

Running head: FACTORS INFLUENCING VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

Factors Influencing Volunteer Participation Levels in

Camano Island Fire and Rescue (CIFR)

Levon Yengoyan

Camano Island Fire and Rescue,

Camano Island, Washington

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

Over the last 10 years Camano Island Fire and Rescue (CIFR) has experienced a significant amount of organizational change as it transitioned from a completely volunteer to a combination volunteer/career department. During this period, the number of volunteers and their individual participation levels have fallen visibly. The problem is that Camano Island Fire and Rescue lacks specific information on the factors that have led to the decrease in volunteerism, and more especially, to the lowered volunteer participation levels in emergency and non-emergency events and training exercises.

The purpose of this research was to identify the factors that influence the current levels of CIFR volunteerism and participation in emergency and non-emergency events and training exercises. Descriptive research, specifically an interview questionnaire, was used to collect data from former and current volunteers on their motivations, influences, and perceptions to answer the following research questions:

What first motivated CIFR firefighters to become volunteers?

What factors influence volunteers' participation levels in incidents and training at the present time?

How do volunteers perceive their relationships with career staff and the district?

Do identified factors and departmental/district relationships differ based on the firefighter's longevity with the district?

These interviews indicated that former and current volunteers were motivated to become volunteer firefighters primarily by their desire to serve their community. Although factors that influence their participation levels differed between longevity, rewards and

recognition, leadership at the company officer and administrative level, other volunteers, the image of being a firefighter were all positive motivators. Current volunteers had mixed perceptions of their relationship with CIFR career staff but overwhelmingly felt they were equally valued and equally treated by administration.

Overall, CIFR volunteers want more opportunities to use their skills in service to their community. Operational procedures and programs (i.e. sleeper program) were recommended to address this need.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	7
Introduction.....	8
Background and Significance	9
Literature Review.....	12
Procedures.....	18
Definitions.....	19
Preliminary Study	20
Participants.....	20
Materials and Procedure	20
Main Study.....	21
Participants.....	21
Materials and Procedure	21
Limitations	21
Results.....	22
Preliminary Study	22
Main Study.....	24
General Observations.....	33
Discussion.....	34
Recommendations.....	41
References.....	43

FACTORS INFLUENCING VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION	6
Appendix.....	45
A. Individual Level of Volunteer Participation in Emergency Incidents	45
B. Individual Level of Volunteer Participation in Emergency Incidents	47
C. Main Study Questionnaire	52

List of Tables

Table

1. Total emergency incidents by year	10
2. Number of volunteer firefighters by year	11
3. Factors influencing participation levels in former volunteers	23
4. Factors influencing participation levels in former volunteers	25
5. Volunteer firefighter attitudes towards relationship with career firefighters.....	29

Introduction

Over the last 10 years Camano Island Fire and Rescue (CIFR) has experienced a significant amount of organizational change as it transitioned from a completely volunteer to a combination volunteer/career department. During this period, the number of volunteers and their individual participation levels have fallen visibly. The problem is that Camano Island Fire and Rescue lacks specific information on the factors that have led to the decrease in volunteerism, and more especially, to the lowered volunteer participation levels in emergency and non-emergency events and training exercises.

The purpose of the present research project, then, was to identify the factors that influence the current levels of CIFR volunteerism and participation in emergency and non-emergency events and training exercises. Using the identified information, the author developed a set of recommendations aimed at increasing volunteerism and the participation of CIFR volunteers.

The method chosen for this applied research project was descriptive. A telephone interview questionnaire was constructed to answer the following four research questions, with specific focus on the possible factors of motivation and relationships:

What first motivated CIFR firefighters to become volunteers?

What factors influence volunteers' participation levels in incidents and training at the present time?

How do volunteers perceive their relationships with career staff and the district?

Do identified factors and departmental/district relationships differ based on the firefighter's longevity with the district?

Background and Significance

Camano Island encompasses 40 square miles and is situated in the Puget Sound area of the state of Washington. Originally served by three separate fire districts, a consolidation of these districts established Camano Island Fire and Rescue in 1995. From the time of its inception, CIFR provided emergency services to the residents of Camano Island with all-volunteer firefighter / emergency medical technicians (EMTs) operating out of five stations. These volunteers provided fire and basic life support (BLS) services to a predominantly senior and recreational population. Advanced life support (ALS) services were provided by a private ambulance company whose employees did not participate in any non-emergency medical system (EMS) incidents or training.

Historically, Camano residents have comprised a mix of retirees and vacationers. However, with the boom of local economy in the Pacific Northwest, a significant increase of island population ensued. The U.S. Census Bureau reported the 1990 population on Camano Island as 7,329, and 10 years later as 13,347. By 2009 there were an estimated 18,000 residents on the island, with a significant number of full-time residences.

Along with the increase in population came a corresponding rise in the number of emergency incidents (Table 1). By 1998, the Board of Fire Commissioners felt that due to the number of emergency incidents and the growing number of volunteers unable to respond to calls because they were working outside of the district during the day, island residents would be served best by the addition of some full-time career firefighter staffing. According to unpublished district data, the first 3 career firefighters were hired in January 1999, staffing an engine Monday through Friday during the day. By 2001, an additional 7 firefighters were hired to staff one engine 24 hours a day 7 days a week. In 2005, CIFR

moved to a fire-based EMS system, hiring an additional 6 firefighters along with 7 paramedics. As of June 2010, CIFR has a total of 32 career firefighters and 27 part-time firefighters operating one engine, one ALS, and one BLS unit out of two stations. One additional ALS unit, staffed 24 hours, 7 days a week, provides ALS services to the neighboring city of Stanwood under an inter-local agreement.

Table 1. Total Emergency Incidents by Year

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Emergency Incidents</u>
1996	648
1997	819
1998	1006
1999	1063
2000	1181
2001	1216
2002	1076
2003	1314
2004	1334
2005	1406
2006	1824
2007	1744
2008	1892
2009	1922

As the number of career and part-time staff has increased, there has been a significant decrease in the number of volunteers (Table 2). Fire district administration has remained committed to the combination fire department model as the most effective and efficient method of providing services to its constituents, and thanks to recent recruitment efforts, volunteer numbers have risen to the current level of 32, with an additional 14 new recruits starting in the summer of 2010. However, although the total number of volunteers

has been on the rise, the individual level of participation in emergency incidents varies dramatically among volunteers (see Appendix A).

Table 2. Number of volunteer firefighters by year

<u>Year</u>	<u>Volunteers</u>
1998	94
1999	89
2000	96
2001	85
2002	59
2003	40
2004	38
2005	30
2006	29
2007	26
2008	25
2009	35

Clearly, Camano Fire Island Fire and Rescue management will benefit by addressing both the number and participation levels of volunteer firefighters in the department. Motivational and influential factors affecting both of these areas are often complex and difficult to assess. However, the collection of more detailed and localized informational data such as envisaged in this project will help management provide a much-needed basis for future planning and action. Actions and decisions regarding change management, organizational culture, leadership, and team building can be better informed and more effective, and relate directly to Units 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 of the Executive Development course.

At the volunteer level itself, the ultimate goal of this research project is to increase participation and motivation levels among CIFR volunteers. Having volunteers who respond to more calls and participate in more training will significantly support the USFA operational objective to “improve the fire and emergency services’ capability to and recovery from all hazards” (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, p. II-2).

Literature Review

The research method used to investigate the problem of volunteer motivation, factors influencing participation, and volunteer/career relationships within Camano Island Fire and Rescue was descriptive. The first phase of the research utilized an in-depth literature review to understand the current state of knowledge relevant to these problems. The literature review was conducted using a number of resources, including the Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland; graduate and undergraduate libraries at the University of Washington in Seattle, Camano Island Fire and Rescue departmental data; and the internet.

The literature review for this study ranged from purely theoretical to the more applied aspects of worker needs and motivation, and potential influencing factors. Literature pertaining to both fire service and non-fire service organizations was assessed, as were the methods for evaluation and making recommendations for solutions. Once reviewed, the author summarized the literature considered to be especially relevant to this study and included it in the literature review.

The review first focused on the general, of the problem concerning the decreasing numbers of volunteer firefighters across the country, then moved to the difficulties facing other fire and rescue departments in their transition to a combination volunteer/career

department, and finally addressed the theoretical and applied aspects of worker/volunteer motivation and influencing. An extremely large body of work exists on these subjects; however, this review attempted to focus on research more specifically applicable to current conditions seen within CIFR.

The national trend in the decrease in volunteerism has affected many organizations, but has been especially notable in the fire service. From 1980 to 1983, the number of volunteer firefighters in the United States reached a record high. Thereafter it experienced a nationwide 11% decline, from 1983 to a total of 784,700 in 2001 (Stocker, 2005). Like many departments across the country, CIFR has faced a significant decrease in the number of volunteer firefighters.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, since the previously cited low in 2001, numbers have increased slightly to 827,150 in 2008 (Karter, 2009). Over this same time period, the number of career firefighters has increased to 321,700, as fire departments continue to hire more career firefighters and transition to combination departments as a way to handle increasing call volumes.

The time commitment needed for volunteers to maintain new training standards is often cited as one of the primary reasons for declining numbers of volunteer firefighters (Stocker, 2005). These time pressures are often magnified in an all-volunteer department, as members are responsible for both emergency response and administrative tasks.

Sullivan (1997) suggests that hiring a core of career firefighters can help relieve some of the pressures on the volunteer system by taking on time-consuming support and staff functions. With these constraints removed, volunteers have more time available for training and response to emergency incidents. He further states that the use of combination

systems has both financial and other costs. The transition to a combination department is a major organizational change that can threaten existing department members.

Sullivan goes on to outline some of the planning and organizational requirements for making a successful combination department. These include well-documented policies and procedures that clearly define job duties, reporting, discipline, and codes of conduct. He also emphasizes the need for “team cohesiveness” and the role that training can play in its development. Open communications, while important in every organization, are especially important in a combination department.

As the number of departments converting to combination departments continued to increase over the last decade, a number of studies have appeared on how to manage this difficult transition. In 2005, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) published their Red Ribbon Report, *Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Department*. This report provided a framework for assessing the need for change, transitioning to a combination system, and developing an effective combination system.

The report discusses a common problem of the transition to a combination department that results from the avoidance of sensitive issues and dodging conflict.

Some departments may deem themselves “combination” simply because they utilize both career and volunteer personnel, but closer examination may show they are organizations in which paid are segregated from volunteer firefighters and there is little cooperation and integration between the two.

This type of system is best described as “dual” rather than combination.

While some dual departments function successfully in the short term, their division makes issues between the two groups stand out even more, and they

miss out on many of the advantages a combination system brings. Poorly managed “dual” systems often become “duel” systems that are destined to fail.

Some indicators of a dual system include:

- Volunteers operating in different quarters than paid staff.
- Volunteers riding on separate apparatus than paid staff.
- Separate rules and regulations used.
- One group receiving better equipment and apparatus than the other.
- Rank structures and supervision not integrated.
- No opportunity for social interaction.

(IAFC, 2005, p. 10.)

Given the challenges inherent in being a volunteer firefighter, especially within a department that has recently made the transition to a combination response model, why do people still become firefighter volunteers? A large body of work exists on employee motivation and motivational theory. Much of the foundational research done on motivation occurred in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s by such researchers as Maslow, Herzberg, Vroom, and others. While some of this work is over a half a century old, it remains relevant and is still taught to students of business and management theory today (Jones, 2005).

In 1943, Abraham Maslow defined the five levels of basic human needs as: basic physiological needs, safety and security, belonging and social activity, esteem and status, and self-realization and fulfillment. Since then many have used these theories, both inside and outside the fire service, to develop management strategies that motivate employees and

volunteers. While the volunteer fire service has the capacity to meet many of these needs, Painter (2001) stipulates that volunteerism on its own does little to meet the lesser needs of safety and security as defined by Maslow. However, he proposes that by adding a benefit, in this case retirement incentives, “the fire service can better fulfill the basic needs of the volunteer” (Painter, 2001, p. 12).

Conversely, Bartel (1998) cites several sources proposing that volunteers are not after material gain. Rather, they are looking for “organizations that are team oriented” and “want to be associated with programs that are well organized, provide quality patient care, and take care of their volunteers” (p. 8). Bartel further supports his position with work by Wilson, who states that volunteers have already met their basic needs at their daily jobs, and Snook and Olsen, whose belief is that “volunteering allows people to have a sense of belonging to something important, to gain respect, to accept challenges, to gain love and affection, to gain recognition, and to have fun and enjoy one’s environment” (Bartel, 1998, p. 3).

A great deal of more contemporary work has been written on worker motivation and satisfaction. Of particular interest, Lee and Olshfski (2002) utilized identity theory and the concept of organizational commitment to analyze the motivation of public service employees in the wake of the September 11, 2001 tragedy. In their paper they “define organizational commitment as a four-dimension construct. Employees can be differentially committed to their superior, to their work group, to their organization, and to an identity as it is operationalized in a job” (p. 109). They conclude that:

Commitment to the job – and its concomitant role requirements – is a distinctive motivational basis for firefighters and is a major factor determining their extraordinary efforts

Furthermore, “the job” as an explanatory variable makes sense. Individuals take jobs, they identify with the role attached to the job, they become committed to doing the job, and they behave according to the expectations attached to that job.

(Lee & Olshfski, 2002, p. 112)

Beyond the theoretical work on motivation and commitment, there has been a vast amount of research conducted regarding the more tangible aspects of volunteer recruitment and retention. Perhaps the most comprehensive work on this topic was done by Snook, Johnson, and Olsen (1998) in their book *Recruiting, Training, and Maintaining Volunteer Firefighters*. This book discusses strategies for volunteer recruitment and retention that include elements of training, leadership, motivation, team building, and management. Also in 1998, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Volunteer Fire Council, and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) issued a report entitled *Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service; Problems and Solutions*. This report lists many specific strategies for retention, including financial incentives, rewards and recognition, and social incentives.

Separately and as a whole, the works cited in this literature review gave necessary insight into the critical nature and complexity of volunteerism as it may operate in the firefighter departmental structure.

Procedures

The author selected the descriptive research method to investigate the problem of decreased levels of Camano Island Fire and Rescue volunteerism and volunteer participation in emergency and non-emergency events and training exercises. The project consisted of two parts: a preliminary study, conducted with former CIFR volunteer firefighters who had left the district within the last 7 years, and a final main study, conducted with current (as of April 2010) CIFR volunteer firefighters. Telephone interview questionnaires were constructed to address the research questions.

For the preliminary study, an interview questionnaire was developed and administered, and the resulting data were compiled and analyzed. Based on this process and the results, a revised interview questionnaire was developed and administered for the main study.

Personal interviews rather than surveys were used as a data collection methodology for this project. Personal interviews are often recommended when data are being collected for a very specific population (<http://knowledge-base.supersurvey.com/in-person-vs-web-surveys.htm>), in this case CIFR volunteers. More importantly, interviews provide the opportunity to query the respondents more extensively on their thoughts and feelings about the subject or situation. Although interviews are time consuming, in this study the relatively small number of volunteers within the CIFR district made the scope of the work for the project manageable.

Certain conditions were common to both studies. The studies were conducted in April and May, 2010. The same interviewers administered the interview/questionnaires in both studies. Interviews for each longevity classification of current members were

conducted by a firefighter within that group: a probationary firefighter with less than 1 year of experience conducted interviews with the rookie firefighter group; a firefighter with 3 years of experience conducted interviews with the 2 – 5-year group; and as a longtime member of the department, the paper's author conducted interviews with the greater than 5 years longevity group.

Interviewers received training to familiarize them with each question and question component as well as the method in which the interviews were to be administered. All questions were asked as open-ended questions without listing the specific answer choices indicated on the interviewer's questionnaire form.

Interviewers were instructed to take notes regarding the participant's response and then select and mark the appropriate answer choice. In this fashion participants were not limited in their choices and thinking. The exception to this methodology was the third question in the main study, in which the interviewers were instructed to read a series of true/false questions to the participant and mark their response.

Interviewers utilized a private, controlled setting in which to conduct their interviews. Each participant was ensured of the privacy of their responses and given the opportunity to answer questions anonymously.

Volunteers within CIFR fall into three distinct longevity categories: Rookie firefighters, who are new to the organization (e.g., in their 1st year); firefighters with 2 - 4 years of membership; and firefighters who have been members for 5 years or longer.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study the following definitions were used:

Volunteer firefighter – Members of the organization who receive a small stipend for their participation in district activities. These individuals respond to an emergency page rather than working shifts with defined hours.

Part-time firefighter – Members of the organization who receive a small hourly wage for their response. These members work 12- or 24-hour shifts and are limited in their scope of practice (i.e., do not function as driver/operators, do not work on Advanced Life Support (ALS) units, etc.). They are not members of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF).

Career firefighter – Members of the organization who are full time fully represented (IAFF) fire fighters.

Company officer – Fire officers holding the rank of lieutenant or captain. May be either volunteer or career members.

Preliminary Study

Participants. A total of 48 former volunteers were identified who had left the district within the last 7 years. Of these, 32 had resigned, 13 had moved outside the district, 2 had been hired as career firefighters in other jurisdictions and as IAFF members were unable to volunteer with CIFR, and 1 was terminated. Due to the inability to find current contact information for the entire sample pool, only 9 former volunteers were able to be interviewed.

Materials and Methods. A short set of interview questions (Appendix B) was developed and delivered via telephone to 9 former members of the district. The questions focused on the individual's initial motivations for joining the district as a volunteer fire fighter, factors influencing their motivation and participation levels while they were

members, reasons for leaving, and ideas on improvements that could be made by the district. Any additional comments were noted.

Main Study

Participants. The district currently has 32 active volunteer firefighters. Of these, 26 were interviewed as part of this study. The 6 individuals not interviewed were either unavailable for the period of time when interviews were being conducted or did not respond. Of the 26 who were interviewed, 8 were in the rookie category, 9 were in the 2 to 4 years of longevity, and 9 had 5 or more years of longevity with the organization.

Materials and Methods. Based on a review of the preliminary study, a questionnaire was developed for the main project study (Appendix C). In the main study, question changes from the preliminary were as follows. Question 2 added “overall” to time commitment (2a); the second factor was divided into two items to include more detailed responses on training (2b and c); and a further factor, “Image of/pride in being a firefighter” was added (2l). Question 3 clearly was not relevant to current firefighters and was changed to inquire in some detail about relationships between the volunteer and career firefighters (3). Question 4 broke down leadership category (4b and c), and added two items on desired opportunities (4i and j).

Limitations

The most obvious limitation in this research project was the composition of the interview respondents. While the overall sample size was small in absolute terms, a large percentage of the finite volunteer population was interviewed. No volunteers outside of CIFR were interviewed. This, however, is in keeping with the goals of the study; to understand attitudes and factors relating to CIFR members only. The results are not meant

to be indicative of volunteer firefighters in general and the recommendations should not be applied to other organizations.

Additionally, as described above, three individuals were used to administer the interview to the three groups of firefighters. Although this approach likely helped to alleviate any bias in sampling due to the rank of the author, it may have imparted an element of variability in the results and is therefore included as a limitation to this study.

Since the paper's author is a member of the district's administrative team and holds the rank of assistant chief, there was concern that members may not be comfortable stating their true thoughts and feelings. To address this potential limitation, interviews for each longevity classification of current members were conducted by a firefighter within that group: a probationary firefighter with less than 1 year's experience conducted interviews with the rookie firefighter group; a firefighter with 3 years of experience conducted interviews with the 2 – 5 year group; and as a longtime member of the department, the paper's author conducted interviews with the greater than 5 years of longevity group.

The final limitation to the study was the amount of time available for research design and literature review. Many additional months could have been spent to cover the vast amount of previous studies both theoretical and applied. Had time not been limited, additional review may have contributed to an improved study design.

Results

Preliminary Study

The first interview question asked about the person's initial motivation to become a volunteer firefighter. Five of the respondents stated that a desire to help their community was the reason they joined. Four were initially motivated by the desire to pursue public

safety as a career. Interestingly, 2 of these individuals wanted careers in the emergency medical services not the fire service. Other motivations selected included “for the excitement,” “I always wanted to be a firefighter,” and “for the camaraderie.”

Question 2 looked at factors within the district that positively or negatively influenced a member’s participation levels. These results (see Table 3), highlight a number of factors that influence volunteers. Other volunteers in the organization were unanimously a positive influence. Training was also a factor that positively influenced individual’s participation levels. Leadership proved to be both a positive influence (at the company officer level) as well as a negative influence (at the chief’s level). Pay was generally not a factor for most individuals, nor was knowledge of the district’s goals and objectives.

Table 3. Factors influencing participation levels in former volunteers

<u>Influencing Factors</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Not a Factor</u>
Time commitment	1	4	4
Training	7	1	1
Pay	2	0	7
Rewards and recognition	2	2	5
Leadership from officers	5	3	1
Leadership from chiefs	2	4	3
Operational policies	2	2	5
Career staff	2	3	4
Other volunteers	9	0	0
District goals and objectives	3	0	6

In asking why people finally stopped serving as a volunteer firefighter, all but 1 individual stated that this was due to conflicts or changes in their personal lives. These factors included moving, job/career changes, and changes in their family life (e.g. divorce, new children, sick parents, etc.). One individual had conflict with the district administration which caused them to leave.

Similarly, when asked what the district could have done to continue or increase their participation levels, 1 individual had specific conflict with administration, 1 felt replaced by career staff, and 1 wanted more opportunities to use his skills. The remaining 6 stated that there was nothing the district could have done, since they had left for purely personal reasons.

Main Study

Interview question 1. “Service to the community” was overwhelmingly chosen (24 responses) as the reason for becoming a volunteer firefighter. Thirteen individuals also selected “as a step towards a career as a full-time firefighter”. Other responses included “for the camaraderie”, with seven selections; “for the excitement”, with four selections; and “I always wanted to be a firefighter”, with three selections. “For the money” was never selected as a motivation for volunteering. Interestingly, 3 individuals also stated that they were individually recruited by someone who thought they would enjoy being a volunteer firefighter.

The trends for the entire group appear to be true for the individual groups, with one exception. Becoming a volunteer firefighter as a step towards a career as a full-time firefighter was more prevalent with the rookie and middle group. Six of the 8 rookies selected this as one of their motivations as did 5 of the 9 individuals in the middle group.

Conversely, only 2 of the 9 individuals in the high longevity group selected this as one of their reasons for volunteering.

Interview question 2. Similar to the interview presented to former volunteers, question 2 looked at factors that influence a volunteer's participation levels either positively or negatively. As noted in the Procedures section, based on the results of the previous interview some additional factors were added. For the purposes of clarity, results from this question are displayed in a list of questionnaire responses broken down by their longevity with CIFR (Table 4).

Table 4. – Factors influencing participation levels in former volunteers.

<u>Influencing Factors</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Not a Factor</u>
Overall time commitment			
0-1 year longevity	1	1	6
2-4 years longevity	7	0	2
5 or more years longevity	0	2	7
Total	8	3	15
Time commitment for training			
0-1 year longevity	2	0	6
2-4 years longevity	9	0	0
5 or more years longevity	1	3	5
Total	12	3	11
Quality of training			
0-1 year longevity	7	1	0
2-4 years longevity	7	1	1
5 or more years longevity	4	5	0
Total	18	7	1
Pay			
0-1 year longevity	3	0	5
2-4 years longevity	1	4	4
5 or more years longevity	4	0	5
Total	8	4	14

Table 4. (cont'd.).

<u>Influencing Factors</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Not a Factor</u>
Rewards and recognition			
0-1 year longevity	3	2	3
2-4 years longevity	5	2	2
5 or more years longevity	0	7	2
Total	8	11	7
Leadership from company officers			
0-1 year longevity	6	2	0
2-4 years longevity	9	0	0
5 or more years longevity	7	1	1
Total	22	3	1
Leadership from chiefs and administration			
0-1 year longevity	8	0	0
2-4 years longevity	9	0	0
5 or more years longevity	8	1	0
Total	25	1	0
Operational policies			
0-1 year longevity	4	1	3
2-4 years longevity	7	0	2
5 or more years longevity	1	6	2
Total	12	7	7
Relationship with career Sstaff			
0-1 year longevity	8	0	0
2-4 years longevity	5	4	0
5 or more years longevity	2	5	2
Total	15	9	2
Other volunteers			
0-1 year longevity	8	0	0
2-4 years longevity	7	1	1
5 or more years longevity	8	0	1
Total	23	1	2
District goals and objectives			
0-1 year longevity	6	0	2
2-4 years longevity	7	1	1
5 or more years longevity	7	1	1
Total	20	2	4

Table 4. (cont'd.).

<u>Influencing Factors</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Not a Factor</u>
Image of / Pride in being a firefighter			
0-1 year longevity	8	0	0
2-4 years longevity	9	0	0
5 or more years longevity	7	0	2
Total	24	0	2

The time commitment needed to be a volunteer firefighter is often cited as a major hindrance to people's participation. For CIFR volunteers, this does not appear to be the case. Whether the overall time commitment or the time commitment needed for training, the majority of volunteers felt time commitment was either a positive influence or was not a factor. This trend held true for all three groups.

The quality of training generally appeared to be a positive influence (18) as opposed to a negative influence (7). The two groups with least longevity felt more strongly about training being a positive influence. The group with the most longevity appeared to be split in their feelings towards training quality, with 4 calling it a positive influence and 5 a negative one.

Pay and rewards and recognition appeared to be viewed similarly by current volunteers. In both cases, some individuals felt that current pay rates and efforts at reward and recognition were a positive factor (8 for each question). Others felt as if the district needed to do more and that the lack of effort, particularly in terms of rewards and recognition (11), was a negative influence. Pay was not a factor for 14 individuals while rewards and recognition was not a factor for only 7. Differences were also noted based on

the longevity group. Almost half the firefighters in the 2 – 4- year group felt pay was too low and should be increased while no members of either other group shared that view.

Additionally, every member of the most longevity group felt there was insufficient rewards and recognition.

There was relative strong consensus among all groups when it came to leadership. All three felt that leadership at both the company officer and administration level was a positive influence. In fact, all but 1 individual felt that leadership from the chief officers was a positive influence. This contrasts with the group of former volunteers, many of whom felt that administrative leadership was lacking or negative in its influence.

Feelings towards operational policies were mixed overall, but again a trend could be seen in relation to the longevity groups. The two newer groups felt that operational policies either positively motivated them or were not a factor. In contrast, a majority (6) of the most longevity group felt the operational policies of the district were a negative influence.

As discussed earlier, the transition to a combination department is a difficult one for many fire organizations. Among CIFR volunteers the majority (15) felt the relationship with the career staff was a positive one, while 9 felt it was negative. In this question the trends by longevity group were most clear. The rookies unanimously felt positive about the career staff while the middle group was split almost down the middle. The most seniority group, many of whom had been present during the bulk of the district's transition, had more negative feelings towards relationships with the career staff.

Similar to the interview results from the former volunteers, other volunteers play a huge role in positively motivating their peers. With the exception of 1 individual who felt

the influence was negative and 2 who felt it was not a factor, all volunteers felt that the camaraderie within the district motivated them to participate.

Strong consensus was also found in relation to the effect of the district's larger goals and objectives on participation and motivation levels. According to comments noted by the interviewers, 23 of the respondents felt that administration did a good job of keeping volunteers "in the loop" about the big picture direction of the district. They appreciated this and felt that it motivated them to do their job. This trend was true for all longevity groups.

Finally, one's image of what a firefighter is and the pride in being a firefighter was also a strong factor among all groups. This proved to be one of the most significant factors in terms of consistency of feelings by most volunteers.

Interview question 3. For the interviews with current volunteers, question 3 was designed to investigate feelings towards volunteer / career relationships within the district. These results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Volunteer firefighter attitudes towards relationship with career firefighters.

<u>Relationship Statement</u>	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>
The two groups are well integrated		
0-1 year longevity	4	4
2-4 years longevity	2	7
5 or more years longevity	2	7
Total	8	18
The two groups are equally important to the organization		
0-1 year longevity	7	1
2-4 years longevity	7	2
5 or more years longevity	9	0
Total	23	3

Table 5. (cont'd.).

<u>Relationship Statement</u>	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>
There is mutual respect between the two groups		
0-1 year longevity	4	4
2-4 years longevity	2	7
5 or more years longevity	5	4
Total	11	15
The two groups are equally valued by department leadership		
0-1 year longevity	8	0
2-4 years longevity	9	0
5 or more years longevity	9	0
Total	26	0
The two groups receive equal equipment and apparatus		
0-1 year longevity	0	8
2-4 years longevity	4	5
5 or more years longevity	6	3
Total	10	16
There are sufficient opportunities to work together		
0-1 year longevity	7	1
2-4 years longevity	9	0
5 or more years longevity	7	2
Total	23	3
There are sufficient opportunities to socialize together		
0-1 year longevity	2	6
2-4 years longevity	7	2
5 or more years longevity	6	3
Total	15	11
Rank structure and supervision should be more integrated		
0-1 year longevity	7	1
2-4 years longevity	6	3
5 or more years longevity	7	2
Total	20	6
Both groups are subject to the same rules and regulations		
0-1 year longevity	5	3
2-4 years longevity	8	1
5 or more years longevity	6	3
Total	19	7

Table 5. (cont'd.).

<u>Relationship Statement</u>	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>
Overall both groups are treated equally		
0-1 year longevity	4	4
2-4 years longevity	4	5
5 or more years longevity	7	2
Total	15	11

Feelings towards volunteer / career relationships varied overall, with fewer distinctions evident between the longevity groups. Eighteen of the 26 individuals interviewed felt that the two groups were not well integrated and 15 felt that there was a lack of mutual respect between the two groups. Twenty-three felt that there were sufficient opportunities for the two groups to work together, while only 15 felt there were sufficient opportunities to work together.

A significant majority (23) felt that the two groups were equally important to the organization and all 26 felt that the two groups were equally valued by department leadership. However, in regards to equality only 10 felt they received equal equipment and apparatus while 19 felt they were subject to the same rules and regulations. A large number of volunteers (20) felt that rank structure and supervision should be more integrated. Overall, a small majority (15) felt that the two groups were treated equally.

Interview question 4. Question 4 of the interview addressed ideas on how the district could help increase participation and motivation levels. The number one suggestion among all groups (16 total suggestions) was to find more ways for volunteers to use their skills. The district has recently implemented a volunteer sleeper program with great success. This program was repeatedly brought up as an example of actions the district is

currently undertaking to help in this vein. The current program occurs only on the weekends and there were many suggestions to expand the program to 7 days a week.

Better, more organized training was the second most suggested item (10 total selections). It was number one among the most longevity and least longevity groups, yet was suggested only once by the middle group. Many suggestions were received to increase training in special rescue (CIFR maintains a marine rescue and rope rescue team), increase the amount of hands-on training, increase training with the career staff, and increase larger multi-company training among others.

After use of skills and training, three other ideas received a relatively large number of suggestions. Increasing pay or monetary incentives was suggested by 7 individuals. Six of these individuals were from the middle longevity group and 1 from the most longevity group. This is consistent with the results seen in question 2, where the same group felt the lack of pay was a negative influence and should be increased. Alternatively, better leadership at the company officer level was also suggested by seven participants. Many additional comments were made on the need for better managerial, leadership, and operational skills by the company officers. This is interesting in light of the results from question 2 where most a large majority felt that the officers were a positive influence on motivation and did a good job. Finally, giving more rewards and recognition (6 suggestions) was also discussed many times as something the district could do to increase participation levels.

Other suggestions were also made by 1 or 2 individuals, including “provide clear goals and objectives”, “equal treatment with career staff”, and “more opportunities for

feedback”. Better leadership at the chief’s level was not identified by any individuals as an area needed work.

Interview question 5. The final question of the interview asked for any additional comments by the participant. These comments were typically made in support of statements or selections made by the participant on previous questions and were incorporated in the general observations and discussion sections. All members commented that they were grateful for the opportunity to give their input and thankful that the district was investigating and addressing these issues.

General Observations

As discussed in the procedures section, the use of interviews as a data collection mechanism has several advantages over that of a traditional survey. One of these advantages is the ability to gain a more in-depth understanding of participants’ feelings about an issue. During the course of these interviews several themes consistently presented themselves. The first of these is the role the company officers play in motivating and leading volunteers. The general consensus was that some current officers do a better job than others. There was a sense that overall the officers were performing only satisfactorily. It was also felt that with some additional training they could play a much more significant role in leading the organization.

Similar to the officers, there were many mixed feelings about the career staff. It was clear that there are some difficult relations with the career staff as a group, yet there are some individuals who are a very positive influence on the volunteers and some who are very negative. It was also felt that the career officers in general treat the volunteers well

and that they need to do a better job in creating this type of attitude with the career firefighters.

Positive changes in administration were also evident from the preliminary and the main studies. Both the former volunteers and volunteers who had more longevity all commented on the positive changes in leadership. Many felt that there had been major improvements in attitude and treatment over the last 5 years and especially over the last year. Within administration it was also felt that more changes needed to be made to some operational policies. Volunteers more than anything want to use their skills and felt that certain policies and procedures, or the lack thereof, hampered their ability to do so.

Discussion

This research project attempted to understand the specific motivations, perceived factors, and relationships that influence volunteerism and volunteer participation levels within Camano Island Fire and Rescue. The challenges facing CIFR are similar to those facing other fire departments across the country. Thus it should come as no surprise that the results are not unique but follow patterns seen elsewhere. This fact, however, should not overshadow the real value of this research which was to understand the specific attitudes and feeling of the current volunteers within the district. Only in this way can meaningful recommendations be made that can have a truly positive impact on the organization.

The answers to the first research question, “What first motivated CIFR firefighters to become volunteers?” show that volunteers on Camano Island exhibit the same desires as other volunteers in general and volunteer firefighters specifically. Service to the community is often cited as the number one reason people choose to volunteer, and this

held true for volunteer firefighters on Camano Island. These results were encouraging: firefighters who volunteer in order to help their community are easier to retain (National Volunteer Fire Council, 1998).

The second largest factor in an individual's motivation to join was to use the volunteer position as a step toward a career firefighting position. This was only a factor in the two groups of newer volunteers and clearly shows a new trend in motivation that may not have existed 5 years ago on Camano. This motivation does exist elsewhere and may be one of the main benefits for firefighters volunteering in a combination department. Silva (2001) found that "one of the prime reasons firefighter in many areas volunteer is to get their foot in the door with an organization who has career staff or to gain the much needed experience factor to get a job with another organization" (p.45).

CIFR offers tremendous training opportunities for its volunteers. New firefighters obtain their Firefighter I and Emergency Medical Technician certifications in their first 1 – 2 years. After these basics additional training opportunities exist for strategies and tactics, special rescue, instructor training, leadership training, and many other areas, all of which will help prepare a candidate for a fire service career. All training is covered by the district and the ability to take these classes is limited only by an individual's time.

Even more relevant is that the CIFR Board of Fire Commissioners and Fire Chief have remained committed to creating opportunities for existing volunteers by first attempting to hire from within the department before looking outside. They also give bonus points in the testing process for years of service with the district. These policies provide a tangible incentive for those hoping to become career firefighters.

The National Volunteer Fire Council and the United States Fire Administration, as cited by Bartel (1998), recognized decades ago that much of what drives people to volunteer is their need to belong to something important. Volunteering for the fire department gives people an avenue to help their community in a very tangible way. Bartel also cites Snook's higher level approach to this issue stating that "the primary reason people volunteer has always been and will remain to be, the desire of the individual to meet their personal needs" (Bartel, 1998, p. 9).

The level to which an individual's needs are being met can influence his or her motivation and participation levels. Although these needs and motivations vary from person to person, answers to the second research question, "What factors influence volunteers' participation levels in incidents and training at the present time?" and the fourth research question, "Do identified factors and departmental/district relationships differ based on the firefighter's longevity with the district?", give insights into the needs of CIFR volunteers.

Time commitment is often cited as one of the primary reasons people do not volunteer or cease in their volunteer efforts (Stocker, 2005). Sweeney (2003) found that time demands was the third most significant factor negatively affecting motivation. The National Volunteer Fire Council and the U.S. Fire Administration (1993) state that the fire service places more time demands on its volunteers than other volunteer activities and that the demands are one of the most critical problems facing the volunteer fire service. This was corroborated by Sweeney (2003), who found that time demands was the third most significant factor negatively affecting motivation. These results did not hold true for CIFR volunteers, most of who felt that time commitment was either a positive influence for them

or not a factor. Additionally, decreasing the time commitment needed to volunteer was never mentioned as something the district could do to increase participation and retention levels.

Pay and other types of rewards and recognition are universally listed in the literature as methods for retaining volunteers, and relate to Maslow's needs of esteem and status. The efficacy of using these types of incentives to meet volunteer's needs has advocates on both sides – from Painter (2001), who proposes retirement benefits to fulfill the needs of volunteers to Bartel (1998), who believes volunteers are not after material gain. True to the literature, CIFR volunteers also fall on both sides. While it appears that pay and other rewards and recognition are relevant factors, what is relevant and to whom varies among groups. Pay, while not a factor for two groups was listed as a factor for the middle longevity group. Increasing pay was also discussed as something the district could do to increase participation level. Conversely, the rookie group on most longevity group felt that pay was either sufficient or not a factor. The most longevity group strongly felt that more needed to be done in the way of rewards and recognition, and this was brought up as a recommendation from members of all groups.

The image associated with being a firefighter and the pride in being one was shown to be a very strong motivation for all CIFR volunteers regardless of group. Maslow defined this need as self-realization and fulfillment and it has been related to such things as purpose, personal growth, and achievement. Lee and Olshfski (2002) took a closer look at this concept specific to the fire service, and found that firefighters become extremely committed to the idea of the job and behave according to the expectations of the job definition. While

these concepts and values may be outside of the influence of the district, it is important to understand their significance when looking at how to motivate and manage staff members.

Leadership at both the administration and company officer level was overwhelmingly a positive influence among all groups. The chiefs play perhaps the most significant role in a fire service organization and this is true at CIFR. When it comes to the five basic needs of firefighters, the chiefs have influence and control over many aspects of physiological needs, safety and security, belonging and social activity, esteem and status, and self-realization and fulfillment. Additionally, the chiefs set operational policies and long-term goals and objectives each of which were shown to influence volunteers' motivation.

Leadership at the company officer level is also very important and cannot be overlooked. Company officers provide the day-to-day management and leadership of the crews. This is where firefighters first look for answers and guidance. The results indicate that CIFR officers play a significant role in positively influencing their volunteers. At the same time it was also suggested that the officers need additional training in leadership, interpersonal skills, and managerial skills. Much of the organizational culture within the fire service comes from leadership setting the stage and leading by example (Windisch, 1995). Stittleburg (1993) also stressed the importance of leading by example and emphasized the impact leaders have on the attitudes of others. Changing culture within CIFR, as in any organization, is a challenging task and focus needs to be placed on the role of the chief and company officers in this work.

As discussed previously, the desire to help their community was the principal factor in people choosing to volunteer for CIFR. Results from other interview questions

supported this as well. Training was an influencing factor in determining individuals' participation levels as were operational policies to some degree. These factors were also highlighted in regards to actions the district could take to increase participation. The ability to use their skills was the most selected item and better, more organized training was the second highest factor among all groups.

CIFR volunteers want to train and want to use their skills. These results are similar to those found by Kerst (2001), who reported that the greatest factor in retaining volunteers in the Eagle River Fire Protection district was their contribution to the organization. He further stated that "when a member is at the station or on a call, they feel their importance and performance is contributing to their community" (p.28).

In investigating the effect of district policies on participation levels, two factors were brought to light. First, the district has recently implemented a volunteer sleeper program. Volunteer sleepers are first on-scene at incidents in their area and are able to utilize both their fire and medical training prior to the arrival of the career staff and paramedics. The program has been extremely successful and the interview results further highlight the benefits of this program and the desire to expand it.

Second, volunteers at stations with career staffing are often de-motivated by the paging procedures currently in place. They are toned for incidents along with the career staff, but due to the mechanics of their response (i.e., responding from home to the station) they are never first on scene and are often cancelled in route. Other operational conditions exist that make working together difficult, and the result has been a sense of dissatisfaction and decreased participation by some volunteers. As noted by Sullivan (1997), the need for

clear written policies and procedures addressing job descriptions and duties, reporting, and discipline will help reduce potential problems.

The operational issues of using volunteer and career firefighters in a combination department are exacerbated by cultural and relationship issues between the two groups. The IAFC, in their 2005 *Lighting the Path of Evolution: The Red Ribbon Report*, described aspects of a “dual” system rather than a combination system. They also warn that “poorly managed ‘dual’ systems often become ‘duel’ systems that are destined to fail” (p. 10). Based on the interview results, it appears that CIFR has some attributes of a combination system and some of a “dual” system. Operationally, career and volunteer firefighters respond on separate apparatus. Some stations house both career and volunteer firefighters while others are volunteer only. Also, it appears that efforts can be made to more closely integrate the rank structures and supervision.

On the other hand, most volunteers felt that there were sufficient opportunities for volunteer and career to staff to work and socialize together. They also felt that both groups were equally important to the organization and equally valued by department leadership. While a majority of the group felt that the career staff received better equipment and apparatus, they also felt that everyone was subject to the same rules and regulations and that overall both groups were treated equally.

The transition to a combination department has been a long one for CIFR. Since hiring its first three career firefighters in 1999 there has been a great deal of change on all sides of the organization. Over the last decade the district has seen a loss of many of its volunteers and tenuous relationships between career staff, volunteer staff, and administration. However, the results from these interviews are very encouraging. It

appears that the district is on the right path to creating a strong combination department with dedicated volunteer and career staff.

Recommendations

Results from this research project provided valuable insight into motivations and needs of CIFR volunteers. An ancillary benefit of conducting these interviews was that each member was grateful for the opportunity to give their feedback and thankful that the district was concerned enough about them to actually investigate the issues. Because of this, it is recommended that the district continue to promote this feedback mechanism by conducting regular surveys, interviews, or focus groups. Similarly, the district should implement exit interviews of members who are leaving the district. While personal reasons were shown to be the causal factor for people interviews as part of this study, valuable insight will be gained that will promote quality improvement.

Volunteers participating in these interviews were also very eager to participate in developing and implementing potential solutions. While a number of recommendations are presented here, the district may want to hold a series of focus group sessions that can further define and implement these recommendations as well as develop new one.

Rewards and recognition are another area in which the district could help motivate its volunteers. For many years CIFR held an annual awards banquet to thank their firefighters and staff for their service. Rewards such as firefighter of the year, most training hours, most call responses, and years of service were presented. An awards banquet has not been held in several years and this fact was mentioned by many individuals. The district should re-institute this ceremony. Additionally, not all awards and recognition need to be formal. Small gifts, letters of appreciations, or even a “thank you” goes a long way in

making people feel valued. All officers from the fire chief to the company officers should take it upon themselves to thank people regularly in some fashion.

Leadership at the company officer level was identified as being important as well as an area needing work. This district should develop an officer training program that will give their officers not only the operational and tactical skills they need, but emphasize leadership, managerial, and interpersonal skills. This lack of officer training has also been noted among the career officers. A training program delivered to both groups will not only help train all CIFR officers, but help integrate the two supervisory groups and promote better career / volunteer relationships.

Camano Island Fire and Rescue volunteers want to train and use the skills they train for on emergency incidents. CIFR has been without a training officer for the last year and its training program has languished. It is recommended that a dedicated training officer be re-established and given the resources to do their job effectively. Operational policies such as paging should also be evaluated and overhauled to better accommodate volunteer and career staffing. Finally, the sleeper program should be expanded to seven nights per week and other similar programs should be implemented. How to enable volunteers to utilize their skills and fulfill their desire to help their community should be priority number one. These ideas would be excellent topics for a first focus group session as discussed above.

Like many fire service agencies today, CIFR is facing significant financial challenges. With decreases in assessed values reducing property tax revenues, the district must find ways to do more with less. A strong combination department is an efficient and effective way to provide service to the community. It is hoped that these recommendations will help CIFR further this goal with minimal cost and great benefit.

References

- Bartel, L. (1998). *Recruiting volunteer firefighters*. Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy.
- Bassett-Jones, N. & Lloyd, G.C. (2005). Does Herzberg's motivation theory have staying power? *The Journal of Management Development*, 24(10), 929-943. doi:10.1108/02621710510627064
- Department of Homeland Security. U.S. Fire Administration. Executive Fire Officer Program. (2009, October). *Operational policies and procedures*.
- The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). (2005, November). *Lighting the path of evolution: The Red Ribbon Report*.
- Karter, M.J. (2009). *U.S. fire department profile through 2008*. Retrieved May 13, 2010, from NFPA: <http://www.nfpa.org/itemDetail.asp?categoryID=955&itemID=23688&URL=Research/Fire%20statistics/The%20U.S.%20fire%20service&cookie%5Ftest=1>
- Kerst, W.M. (2001). *Retention of volunteer fire and rescue personnel for the Eagle River Fire Protection District*. Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy.
- Lee, S.H. & Olshfski, D. (2002). Employee commitment and firefighters: It's my job. *Public Administration Review*, 62, 108-114.
- Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.

The National Volunteer Fire Council, & U.S. Fire Administration. (1993). *Retention and recruitment in the volunteer fire service*. Washington, DC: Federal Emergency Management Agency.

National Volunteer Fire Council, Federal Emergency Management Agency, & U.S. Fire Administration. (1998). *Recruitment and retention in the volunteer fire service: Problems and solutions*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Painter, R.L. (2001). *Volunteer firefighter recruitment programs: A state-by-state assessment*. Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy.

Silva, J.P. (2001). *Motivation of volunteer firefighters in combination fire departments*. Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy.

Snook, J.W, Johnson, J.D., & Olsen, D.C. (1998). *Recruiting, training, and maintaining volunteer firefighters*. West Linn, OR

Stittleburg, P. (1993). Leaders set the tone for members. *NFPA Journal*, 87, 83.

Stocker, M.L. (, 2004-2005, Winter). Suppressing volunteer firefighting. *Regulation*, 12-13.

Sullivan, T.M. (1997). The career/volunteer relationship. *Fire Engineering*, 150(5), 10-14.

Sweeney, M.R. (2003). *Maintaining motivated firefighters a continuing challenge for the volunteer fire service*. Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy.

Windisch, F.C. (1995). Influencing change with a new culture. *Fire Engineering*, 148(4), 12-16.

Appendix A

**Individual Level of Volunteer Participation
in Emergency Incidents**

Table 2. Number of Emergency Incident Responses by Volunteer

<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Responses</u>
1	30	2	17
3	6	4	32
5	9	6	39
7	92	8	5
9	22	10	164
11	0	12	15
13	45	14	135
15	35	16	16
17	58	18	30
19	4	20	37
21	32	22	114
23	14	24	265
25	254	26	17
27	32		

Appendix B

Preliminary Study Questionnaire

Appendix B. Preliminary Questionnaire

(Former Volunteers)

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Conducted by: _____ Date: _____

1. What initially motivated you to become a volunteer firefighter with Camano Island Fire and Rescue:
- a. Give back to the community.
 - b. As a step towards a career as a full-time firefighter.
 - c. For the excitement.
 - d. For the money
 - e. I always wanted to be a firefighter.
 - f. For the camaraderie.
 - g. Other (please elaborate): _____

Comments:

2. Which of the following factors positively or negatively influenced your level of participation while volunteering with Camano Island Fire and Rescue?

a. Time commitment.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

b. Training.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

c. Pay.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

d. Rewards and recognition.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

e. Leadership from company officers.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

f. Leadership from chiefs and administration.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

g. Operational policies.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

h. Relationship with career staff.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

i. Other volunteers.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

j. District goals and objectives.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

Comments:

3. What finally motivated you to stop volunteering with Camano Island Fire and Rescue?

- a. The time commitment was too great.
- b. I lost interest.
- c. Personal conflict (moved, medical, family, etc.).
- d. Not enough action.
- e. Relationship with administration.
- f. Relationship with career staff.
- g. Other (please elaborate): _____

Comments:

4. What could the district have done to motivate you to continue / increase your service as a volunteer firefighter?

- a. Increase pay or provide other monetary incentives.
- b. Provide better leadership.
- c. More rewards and recognition.
- d. Better, more organized training.
- e. Provide clear goals and objectives.
- f. Equal treatment with career staff.
- g. Other (please elaborate): _____

Comments:

5. Any comments you would like to add:

Appendix C

Main Study Questionnaire

Appendix C. Main Study Questionnaire

(Current Volunteer Firefighters)

Name: _____

Conducted by: _____ Date: _____

1. What initially motivated you to become a volunteer firefighter with Camano Island Fire and Rescue?

- h. Give back to the community.
- i. As a step towards a career as a full-time firefighter.
- j. For the excitement.
- k. For the money.
- l. I always wanted to be a firefighter.
- m. For the camaraderie.
- n. Other (please elaborate): _____

Comments:

2. Which of the following factors positively or negatively influences your level of participation in emergency and non-emergency events?

a. Overall time commitment.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

b. Time commitment for training.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

c. Quality of training.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

d. Pay.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

e. Rewards and recognition.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

f. Leadership from company officers.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

g. Leadership from chiefs and administration.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

h. Operational policies.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

i. Relationship with career staff.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

j. Other volunteers.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

k. District goals and objectives.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

l. Image of / pride in being a firefighter.

____ Positive Influence ____ Negative Influence ____ Not a Factor

Comments:

3. How do you feel about relationships between the volunteer and career firefighters?

h. The two groups are well integrated T F

i. The two groups are equally important to the organization. T F

j. There is mutual respect between the two groups. T F

k. The two groups are equally valued by department leadership. T F

l. The two groups receive equal equipment and apparatus. T F

m. There are sufficient opportunities to work together. T F

n. There are sufficient opportunities to socialize together. T F

o. Rank structure and supervision should be more integrated. T F

p. Both groups are subject to the same rules and regulations. T F

q. Overall both groups are treated equally. T F

r. Other (please elaborate): _____

Comments:

4. What can the district do to motivate you to increase your service as a volunteer firefighter?

- h. Increase pay or provide other monetary incentives.
- i. Provide better leadership at the company officer level.
- j. Provide better leadership at the chief level.
- k. More rewards and recognition.
- l. Better, more organized training.
- m. Provide clear goals and objectives.
- n. Equal treatment with career staff.
- o. More opportunities for feedback.
- p. More opportunities to use my skills.
- q. Other (please elaborate): _____

Comments:

5. Any comments you would like to add: