



Parksville Fire Department - Strategic Planning Survey Results

PARKSVILLE, BC: The Parksville Volunteer Fire Department (PVFD) recently conducted an online survey intended to assist in the review and update of the department's strategic plan. The department asked the public to provide comments and suggestions for improvements to services they wish to see and also to receive input related to community expectations of the fire department.

A total of 69 residents from the Parksville Fire Protection Area completed the survey between February 14 and March 17, 2013. Although the department had hoped for a greater number of participants, the responses received were detailed and thoughtful and input will prove valuable as part of the overall strategic planning process.

Many of the responses indicated a need to provide the community with more information on the fire department's activities - this was particularly evident in the question on which type of incidents the fire department should or should not respond to.

"We appreciate the time residents took to provide their comments and suggestions and the input will be considered as part of the department's strategic planning review. In the future, we will endeavour to provide the public with relevant and topical information on the department's activities in order to give the citizens of the fire protection area a better understanding of the department's role in the community," said Fire Chief Doug Banks.

Results of the survey are provided here:

General

- 81% of respondents live in City of Parksville
- 95.5% are aware the PVFD operates as a volunteer fire department
- Just 21% of respondents have used the services of the fire department; through public education, burning complaints, gas leaks, building inspections and fire suppression.

Overall satisfaction

- 78% found the level of service to be excellent or very good
- 85% indicated the PVFD met expectations (8% indicating either "no" or "don't know")
- 78% said personnel appeared knowledgeable about their job
- 86% said firefighters were courteous and helpful

Awareness, public education and recruitment

- 88% are aware that fire inspections of public buildings are mandated by the Fire Services Act and provided to the community by the PVFD.
- 91% are aware of the annual recruitment campaign with 35% indicating they have considered volunteering. Reasons for not volunteering included age as a factor, health considerations and work or family commitments. Good feedback was provided to this question which will be used for strategic planning purposes.
- 84% are aware of the department's public education/outreach programs and 60% have taken part in one or more sessions. The public is interested in additional programs and provided many suggestions for topics.

Emergency Preparedness

- 54% are prepared for a large scale emergency or disaster (46% are unprepared or "do not know").
- 66% are aware of the community emergency program, 33% are interested in receiving information and 57% would like to see more public training made available by the department.
- 47.5% indicated they "don't know" if the Parksville emergency program meets their expectations. 11.5% indicated "no" and 41% indicated "yes" to the program meeting expectations.
- Only 10% are members of a neighbourhood emergency preparedness program.
- Of the 13 respondents who operate a business in Parksville, 8 feel their businesses are prepared for an emergency or disaster.

Communications

- Responses indicated the best ways for the fire department to communicate with residents were local newspapers (77%), City and PVFD websites (57%), public education (31%), email (28%) and social media (28%).

Mission statement of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department:

The commitment of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department is to maintain the quality of living in our community by preventing or minimizing injury, loss of life and/or property from fire or other emergencies that may occur within the area that we serve. At the same time, the department strives to improve the quality of life through public education and prevention programs.

The Parksville Fire Protection Area includes the City of Parksville and contract areas within the Regional District of Nanaimo including San Pareil, Morningstar, Columbia Beach, French Creek, Fournau Road and the Forever Green Estates. The population of the fire protection area is estimated to be about 20,000.

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