

CHEROKEE COUNTY, GEORGIA

FIRE & EMERGENCY
SERVICES

WORK PLAN

SEPTEMBER 1996

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHEROKEE COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION WISH TO EXPRESS THEIR APPRECIATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES PLANNING TEAM FOR ALL OF THE LONG HOURS AND HARD WORK THAT WENT INTO THIS PROJECT AND FOR THE ONES YET TO COME.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE

ROBBY WESTBROOK

STATION LOCATION & DESIGN TEAM

LARRY BERRY - TEAM LEADER
GARY VAUGHAN
BOB NEALEY
JACKIE BYERS

ORGANIZATION TEAM

J.H. PAYNE - TEAM LEADER
JEFF WHIDBY
MIKE SMITH
JERRY SMITH

APPARATUS & EQUIPMENT TEAM

RAYMOND GUNNIN - TEAM LEADER
OSSIE DELAY
J.T.WHIDBY
GREG DAY

We the undersigned membership of the Cherokee County Fire Chief's Association fully support all aspects of this work plan and urge the Board of Commissions to move forward on all aspects of this proposal to move the Cherokee County fire service forward.

 CHIEF ROBBY WESTBROOK
 PRESIDENT

 CHIEF GARY VAUGHAN
 VICE PRESIDENT
 HOLBROOK CAMP GROUND FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF JACKIE BYERS
 BALL GROUND FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF LARRY BERRY
 HICKORY FLAT FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF J.T.WHIDBY
 CIRCLE FIVE FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF J.H. PAYNE
 CLAYTON FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF JOHN EBERSOLE
 HOLLY SPRINGS FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF JAMES MORRIS
 NORTH CANTON FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF MARK EUBANKS
 NELSON FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF JERRY SMITH
 WALESKA FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF JEFF GAZAWAY
 SUTALLEE FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF ELMER BARRETT
 MICA FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF CHUCK VANESS
 LAKE ARROWHEAD FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF HORACE FLOWERS
 SALACOA FIRE DEPT.

 CHIEF BOB NEALEY
 DISTRICT CHIEF 1

 CHIEF BOB JUNK
 CANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

PURPOSE:

To make a workable plan for all Fire and Emergency services within Cherokee County in order to unify all Departments in an effort to improve every aspect of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services.

CURRENTLY

Cherokee County has 16 different fire department organizations including the current fire tax district, Ball Ground, Hickory Flat, Holbrook, Circle Five, Clayton, Holly Springs, North Canton, Nelson, Waleska, Sutallee, Mica, Lake Arrowhead, Salacoa, City of Canton and the City of Woodstock.

These 16 different organizations operate over 50 different pieces of apparatus and have over 100 paid and 150 volunteer Firefighters, many of which are EMT's and Paramedics.

During 1995 these 16 different organizations responded to over 5,000 calls for help from 21 stations with an average response time of just over seven minutes.

Funding for these organizations vary. The tax supported district has an annual budget for it's four stations and personnel of around three million dollars. The 15 volunteer county supplemented stations receive approximately \$225,000.00 total to operate with a limited county MAINTENANCE budget.

Many of the volunteer stations must spend time fund raising to purchase new equipment for their departments.

The city of Canton and Woodstock both receive \$9,000.00 each per year from the county for responding to areas outside their city limits where county stations are further away.

PROPOSAL

All members of the Cherokee County Fire Chiefs Association recommend that a second tax supported fire district be formed as soon as possible to include all unincorporated areas of Cherokee county not currently included by the existing fire tax district. We recommend that the second tax supported district be know as "District 2".

We also recommend that all incorporated municipalities who wish to participate and become a part of either one of the fire tax districts be allowed to do so.

Almost all of the existing Volunteer Fire Stations are owned by the individual departments who are private corporations, and for the immediate future volunteers will continue to provide the major portion of the Fire Personnel in District 2.

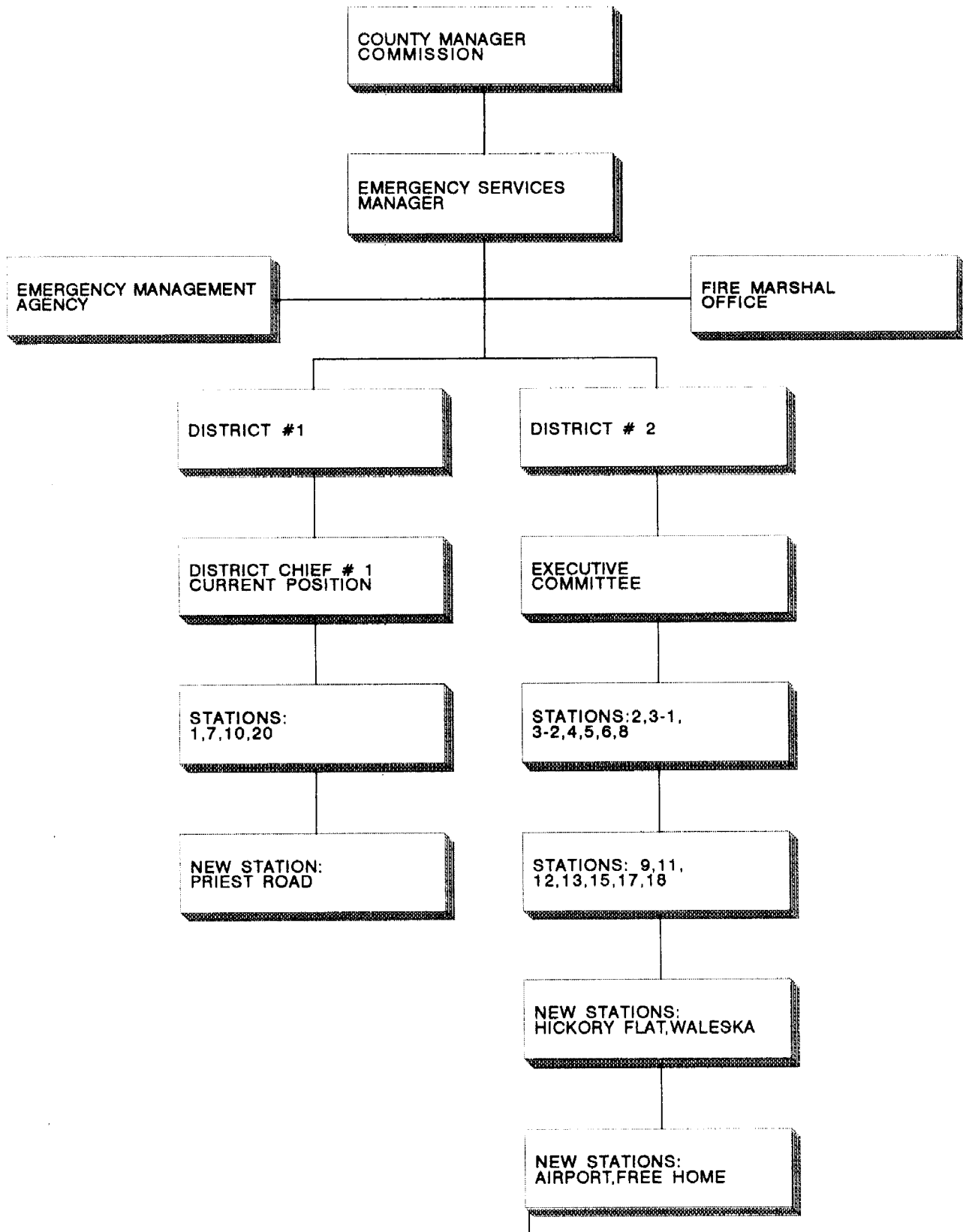
Control of these stations shall remain with each local board of Trustees/Directors Ect. Emergency scene operations shall remain under the control of local Fire Station Officers operating under guidelines and policies established by the Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services.

This shall remain in effect until full funding, equipment and stations are provided by the tax supported district.

STRUCTURE

A new position should be created as soon as possible which would answer directly to the County Manager and Commission. This position, would act as the "emergency Services Manager". This positions official name may be amended or changed by the Commission.

CHEROKEE COUNTY FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES



The current tax district should maintain it's fire suppression and rescue command structure. The District Chief shall work with the Emergency Services Manager and the executive board of the second tax district.

The new fire district #2 shall have the executive board of the Fire Chief's Association acting as the "District Chief" for it's district until such time as funding is available to hire a "District 2 Chief".

We strongly recommend that all official communications between staff in either district and the county commission go through the "Emergency Services Manager". This will allow a strong chain of command to be established and the flow of information will be more organized.

Each fire station in the new district should be staffed with paid Firefighters as soon as possible. These Firefighters should work 24/48 shifts and will be county employees. The chief of each station in district 2 will be their direct supervisor.

A minimum of 45 new Firefighters will need to be hired by the new district in order to have one Firefighter in each station 24 hours per day. These positions are in no way planned to replace any of the current volunteer members, but to supplement their force.

The chief of district 1, the Executive board over district 2 and the "Emergency Services Manager" shall work with other staff from both districts to establish the following which will apply equally to both districts and any municipality that wishes to participate;

1. Standard hiring procedures and applications for all applicants both paid and volunteer. This should be completed ASAP.
2. Standard medical procedures for existing members, both paid and volunteer, including all new applicants.
3. Unified incident command and fire fighter accountability system.
4. Apparatus and equipment maintenance and inspection.
5. Standardize promotional examinations.
6. A complete standard operating procedures manual.
7. Apparatus and station specifications.

FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

Cherokee County enforces the Standard Fire Prevention Code and other codes adopted statewide by the Department of Community Affairs. This code establishes a Fire Prevention Department and names the "fire official" as the person in charge.

Fire Prevention includes two [2], broad areas of responsibilities. The first is construction plan review, construction inspections, and periodic inspections. The second category is Public Fire Safety Education which is provided to schools, day cares, nursery schools, and industry to name only a few of the groups that have benefitted from this standardized program. Both of these functions are in place today but, with the geographical and financial separations created by a paid fire district and the volunteer system, neither of these programs are as efficient or effective as they can be. Nationwide, these programs have made significant impacts toward reducing property damage and loss of life. The residents of the county can only benefit when these programs are coordinated and provided in a uniform manner throughout the county.

We recommend the inspection and education personnel be assigned under one heading. The title of the organization shall be the "Fire Marshal's Office". We also recommend that the activities of the prevention and inspection personnel in the Fire Marshal's Office, be the direct responsibility of the Fire Marshal who shall report directly to the "Emergency Services Manager".

We further recommend that fire origin and cause determination "arson" be the responsibility of the Fire Marshal's Office. Where and why a fire started are directly related to prevention through inspection and education. Investigating fires, working closely with fire suppression forces and insurance companies, and assisting property owners will help identify if and where special problems exist and if extraordinary prevention measures need to be applied.

FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

As previously mentioned, the Cherokee County Fire Marshal enforces fire prevention and building codes adopted by DCA. The Life Safety Code [NFPA 101] is also enforced by the Fire Marshal. Woodstock and Canton adopted these codes but many have modified them for local application. This can create confusion for developers and contractors doing work in the various jurisdictions of the county which opens the door for code violations and extra expense to correct the violations. Coordination between county and cities to minimize the code variances and unify the fire prevention efforts should be the responsibility of the fire prevention organization.

RECOMMENDATION SUMMATION: Establish a single organization whose responsibility is Fire Prevention through inspection, education, and investigation programs. The Fire Marshal, reporting to the "Emergency Services Manager", will be responsible for the activities of the personnel in this organization.

FIRE STATION LOCATION & DESIGN

PURPOSE

To review the current locations of fire stations in Cherokee County and to recommend the location and design criteria for future stations, taking into consideration the present and anticipated growth in each community.

CURRENTLY

As previously stated, there are 21 stations within Cherokee County. The location of these stations affects the response time of apparatus to fires and other emergencies and the cost of property insurance for both homes and business. Decreasing the response time directly affects the loss of life and property as well as insurance premiums.

The one percent sales tax referendum included 5 new fire stations incorporated into a community room with a Sheriff's precinct in each of them. Since this was a five year tax option, we concentrated on these five stations. With the anticipated growth in the next five years, any further recommendations would probably be outdated before they could be acted upon. We did identify some other areas that will probably justify additional stations due to the growth anticipated but the justification should be revisited after the planned growth is firmed up.

The Insurance Services Organization (ISO), the insurance industry rating company, only gives credit to property within five road miles of a fire station. They give maximum credit for property within 1 1/2 miles of the fire station. The 21 existing stations plus 5 new ones place most (but not all) of the county within 5 road miles of a fire station.

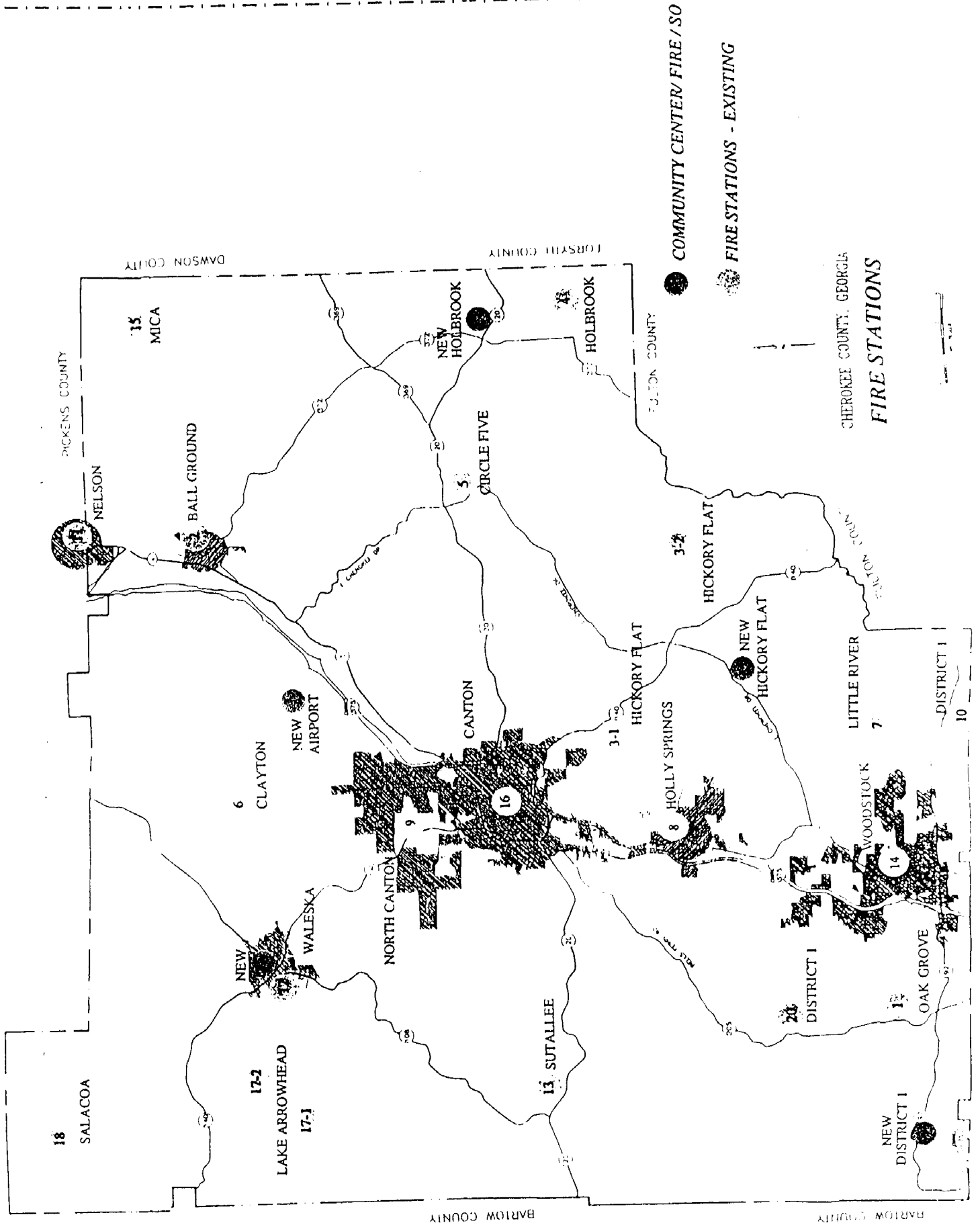
FIRE STATION LOCATION & DESIGN**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The five stations should be located as follows:
 - A. Priest road near hwy 92 (property already purchased).
 - B. Airport drive near I-575 (property already purchased).
 - C. Highway 20 near Perkins Circle (property identified).
 - D. Near Reinhardt College "Waleska" (area identified).
 - E. East Cherokee Dr. between Little Rd. & Avery Creek (area identified).

{See attached map}
2. The property should be identified and purchased ASAP. Growth is driving the price up and decreasing the availability of open spaces. Property should be a minimum of three (3) acres to allow adequate parking and training space. The locations have been coordinated with Sheriff Garrisons office.
3. The stations should be built to the same basic specifications and should include sleeping quarters. All stations are manned at times by volunteers as well as by career Firefighters.
4. An architect experienced in fire station design should be retained to work with the committee and the Sheriff's office in designing an efficient, functional and economical facility.

The members of the Location and Design Team stand ready to assist the fire service command staff and Board of Commissioners to bring this project to a conclusion by opening these 5 new stations in a timely manner.

PICKENS COUNTY



COMMUNITY CENTER/FIRE/50

FIRE STATIONS - EXISTING

CHEROKEE COUNTY, GEORGIA
FIRE STATIONS

18

SALACOA

17-2

LAKE ARROWHEAD

17-1

NEW

WALESKA

NORTH CANTON

9

13

SUTALLEE

6

CLAYTON

NEW AIRPORT

CANTON

16

3-1

HICKORY FLAT

HOLLY SPRINGS

3-2

HICKORY FLAT

NEW HICKORY FLAT

LITTLE RIVER

7

WOODSTOCK

14

OAK GROVE

NEW DISTRICT I

DISTRICT I

10

DISTRICT I

11

NELSON

BALL GROUND

15

MICA

NEW HOLBROOK

20

HOLBROOK

5

CIRCLE FIVE

7

HOLBROOK

DAWSON COUNTY

FORSYTH COUNTY

FULTON COUNTY

CHEROKEE COUNTY

BARTOW COUNTY

BARTOW COUNTY

APPARATUS

SCOPE

The scope of this portion of the plan prepared by the Apparatus Team is to broadly identify the apparatus needs for the first five (5) fire stations to be built using 1% sales tax revenues. This is only a small portion of the work necessary to prepare a plan to purchase the equipment and to also replace equipment over the next several years. The plan does not focus on the specific requirements of the apparatus nor does the plan identify or attempt to specify the equipment and hose to be carried on the apparatus. Detailed performance specifications and the list for equipment required to be carried on the apparatus will be compiled at a later date.

This plan attempts to make recommendations based not only on need, but also on the impact the apparatus will have on insurance rates. As stated before (ISO) evaluates fire departments and publishes their rating for insurance companies to use in determining insurance premiums that home owners and businesses pay. Fire apparatus and the equipment carried on the apparatus factors into ISO's evaluation. Other factors that impact on the evaluation (rating) are the characteristics of the area to be protected; i.e., residential, commercial, or a combination, fire station locations as earlier stated, manpower, training and training facilities, communications (E-911), and the water system.

The following recommendations are based on the five station locations as stated on page 9 by the station location and design team.

This plan along with more detailed information will be used as the basis by fire service management to make decisions on apparatus and equipment purchases.

The committee also recommends that a minimum of two (2) replacement apparatus be purchased each year based on age, condition, and repair cost of existing apparatus. The existing rescue and pumping apparatus is a combination of equipment leased from Georgia Forestry, owned by Cherokee county, and privately owned apparatus by the fire departments themselves.

APPARATUS

NEW STATION APPARATUS:

The following recommendations are made for fully equipped apparatus in the five new stations:

1. PRIEST ROAD NEAR HIGHWAY 92

1-ENGINE
1-LADDER TRUCK

2. AIRPORT DRIVE NEAR I-575

2-ENGINES: ONE OF WHICH SHOULD BE PURCHASED WITH EQUIPMENT TO SUPPLY SPECIAL FIRE FIGHTING FOAM BECAUSE OF THE PROPOSED LOCATION AND IT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE AIRPORT AND EASY ACCESS TO I-575.

1-SERVICE TRUCK

3. HIGHWAY 20 NEAR PERKINS CIRCLE

2-ENGINES

4. WALESKA NEAR REINHARDT COLLEGE

1-ENGINE: THE EXISTING WALESKA ENGINE MAY FULFILL THE NEED FOR PUMPING APPARATUS IN THIS STATION FOR SOMETIME. HOWEVER, THIS ENGINE IS OWNED BY THE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT WHICH MAY REQUIRE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND THE COUNTY AND/OR COMPENSATION IN SOME FORM FROM THE COUNTY.

1-LADDER TRUCK

5. EAST CHEROKEE DRIVE BETWEEN LITTLE ROAD AND AVERY CREEK

1-ENGINE
1-SERVICE TRUCK