promotes ownership and individual growth.
- **Trust** that develops between us as we care for one another, support and look after one another’s interests. This is the trust placed in us by the districts and citizens we serve.
- **Loyalty** to our colleagues. Loyalty to the districts who commission us and loyalty to the communities they serve. Loyalty to our mission and to these values and principles.
- **Respect** between all persons regardless of rank, classification, education, personal influence, gender, religion, race, creed, affiliation or natural ability.
- **Teamwork** and the strength of **decisions** developed through open and collaborative processes.
- **Positive work environment** that encourages good-natured humor, a balanced approach to lie in the freedoms that come with feeling emotionally safe, valued and fulfilled.
- **Cooperation**, our shared and complimentary efforts and those of the districts we serve.
- **Commitment**, an enduring and sustainable effort to over-come challenges and to accomplish long-term goals.
- **Preparedness** achieved by anticipating the future, educating and equipping personnel, the funding of priority projects and encouraging effective prevention activities in the districts and communities we serve.

These values will be clearly and consistently visible in our daily interactions.

Principles

These principles reflect our values and are the foundation of our organization. We will maintain a climate of fairness, consistency and professionalism in assisting our members in achieving both individual and group success. By following the principles and values established by our organization, we can enhance the excellence of our districts.

Safety. Every decision we make every action we take and every service we provide will account for the physical and emotional safety of all persons involved.

We shall:

- Expect everyone to perform their jobs at the highest performance level possible.
- Make decisions such that every responder returns safely from every scene.

Communication. Effective communication is central to everything we do. We aim to be careful listeners who value two-way communications, maintain confidences, and recognize the complexities of communication in all forms.

We shall:

- Promote an environment of open and honest communication through respect, compassion, consideration and understanding.
- Believe that collaboration, effective listening, and willingness to acknowledge constructive criticism improves the outcome of our decision-making.
- Be consistent with our communications through active listening, with a mature and positive attitude.

Customer Service. We will be an organization where individual citizens feel welcomed, safe, valued, and listened to. Our organization exists to serve its districts and their citizens.

We shall:

- Present ourselves professionally and courteously, through actions and appearance.
- Exhibit a positive attitude when speaking to people on behalf of our districts...
- Remember that we serve people.

Competency. Our success depends on individual competence at every level of our organization.

We shall:

- Foster an environment that honors proactive problem solving, common sense and good judgment.
- Achieve proficiency through continuous education and training.
- Utilize the knowledge and experience of those with whom we serve.

Financial Integrity. Our financial decisions will be open and transparent. We will be careful, competent and wise stewards of public funds.

Relationships. We recognize the very high value of healthy, authentic relationships. We invest time, energy and resources in creating, maintaining and improving excellent interpersonal relationships.

Fitness. Intellectual, emotional and physical.

Hard Work. We serve districts and communities who rightly expect us to work hard and give our best.

Our Responsibilities

Willamette Valley Fire & Rescue Authority (WVFRA) is an organization committed to excellence. This commitment is derived from each individual, positive leadership, and the pride of our members.

The Philosophy is not meant to be a procedure, but rather a vision of how we want to function. This Philosophy expresses the values, principals and ideals that members of WVFRA are committed to achieving. We choose to be a proud, close-knit organization. This Philosophy is a result of our members' ideals and dedication, as well as our relationships.

We understand the importance of individual initiative and going the extra mile by communicating expectations and recognizing that each individual does make a difference.

Making the Commitment

Being a member of the Willamette Valley Fire & Rescue Authority is a commitment to each other, to citizens and to our communities. WVFRA is made up of members from a variety of economic and social backgrounds. We have in common, the sincere desire to serve the public. We are a professional organization dedicated to meeting our mission and committed to excellence. We realize our obligation to protect the public and the environment at all times, on or off duty. We honor members and their families for life.

By achieving this high level of public service, we are exhibiting our commitment to "Going the extra mile." Application of this Philosophy is our commitment to WVFRA.

Being Responsible For Ourselves and Each Other

WVFRA is only as good as we, its members, are committed to making it. We are sometimes leaders and sometimes followers; however, all are always members. ***We will be known for keeping our word and doing what we say we will do.*** ***This*** is a major part of WVFRA's foundation.

As a member, you are expected to be responsible and accountable for your actions, to take the initiative in positively solving problems at your level, and to seek assistance when needed. How we treat each other has a direct correlation to how we treat our public. It is expected that we will treat ourselves with the respect we give our customers.

Being Responsible Leaders

Leadership is the critical element in maintaining a positive image and high standards. Our leaders will take an active role in developing, expressing, and defending the values of both the individual and WVFRA. Each of our leaders, both formal and informal, consistently models an appreciation of this philosophy and its values. Positive reinforcement is our preferred method of motivating ourselves and one another.

When responsible leaders face problems, we strive to develop solutions that solve both the immediate problem and create improvement for the future. Every leader is also a follower. Being a good leader means treating your followers as you want to be treated as a leader. It means following your own leaders as you expect to be followed.

Being Responsible Communicators

Effective communicators are critical to the success of our mission. Whether we are on scene, attending meetings in or out of our respective districts, on duty at the station, working at our desks, or just out in the public eye, we demand of our members to practice effective listening and competent communication behaviors. We believe that open, direct and honest communication will aid us as we work together and as we manage our differences when they arise.

We task the responsibility of being an effective communicator to each member because communication is a key principle of this organization. We believe a positive and healthy culture can only be developed and nurtured if we support ground rules for communication behavior in our organization:

1. Take responsibility for what you say, when you say it, and after you said it.
2. Show respect for each other in your choice of words and the tone you choose when communicating. Everyone is listening.
3. Be a great listener... Listeners are powerful people.
4. Remember that body language is a powerful form of communication; use it wisely and effectively.
5. When all is said and done, be sure you can be proud of what you said.
6. Just as important as knowing when to start talking, is knowing when to stop.

First impressions are often based on a combination of appearance and communication. First impressions count! We want the impressions we make to be an accurate statement about who we are and what we

believe. We expect each of our members to conduct themselves in a manner that projects the positive image of WVFRA.

And so the story begins...

It is our sincere hope that by reviewing this document, the reader has gained a sense of our motives and the desire that drives us to the creation of WVFRA.

The concepts herein shall be the framework for every decision we make and for every service we provide. As we deal with each other and with every citizen, our belief in, and adherence to each of these core concepts shall be clear. Our words and our actions will display both our intent and the depth of our commitment.

By holding firm to our unchanging foundation, this organization will be positioned for continued service in a changing world. And for this reason, we strongly admonish those who follow us not to adjust or amend this founding document without very careful thought and deliberation. While the organization must be nimble, we believe this founding document to be timeless in value and virtually unchanging in content.

Our individual and corporate belief in these concepts is clearly expressed by the signatures attached.