

FY10 UA Capital Budget Request
\$1 million general fund/\$500,000 nongeneral fund

UAF Fire Station and Student Firefighter Training Center

(new facility planning money)

Background

The University Fire Department (UFD) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks has provided fire protection for the campus community for more than 40 years, as well as a large off-campus fire district since the 1970s.

The department is ranked in the top 1 percent of fire departments in the country based upon a rating by the Insurance Services Organization, an independent agency which rates fire departments throughout the United States.

The UFD is located in the Whitaker Building on the UAF campus. Built in 1964, the building fails to meet current seismic building codes and the building's electrical and plumbing systems are failing.

Firefighter dorm rooms are about one-third the size of normal campus dorm rooms, and the building only has space for 10 students although the need is for close to three times that many. Student firefighters that live in the facility provide the manpower for general alarms and second out calls.

An expanded facility is urgently needed to meet the demands placed on the department due to an increasing call volume and population.

Serving students

The UFD is the only student firefighter program of its kind in the country. Student firefighters are treated as full-time career firefighters, and receive hands-on training as firefighters, EMTs, apparatus drivers and public educators. Students work 24 hours on/48 hours off, which exposes them to a wide range of calls.

An average day for a student firefighter may include:

- responding to fire/EMS calls.
- performing vehicle checks and maintenance.
- driver and pumper training.
- fire ground operation training.
- rescue/extrication training.
- EMS training.
- attending university classes.



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Alaska's First University



Captain Jim Styers with the University Fire Department thanks Mrs. Roth's third grade class at University Park Elementary School for their efforts to help raise funds to buy teddy bears for rescue workers to hand out to children as needed during future rescue operations.

Student firefighters are required to maintain at least 6 credit hours and a minimum 2.0 GPA each semester, and can be pursuing any major they wish. While many pursue degrees in emergency services, others major in engineering, education, biology, management and so on.

Serving community

UFD has had a partnership with the Fairbanks North Star Borough university fire service area since the late 1970s. The department provides fire and rescue services and public education to approximately 22,000 people within this 26-square-mile area. UAF also has a contract to provide EMS services to a large service area that encompasses the above area as well as the Fairbanks International Airport.



The fire department is part of the area-wide mutual aid pact with other area fire departments, and is a major player when there is a borough-wide disaster of any kind. The department is also active with the Pipeline Training Center and has provided support to that project for six years.

Serving Alaska

Alumni of the UFD can be found in fire departments around the entire state. Some examples include:

- Mike Tilley, fire chief, Kenai Fire Department
- Brian Long, fire chief, Unalaska Fire Department
- Mike Murphy, Anchorage battalion chief
- Dave Halbrooks, assistant fire chief, Fort Wainwright
- Randy Sourada, assistant fire chief, Fort Richardson
- Tom Covington, fire chief, Red Dog Mine

A large group of former UAF firefighters have gone into wildland firefighting with both the state and federal government. Additionally, half of the current UAF career staff are former UAF student firefighters.

Facility Needs

UAF is proposing construction of a new University Fire Station and Student Firefighter Training Center. The facility will be constructed at a new location near lower campus, which will provide better access for emergency service response to the campus and the community, as well as greater access by other emergency service providers.

The facility will provide space for administrative offices, classroom space, apparatus bays with fire and EMS support rooms and firefighter/medic living quarters for both on- and off-duty members.

In addition, the new station will be versatile enough to provide various alternate functions during major incidents such as earthquakes and wildfires.



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