

Executive Summary on the Contender Boat Donation from the Lee County Sheriff's Office

The Upper Captiva Fire and Rescue District's (UCFRD) mission, as recertified in 2004 by the Florida Legislature (House of Representatives' Bill 1717), is to provide:

- Fire suppression and control services
- Emergency medical services and rescue response services

The UCFRD currently provides these through three different funding processes:

- The Ad Valorem budget, currently based on a millage rate of 3.75/\$1,000 of property assessor valuation of properties on the island, is budgeted to generate \$593,767 this year.
- The Special Assessment budget, approved by referendum by District voters in July 2014, to increase minimum firefighter staffing from 2 firefighters to 4 firefighters, in response to the last Insurance Services Organization (ISO) evaluation conducted in October 2013, is budgeted to generate \$447,400 in revenue this year.
- And donations from the island residents and visitors have generated \$64,216 so far this year. This money has been used to buy equipment that tax revenues haven't been capable of funding. In the past, these donations were used to replace equipment lost or damaged in the February 2013 fires and, in 2014, the "Medical Mule" (for patient evacuation). This year, the money is being used to purchase all of the equipment and supplies required for initial outfitting of medical requirements, including the establishment of an Advance Life Support capability on the island (approved by Lee County EMS to begin on 1 June 2015) and patient boat evacuation from the island.

After the Lee County Board of Commissioners terminated the Lee County EMS-operated MEDSTAR medical evacuation helicopter service, North Captiva Island was left without any county-funded services for patient evacuation. During the time between termination of MEDSTAR and the County contract with Air Methods, a private aeromedical evacuation provider, most patient evacuations were completed by private boat charters and Island Girl water taxis. For these urgent transports (both before and after MEDSTAR was terminated), the District paid those fees (without reimbursement, since we are not a licensed Patient Transport Service).

- The UCFRD is not a Transport Department and there is no intent to become a Transport Department in the future. The costs for increased insurance and higher liability risk compared to the relatively small reimbursement rates that a Transport Department could bill don't make monetary sense. In the past, we have spent roughly \$1,800 every year from the Ad Valorem Budget for private charter captains or Island Girl to evacuate patients off-island, without reimbursement (if no further Emergency Room treatment is required, then the District does not coordinate or fund the evacuation).
- After repeated conversations with the Lee County Commission (and Commissioner Manning individually), the District reiterated that the high costs of aeromedical evacuation of patients was unfair to Upper Captiva taxpayers, residents and visitors. This is especially true after the County terminated the EMS-operated MEDSTAR (that cost between \$7,000-\$8,000/flight), replacing it with Air Methods, the EMS-contracted service provider (that now costs our residents and visitors between \$18,000-\$21,000/flight). After repeated pleas to the County Commission and Commissioner Manning to provide a lower cost solution for medical evacuation to the barrier islands after the new provider doubled the aeromedical evacuation costs, the Lee County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) donated a 2003 28' Contender with two 225 horsepower Mercury outboard engines, outfitted with an extensive electronics and communications package, allowing operations during limited visibility and conditions.
 - The 28' Contender has an estimated value of \$40,000

- Each engine had 620 hours on them, with an expected useful life of 3,000 hours and an estimated value of \$16,000
- The extensive electronics package includes GPS, radar, and various radios, with an estimated value of \$2,000.
- The donation also included a heavy duty boat trailer with an estimated value of \$2,000
- The LCSO made the donation on 5 February 2015 as an interdepartmental transfer between LCSO and the District. The donation was accepted by Chief Pepper on 8 February in a letter to Sheriff Scott and Commissioner Manning. The Commissioners discussed the donation and its potential use for lower priority medical evacuations (in lieu of higher cost helicopter evacuations for lower priority patients) at the regularly scheduled Commission Meeting on 18 February 2015. During that discussion:
 - It was agreed that initial outfitting costs would be paid for by donations, while operational costs would be funded by the Ad Valorem budget.
 - That our ISO certification could not be placed in jeopardy for the rare occurrences when 2 firefighters were off-island for the 40-60 minutes required to evacuate a patient, transfer the patient to Lee County EMS, and then return to the island.
 - The District paid for 12 private charters in Fiscal Year 2013 (\$2400), 3 private charters in Fiscal Year 2014 (\$625) plus 5 in the UCFRD skiff and one on Island Girl (when charters couldn't be arranged), and 4 private charters in Fiscal Year 2015 (\$860 through 31 May). Based on the average number of patient evacuations over the last 3 fiscal years, the average number is 9 (costing an average of \$1,800 each year) ... and the same number of roundtrips are estimated for the Contender.
 - According to A-1 Marine, based on the District's expected usage each year, the scheduled maintenance services should be scheduled every other year at a total cost of \$784 for both (or prorated amount of \$392 each year).

Boat Evacuation Cost Analysis

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Private Charter Costs</u>	<u>Contender Costs</u>
Private Charters	9	\$200	\$1,800	
Lee EMS Travel/Wait Time			60-90 minutes	0-30 minutes
* Physical Damage Insurance	1	\$900		\$ 900
Liability Insurance	1	\$50		\$ 50
** Fuel	9	\$75		\$ 675
Annual Services	1	\$392		\$ 392
Bi-Annual Services (\$784 for both)				
Water Pump Services (\$480 EOY***)				
Spark Plugs (\$240 EOY***)				
Gear Oil/Lube (\$100 EOY***)				
SHC Dockage Cost	1	\$0		\$ 0
Total Costs			\$1,800	\$2,017
* Physical Damage Insurance is Not Mandatory				
** Fuel Usage Estimated				
*** Services Every Other Year (EOY); Price as of 1 June 2015				

- The UCFRD now has three boats that are well-suited, in different ways, for our stated missions:
 - The Carolina Skiff (docked at the Safety Harbor Club docks near SHC's Over the Water restaurant), is specifically designed with shallow draft for running near to the beach (and landing on the beach when necessary). Its low sidewalls work well for loading firefighting and EMT equipment aboard for either water rescue or moving equipment to respond to an emergency affecting our South Banks homes. And the "sidewall access" allows easier water-level recovery of swimmers in the water requiring rescue. Dockage is paid for with the

District's quarterly payment of \$750 to SHC (which also covers water, sewer, and trash services for the Station).

- The 23' HydroSport (docked at Pineland Marina) is used as our crew transfer boat each morning, instead of paying Island Girl for 3 roundtrip passenger charges per day, every day of the year. The District determined that purchase and operation of a crew boat would save \$10,000 - \$12,000 per year in roundtrip transportation costs for our firefighters. The crew boat was purchased in September 2014 for \$5700 and operating costs are shared by the Special Assessment and Ad Valorem budgets (we pay \$800/month for dockage and parking at Pineland Marina).
- The Contender, a 28' V-Hull with two Mercury 225 horsepower engines and an extensive electronics package (docked at the SHC T-Dock) was donated by the Lee County Sheriff's Office. Its speed will allow for quick evacuation of patients off-island that don't need the more expensive aeromedical evacuation on the Lee County EMS-contracted helicopter but still require further immediate treatment in an Emergency Room. With the approval of the Friends of the Fire Department, all of the initial outfitting costs were paid for from the donation account (with the District taxpayer-funded budget responsible for the operating costs). Dockage is included in the rental payment for the Staff's SHC townhouse.

Initial Outfitting Costs

Paid by Friends of the Fire Department

<u>Item</u>	<u>Estimated Costs</u>
Painting	\$ 600
Wrap-Around Decal/Lettering	\$1,700
Patient Bench Installation	\$ 750
Dodger (Aluminum Cover)	\$1,200
Total Costs	\$4,250

With the increase of firefighters from 2 each day to 4 on shift each day, our firefighters have been involved in out-of-station work projects like trimming Brazilian Pepper around road signs to make them visible or installing new road signs funded by the Upper Captiva Civic Association this year. While we limit this out-of-station work to 2 firefighters, we still have 2 firefighters in-station, and all 4 can meet our required emergency response times.

- The District has confirmed from ISO, in writing, that short absences from the island to complete sporadic patient evacuations will not affect our new Public Protection Class 4 certification as a fire district. We normally average 1-2 boat evacuations per month (and we estimate these roundtrips for our firefighters will average 40-60 minutes for each evacuation).
- The Lee County EMS Medical Director (Dr. Lemmons), who is responsible for privileging our Paramedics and EMS Director Scott Tuttle, have approved, in advance, two authorized "blackout" periods where Advance Life Support (ALS) coverage can be temporarily suspended without impacting our new ALS certification:
 - One allowance is for the 40-60 minutes that would be required for evacuating a patient by boat for further immediate treatment in an Emergency Room (but one not requiring immediate aeromedical evacuation by helicopter) from North Captiva Island.
 - The other allowance is for any periods of natural disasters or other occasions where our part-time Emergency Medical Technicians-Paramedic (EMT-Ps) are not released from their home stations (their departments may require them to work overtime in their home communities during the emergency).