

Innovation Award Application 2014



Ensuring Rapid Response: Keeping units in their primary service area to reduce incident response times.

Mark A. Foulks, Fire Chief

Todd Smith, Town Administrator

Town of Greeneville Tennessee

200 North College Street, Greeneville, TN 37745

(423) 639-7105

mfoulks@greenevilletn.gov

Describe the Program/project/ product/ service innovation:

This program delivers all didactic and most practical firefighting, ems, and hazardous materials training via video conference. Utilizing broadband internet, webcams, and WebEx video conferencing all training is conducted interactively at our four fire stations. Although our Central Fire Station is the primary host for the training, all stations have the ability to host and present training. Additionally the interactive nature of the training allows all firefighters to actively participate, ask questions, give answers, etc. This program allows for the use of Powerpoint, videos, specialized fire simulation software, incident management scenarios, the sharing of documents and files, etc. We can also utilize this system to attend and share web based briefings, training, and meetings from other agencies or sources. One example of this is severe weather webinars presented by the National Weather Service. We have also expanded the system to include a webcam, computer, and broadband internet on our incident command vehicle. This enables our command personnel to communicate face-to-face with other command personnel or the Emergency Operations Center. Command personnel located at the Emergency Operations Center also have the ability to get a “look” at the scope of the scene through the camera based in the command vehicle.

Short description of the importance, internal impact, and community benefits:

The importance of this project is immense because of its potential to save lives due to reduced response times of the fire apparatus. The internal impact of this project is that the fuel savings allow budget dollars to be utilized on other much needed equipment, personnel, etc. The community benefits are substantial in that response times are significantly reduced to all areas of the city. Reduced response times are essential to the reduction of property loss and the saving of lives on medical emergencies. The community also benefits from the reduced fuel and maintenance costs of the apparatus.

What makes this a quantum leap of creativity?

This is a quantum leap in creativity because it still allows for completely interactive training while keeping our units in their response zones which saves lives. It also provides the means to be interactive with emergency scenes without actually being on the scene.

Who benefits?

The primary benefactor is the citizens and visitors of Greeneville. Reducing response times, while keeping quality and interactive training, obviously results in enhanced outcomes of fire, ems, and hazardous materials related emergencies.

How was the program/project/product/service initiated and implemented?

The high speed internet already existed at each of our stations. We purchased the cameras, microphones, fire simulation software, and other equipment, conducted training and went live with the system on all three of our shifts.

What risks were taken?

The only risks were that the bandwidth would not be able to keep up with the demands of the video streaming and the equipment that we purchased would not be able to be utilized. This was a very low risk due to the fact that we were able to subscribe to high speed internet.

What, if any were the costs and/or savings?

The total cost of the equipment for the video conferencing was approximately $12,000.00. We anticipate recovering this cost in a rapid manner due to the fuel savings from bringing the trucks to one location for training, the anticipated fuel savings is approximately $2,300.00 annually.

What are the lessons learned that other local governments can learn from?

What seem like small chunks of time become huge amounts of time over months or in a given year. While we were only pulling Engine Companies to Central Fire Station for two to four hours at a time we were doing this three to four days a week. Even on the low end this adds up to 312 hours of time that each company was out of their primary zone due to routine training. This presents a significant impact to response times and can result in the loss of life and/or property due to extended response times.

What department and/or individual(s) championed the innovation? If a contractor was used, please list the name and their contact information.

Fire Department, Fire Chief Mark Foulks championed the innovation.

Any additional information you would like to share?

Click here to enter text.