

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR PENNINGTON COUNTY FIRE

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Overview of the County Volunteer Fire Service

The 19 volunteer fire departments and 425 volunteer firefighters, serving the 35,000+ Pennington County residents outside Rapid City, respond to nearly 1500 calls for service each year. Volunteer fire departments respond to structure fires, hazardous material conditions, vehicle accidents, wildland fires, and other related calls. First responder medical service is provided by 16 of the fire departments.

Authorization for County Fire

SDCL 34-31-3. County tax levy for fire-fighting purposes -- Petition to include municipality -- Maximum levy -- Accumulation from year to year. For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of § 34-31-1 and 34-31-2, the board of county commissioners may levy a tax not to exceed sixty cents per thousand dollars of taxable valuation in the county outside the limits of any municipality which provides fire protection service. However, the governing body of any municipality may by ordinance petition the board of county commissioners to include the taxable valuation within the limits of the municipality under the aforementioned levy for county fire protection service. The inclusion of the taxable valuation within the limits of the municipality under the levy for county fire protection service shall be in addition to the municipal levy for fire protection as provided in chapter 9-33. The proceeds of such tax shall be used only for the purposes of § 34-31-1 and 34-31-2 in the county in which the tax is levied and unexpended balances at the end of the fiscal year may not revert to the general fund but shall be permitted to accumulate and shall be available for carrying out the purposes of § 34-31-1 and 34-31-2. The levy authorized by this section is in addition to the levy authorized in § 10-12-21.

Pennington County Fire Service Board

The Board of Commissioners and the Pennington County Fire Service Board, through a written agreement, oversee the activities of the Fire Administrator. The Fire

Service Board is comprised of eight (8) members elected by the fire departments, one County Commissioner, Emergency Management, South Dakota Wildland Fire Suppression and the Black Hills National Forest.

Programs Offered by the Pennington County Fire Service Board

Vehicle Replacement Program

Each volunteer fire department may apply for assistance in replacing aging and unreliable vehicles. Cost sharing is encouraged.



10 of 12 Wildland Urban/Interface trucks purchased in 2004

Workers Compensation for Volunteers Firefighters

SDCL states that volunteer firefighters shall be deemed county employees for the purpose of computing workers compensation. County fire provides workers compensation to insure coverage for all volunteer firefighters. The 6-12 claims per year are filed with the Fire Administrator. The Fire Service Board reviews all claims for cause and potential safety recommendations.

Vehicle Repair

The Fire Service Board may assist volunteer fire departments for major repairs to fire vehicles, if the fire department is financially incapable.

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5-Year Personal Protective Equipment Program

Each volunteer fire department, once every five (5) years, may apply for a grant up to \$4,000 for basic firefighter personal protection equipment.

Vehicle Insurance

The Fire Service Board may reimburse volunteer fire departments for vehicle liability insurance if the fire department is financially incapable.

Equipment Purchases

The Fire Service Board may assist volunteer fire departments in purchasing communications and fire equipment if the fire department is financially incapable.

Firefighting Foam

The Fire Service Board maintains a cache of firefighting foam for use by the volunteer fire departments. By purchasing in large quantities we save money and maintain a ready supply.

Future Goals of Fire Service Board

Rural Addressing

The FSB will be proposing to place the address of each rural home near the access road and driveway. Allowing emergency responders to quickly locate the correct home.

GPS Locating

The FSB will be asking for the BOC to direct that the Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) locations be provided on all new building permits and for all existing rural homes.

Community Wildfire Protection Planning

Pennington County received a \$50,000 grant to begin working with homeowners on providing better wildland/urban interface zones. The FSB's plan is to address some of these issues through the platting process and applying for additional grant funding.

Upgrade Communications Infrastructure

The current county wide dispatching and communications system is nearly 20 years old. The FSB will begin a systematic replacement of six radio communications repeaters and related equipment.

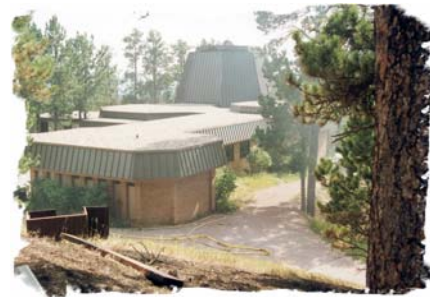
Pennington County Fire Administrator Responsibilities

Budgeting

Prepares and submits annual budgets recommendations to Commissioners. Submits vouchers and other financial reports.

Structure Protection Specialist

Qualified Structure Protection Specialist on the Northern Great Plains Type 2 fire management team. A Structure Protection Specialist is responsible to coordinate structure protection during wildland fires.



Jewell Cave Visitors Center During Jasper Fire

Planning & Zoning

Reviews approximately 350-400 plats, variances; conditional use permits, rezoning requests and construction permits. These are reviewed for adequate water supplies, emergency ingress and egress and public safety issues.

Fire Investigation

Provides fire investigations to volunteer fire departments, Sheriff's office and assist State Fire Marshal's office with origin and cause of fires. The Fire Administrator conducts approximately 10-12 fire investigations each year.

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Youth Fire Setting

Provides intervention for youths that have caused a fire. A fire chief, parent, law enforcement officer or court services may recommend the youth for intervention.



Working with youth fire setters

Training

May coordinate the training classes for the volunteer fire departments. Class coordination consists of notification, obtaining instructors, rosters, and when required instructing the class. Maintains a county resource library of training material for all fire departments.

Pennington County Board of Commissioners

Advisor to the Commissioners on fire related matters. The Fire Administrator, with the approval of the Commissioners, may obligate county funds necessary to mitigate fire situations.

Communications

Fire Administrator is responsible to insure that the County Fire radio system is

operational. The 19 volunteer fire departments and four volunteer ambulances are paged on the county fire radio system. The Fire Administrator works closely with the Director of the Emergency Services Communications Center and all telecommunicators.

Agency Liaison

Agency liaison between federal, state and local agencies. The Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota Wildland Fire Suppression, National Parks, Ellsworth Air Force Base FD, Rapid City Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Pennington County Emergency Management, National Weather Service, are some of the agencies.

Committees

Serves on Black Hills Fire Advisory Board, South Dakota Interagency Fire Council, National Volunteer Fire Council, South Dakota Homeland Security Senior Advisory Committee, President of South Dakota Firefighters Association and other committees. This provides Pennington County with direct input on issues that might affect the citizens. These committees and organizations are direct links between federal and state forestry and the fire departments. Currently the Fire Administrator is the recording secretary for two organizations and maintains the mailing list for each.

County Fire Budgets, Funding Sources and Mill Levy's

County Fire is not funded from the County's General Fund. However, SDCL allows up to .6 mills to be assessed on all property outside of any municipality, city or town to support only county fire programs.

The budget of County Fire consists of two parts:

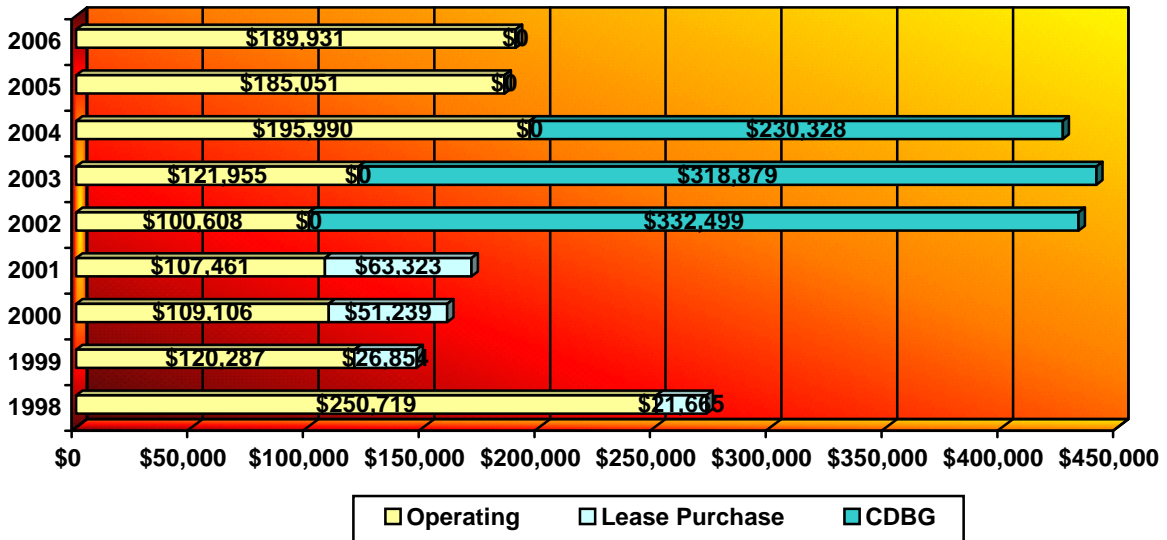
General operating: used for salary, workers compensation insurance, liability insurance, maintenance, office supplies, utilities, and equipment.

Equipment: Used for assists in vehicle replacement, upgrading equipment, personnel protective equipment, communications replacement, future growth projects.

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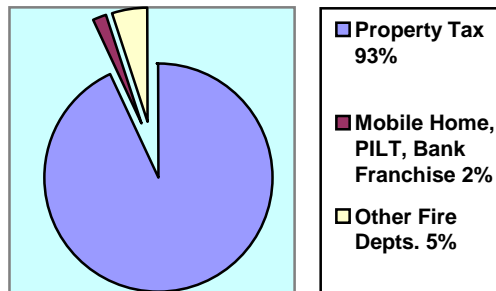
The budgets for the past several years are shown below

2001 & 2000 Are Approved Budget Amounts



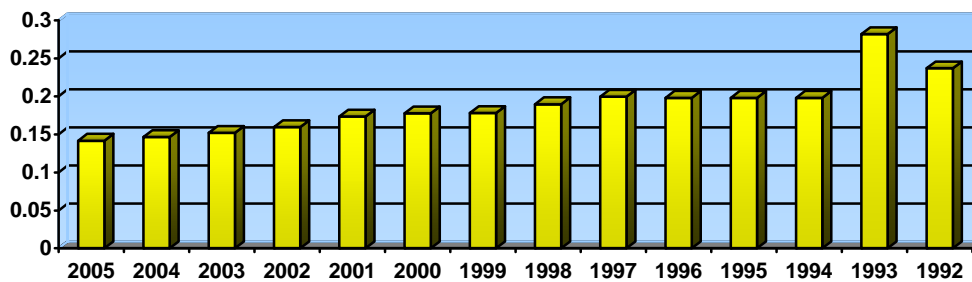
1998 - 2006 Are Actual Budget Expenditures

The funding for county fire is derived from several sources.



County Fire Funding Sources

The assessed mill levy for past years is listed below:



Mill Levy per Budget Year