

8/25/03
Handout

**Pinellas Assembly
Fire & EMS Structure and Funding Task Force
August 11, 2003**

- The County favors fire departments voluntarily regionalizing for cost savings.
- The County believes those who benefit from Hazmat & Tech Rescue (cities and fire districts) should financially support those specialty teams.
- Combined countywide EMS and Fire can be a tax, but not an assessment. EMS benefits people, not property, per Chapter 80-585, Laws of Florida, and a recent Florida Supreme Court decision.
 - o The County believes it is fruitful for the Task Force to consider using fire assessments. Considerations may include a common tax or assessment (1) for county unincorporated areas only or (2) instituted countywide.
 - o Districts would be able to distribute their resources such as district chiefs, fire investigators and automatic aid without worrying about who is paying the cost.
- The County believes a centrally location burn building/training center is sufficient, based upon its location at the "timed travel" center of the County, to provide greatly improved training over those currently available.
- The County favors annual EMS funding audits with reimbursement for overpayments.
- The County favors a single countywide ISO Rating as long as none increase.
- The County favors true Priority Dispatch for both EMS and Fire to maximize resource utilization.

The County believes the charge of the task force includes finding fiscal efficiency through:

- Can more be saved in group benefits purchasing and insurance?
- Examining comparisons with other fire agencies around the nation to see where we stack up.
- Countywide ISO Rating.
- Can fire trucks be refurbished, instead of purchasing new all the time?
- Hydrant and other fire standards, which need to be equal countywide.

Considered 8/25/03

FIRE/EMS TASK FORCE

Draft Recommendations; Stated in Concept

- ISO rating of 3 or better countywide. Action: approved unanimously
- Implement a Fire fee for non-residential, non-government tax-exempt properties. Action: Delayed for further discussion
- Recognize and encourage the current level of joint purchase of materials and equipment. Recommend joint purchase of workers' compensation and other forms of insurance, if a cost benefit results. Action: Approved unanimously