



STATEMENT REGARDING THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF ASBURY PARK AND ITS FIRE DEPARTMENT ON FIRE SERVICE CONSOLIDATIONS, MERGERS AND REGIONALIZATION OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The City of Asbury Park and its Fire Department support, in principle, the concept of regionalization and consolidation as one manner of delivering firefighting, technical rescue, and emergency medical services.

Such a plan would be designed to deliver the foregoing services consistent with:

- *NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire.*
- *NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*

These nationally recognized standards provide minimum criteria for response times and staffing levels. These standards enhance the life safety of both the public and the fire service. They form the building blocks to organizing an effective and cost efficient regionalized fire and rescue service. What was a host of different organizations can now be stream lined into a highly cost effective organizational structure; a single emergency organization that now requires fewer resources, yet, provides more services than all of the former smaller organizations due to the effective use of assets.

Some of the Nation's most highly regarded and successful fire departments are regional or county-wide agencies serving significant populations and infrastructure including: Miami-Dade, Fairfax, Prince Georges, Montgomery, and Los Angeles County's. These departments, and many more like them employ cross-trained firefighters with the ability to provide all facets of emergency medical services in addition to fire and technical rescue services.

A successful example of an effective service in New Jersey is the Cherry Hill Fire Department. The Cherry Hill Fire Department has systematically grown over the years from a fractionalized, small volunteer/combination fire service comprised of several independent districts, to a first class fire, rescue, and EMS provider employing a career based service supplemented by volunteers. It is an organization that used NFPA standards including 1710 and 1720 as the basic building blocks to achieve organizational effectiveness and cost efficiency. This department offers a local model of what could be.

In summary, there is a great opportunity to provide a universal service that is significantly more cost effective and offers the public a greater degree of service. The concept of regionalization is not a foreign concept and with the proper leadership could be made to work locally with great success.