

# MESCAL-J6 FIRE DISTRICT Strategic Plan 2025-2029

#### **OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to protect life and property while enhancing the well-being of those we serve through strength, integrity and relentless commitment.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Continuous Improvement Transparency Fiscal Responsibility Operational Readiness Community Focus Health, Wellness and Safety



#### **Governing Board**

Dana Law, Board Chair Deborah Wise, Board Clerk Soni Salcido, Board Member Mike Nervik, Board Member Wade H. Temple, II, Board Member



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#### **External Stakeholders**

Vickie and Ken Carter Residents

> Mary McCool Resident

Fiona de Young Office of Rep. Juan Ciscomani

> Jonathon Serna Resident

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Strategic Plan Facilitation by





## **Message From the Fire Chief**

#### Greetings!

As you read the new and improved mission statement for the Mescal-J6 Fire District on page four, I would ask you to pay particular attention to the words "relentless commitment." We believe these words epitomize what MJ6FD does daily. We are committed to our citizens, strategic partners and other agency affiliates in bringing the very best we can through our all-hazard responses.

This same relentless commitment was shown through the hard work of creating this strategic plan. It is our road map through the next three to five years. Why the spread in years? Because the fire service, our region, the state and counties are always in flux. We believe this plan is flexible and will be a living document as we work through the different strategic areas and issues.

This community values and expects transparency. To that end, you can expect to see regular updates as to the progress of each area on the website and as needed, in-person. This, we believe, will show our commitment to keeping you more completely informed.

So, I invite you to take a strong look at this very ambitious plan that the dedicated team has put it together based on external and internal customer input. We believe it will serve and guide us well.

Sincerely,

Ed Nied, Fire Chief

#### **District Profile**

Mescal-J6 Fire District (MJ6FD) is an all-hazards response organization. It was formed as a fire district in January 2009. Prior to that, it was an all-volunteer department. MJ6FD currently responds to all call types including fire, EMS, hazmat, technical rescue and provides services such as reptile removal, bee issues and lift assists.

The district serves some 21 square miles in Cochise and Pima Counties; approximately 3,000 residents as well as over 11 miles of Interstate Ten (I-10), 13 miles of the Southern Pacific Railroad, two major pipelines and a large wildland urban interface. Interstate Ten and railway traffic result in a significant amount of hazardous materials coming through the district daily.

Mescal-J6 Fire District has three full-time employees and eight reserve firefighters. It soon will embark on a new and improved volunteer rank.

MJ6FD operates out of one fire station that houses one 1995 front line pumper, one 2010 model year 3,500 gallon water tender, one 2009 EMS response vehicle, one 2007 command vehicle, one 1999 brush truck and one small rescue vehicle.

A second facility exists to the south of I-10 where the reserve apparatus, helipad, communications tower and water supply are stored.





## **Organizational Structure**



#### **Revenue & Expenses**



## **Service Delivery Programs**

Mescal-J6 Fire District provides the following services to the community:

- Fire suppression; including residential, commercial, vehicle and wildland
- Emergency medical services (EMS)
- Hazardous materials
- Technical rescue
- Nonemergency services including reptile removal, bee issues, lift assists, vehicle lockout, public education and smoke detector checks/battery change





#### **Call Types/Volume**

#### **Stations and Staffing**





388 S. J6 Ranch Rd. Benson, AZ



#### Administration

98 N. Oak Dr. Benson, AZ

Fire Chief and Office Administrator



#### Personnel

Full-Time: Captain, 2 EMT/Firefighters

Volunteers: 8 Firefighters,EMTs or Paramedics



## **Planning Approach**

Strategic planning is a systematic, formal process that is used to set priorities and focus energy and resources to ensure that all organizational members are working toward common goals. It establishes agreement around intended outcomes/results. It also assesses and adjusts the organization's direction in response to a changing environment and the community's needs.

WHEN DONE EFFECTIVELY, STRATEGIC PLANNING:



## Lead, Think, Plan, Act

Mescal-J6 Fire District has chosen to take a systems approach when developing its strategic plan. The systems approach includes strategic thinking, leading and leadership development, people, technology, processes, change management, effective communication, inclusion and transparency, internal and external stakeholder input and organizational culture.

Feedback loops are incorporated to promote continuous improvement and learning. A periodic cycle (annually) is established to refresh the system. This approach can be demonstrated using the Lead-Think-Plan-Act (LTPA) rubric.<sup>1</sup>



The LTPA approach model:

- Promotes a strategic culture that results in continuous improvement
- · Reinforces the district's mission
- · Promotes communication throughout the district
- · Integrates risk management throughout the process

<sup>1</sup>Guide to the Strategic Planning and Strategic Management Body of Knowledge, Second Edition. Association of Strategic Planning. 2015.

#### **Stakeholder Processes**

Mescal-J6 Fire District believes in a community-based approach to strategic planning. Essential to this approach is obtaining input from external stakeholders. This includes gaining an understanding of the community's priorities and expectations of their fire district.

In January 2025 the district hosted two informative and input-centered workshops for external stakeholders. Thirty-seven individuals attended the workshops including representatives from bordering fire agencies, law enforcement, county agencies, businesses and district residents. A complete list of participants is located on page four of this document.

During the workshops an information overview of Mescal-J6 was presented that included:

- Review of emergency and nonemergency services provided
- Funding sources for Mescal-J6
- Call type and volume data
- Current challenges Mescal-J6 faces
- Question and answer session

One of the keys to a successful strategic plan is the development and involvement of an internal stakeholder team. Mescal-J6 Fire District formed a strategic planning team that represented all facets of the district. Members of the team are listed on page four of this document.

The team met five times in early 2025 for more than 30 hours to develop the plan – utilizing external stakeholder and co-worker input. As the team began working through the process, a set of guiding criteria emerged to help direct the identification and development of strategic focus areas, goals and objectives.

#### **Guiding Criteria**

$\checkmark$	Goals and objectives will align with the mission.
$\checkmark$	Member safety, health and wellness always will be a priority.
$\checkmark$	The strategic plan will focus on community expectations.
$\checkmark$	The focus areas, goals and objectives will be built on a consensus of the Mescal-J6 strategic planning team.
$\checkmark$	The plan will inform, inspire and engage Mescal-J6 members and the community.

## **External Stakeholder Surveys**

Following the district information overview presentations, attendees were asked to offer their input regarding what they see as strategic issues for Mescal-J6 Fire District during the next several years. At the end of each session, participants completed a Likert rating scale survey that focused on their expectations of the district and programs Mescal-J6 Fire District currently provides. The strategic planning team took into consideration the survey results during the focus area and goal development process.

Rank	Expectations of M-J6 Fire District	Score
1	Adequate staffing, apparatus and equipment for emergency response.	4.5
2	Ensuring for maximum health, wellness and safety of firefighters.	4.4
3	Professionalism of M-J6 personnel.	4.3
3	Ensuring a high level of competency/training of M-J6 personnel.	4.3
4	Improving current emergency service levels.	4.2
4	Providing training, time and equipment for adequate physical conditioning of firefighters.	4.2
5	Maintaining current emergency services levels.	4.0
6	Expedient response time to emergencies.	3.9
7	Maintaining a comprehensive community risk reduction program that includes public education, new construction plan review and fire code inspections of commercial occupancies.	3.7

Medium Expectation – 2.5-3.4 | High Expectation – 3.5-4.4 | Essential Expectation – 4.5-5.0

Rank	Value of M-J6 Fire District Programs	Score
1	Emergency medical services	4.4
1	Fire suppression services	4.4
1	Wildland fire prevention and mitigation	4.4
2	Public education and community outreach programs such as CPR and fire prevention classes	4.1
3	Community involvement and presence at schools, fairs, neighborhood activities, etc.	4.0
3	Domestic preparedness and planning; large-scale natural or human- caused disasters	4.0
4	Smoke/CO detector battery change service	3.9
5	Special operations; hazardous materials emergencies and technical rescue	3.8
6	Fire investigation	3.6
7	Fire prevention programs such as new construction plan review and code enforcement	3.6

Moderate Value – 2.5-3.4 | High Value – 3.5-4.4 | Essential Value – 4.5-5.0

As part of the plan development process, the strategic plan team conducted a SLOC (strengths, limitations, opportunities and challenges) analysis. The strengths and limitations were considered from an internal aspect; the opportunities and challenges from an external aspect.

# Strengths

- · Relentless commitment to service
- · Dedicated, passionate people
- Cooperation among members
- · Community focused
- Flexibility; open to change and has ability to pivot
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Training applied for maximum effectiveness
- External relations
- Governing board leadership and support
- Commitment to transparency
- Size of Mescal-J6 allows ability to implement and adapt change rapidly

## Limitations

- Staffing levels
- Funding levels
- Geographical location distance from mutual aid agencies and limited vendors in the area
- · Retention and recruitment
- Age of apparatus
- Inadequate/aging facilities
- Insufficient salaries and benefits
- No bench strength/limited "bandwidth"
- Insufficient safety, health and wellness and safety program
- Radio communications
- Community outreach has been limited in the past

A SLOC analysis offers the opportunity for an organization to holistically and realistically appraise its current status and provides a mechanism for identifying strategic focus areas from which goals and objectives can be developed.

# **Opportunities**

- Growth of service boundaries
- Area has potential development opportunities in the future
- Additional grant opportunities
- Agency specific mutual aid agreements
- Radio communications
- Shared services
- Enhanced public and private partnerships
- Political involvement at all governmental levels

# Challenges

- Water supply
- Tax sensitivity of community
- Community perception of bonds
- City annexation
- Unfunded government mandates
- Balance with community wants/ needs and financial resources
- Enhancements of consensus national standards that increase costs of training, apparatus and equipment
- Alarm handling

## **Strategic Focus Areas**

**SUSTAINABILITY** Long term financial stability and sustainability is the single most critical element the strategic plan team has identified for the survivability of the district. Mescal-J6 has optimized its current financial resources and will need to find additional sources of revenue to ensure sustainability.

**STAFFING** Adequate staffing that includes concentrated efforts on recruitment and retention of quality members is essential for maintaining current service levels and Mescal-J6's continuous improvement efforts. Besides sworn personnel staffing, this includes administrative, support personnel and future volunteers.

**OPERATIONAL READINESS** Key functional elements of operational readiness must be in place to achieve Mescal-J6's desired emergency service levels. These elements include fixed facilities, apparatus, equipment, training and appropriate best practice policies and procedures.

**EXTERNAL/INTERNAL COMMUNICATION** Frequent, concise, relevant and transparent external and internal communication results in trust and informed constituents in the community and among Mescal-J6 members. A strategic, targeted approach to communication that includes a performance measurement component is an effective way to ensure this is accomplished.

**COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION (CRR)** A comprehensive community risk reduction plan that targets risks identified in Mescal-J6 Fire District is essential for minimizing risk to life and property. A CRR plan results in decreased losses and injuries, as well as an increase in availability of units and personnel for emergency calls.

**SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLNESS** It is Mescal-J6's intent to provide an effective health, wellness and safety program that is rooted in best practices and reflected in the district's safety culture. This will result in members being able to perform their jobs at optimal levels and provide the best opportunity for a long and healthy retirement.

## Strategic Focus Area #1 Sustainability

#### GOAL 1A | Leader: Board & Fire Chief

Ensure long-term financial stability that maintains current service levels and when the community desires, provides for improvement in emergency and nonemergency services.

OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
1A.1 Ensure the external stakeholder communication plan includes elements that focus on informing the community of the fire district's value and the cost of delivering emergency and nonemergency services.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
1A.2 Develop a multi-year budget plan to identify needed additional revenue.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Update Annually
1A.3 Explore annexation opportunities.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
1A.4 Continue to identify potential grant opportunities.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
1A.5 Continue to seek out cost efficiencies in all areas.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
1A.6 Explore the option of increasing revenue from property taxes.	2nd Qtr. 2025	4th Qtr. 2025
1A.7 Explore the possibility of shared services/staff positions with other fire agencies.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing



#### Strategic Focus Area #2 Staffing

#### GOAL 2A | Leader: Fire Chief

Ensure adequate staffing to meet the district's mission throughout the period of the strategic plan.

OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
2A.1 Determine staffing needs for the period of the strategic plan that includes sworn personnel, administrative and support services and is reviewed and adopted annually.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
2A.2 Identify obstacles to adequate staffing and create action plans for managing each obstacle.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
2A.3 Explore shared staffing opportunities with other regional fire/EMS providers.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing

#### GOAL 2B | Leader: Fire Chief & Captain

Attract and hire qualified personnel who share the service mission of Mescal-J6.

OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	
		COMPLETION
2B.1 Identify and evaluate current recruitment methods.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
2B.2 Analyze other fire organizations recruitment methods.	3rd Qtr. 2025	3rd Qtr. 2025
2B.3 Gain input from current members for recruitment methods.	2nd Qtr. 2025	2nd Qtr. 2025
2B.4 Explore the creation of a cadet program.	1st Qtr. 2026	3rd Qtr. 2026
2B.5 Based on the above objectives, develop a revised recruitment program.	4th Qtr. 2025	2nd Qtr. 2026
2B.6 Evaluate the recruitment plan annually and adjust as needed.	2nd Qtr. 2027	Ongoing

GOAL 2C   Leader: Fire Chief & Captain		
Retain personnel to meet the staffing needs of the district.		
OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
2C.1 Continue to foster a culture that results in a positive and fulfilling work environment.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
2C.2 Conduct a biennial wage/benefit survey among regional providers.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
2C.3 Based on the completion of Objective 2C.2, determine recommendations for wages/benefits adjustments as financial resources allow.	4th Qtr. 2025	3rd Qtr. 2026
2C.4 Survey members for their personal development needs and follow up with personal and organizational development plans.	4th Qtr. 2025	1st Qtr. 2026
2C.5 Conduct annual individual interviews with all members to help measure their job satisfaction.	4th Qtr. 2025	Annually

## Strategic Focus Area #3 Operational Readiness

#### GOAL 3A | Leader: Fire Chief

Ensure that adequate operational readiness policies and procedures are in place.

OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
3A.1 Identify and evaluate current policies and procedures.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
3A.2 Based on completion of Objective 3A.1, adjust current and create new policies/procedures as necessary that are based on best practices and consensus national standards and ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.	4th Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
3A.3 Communicate adjusted and new policies and procedures to members as applicable.	1st Qtr. 2026	Ongoing
3A.4 Ensure training is delivered for adjusted and new policies and procedures.	2nd Qtr. 2026	Ongoing

GOAL 3B   Leader: Fire Chief & Captain		
Optimize public and private partnerships.		
OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
3B.1 Develop a fire suppression water supply plan for all areas of the district that includes water purveyors as well as residents with water tanks and wells.	2nd Qtr. 2025	3rd Qtr. 2025
3B.2 Formalize mutual aid agreements with regional fire agencies that includes regular interagency training.	3rd Qtr. 2025	1st Qtr. 2026
3B.3 Improve mobile and portable radio reception capability in partnership with private vendor.	2nd Qtr. 2025	1st Qtr. 2027
3B.4 Explore opportunities for call processing time improvement with public partnerships.	3rd Qtr. 2025	1st Qtr. 2026
3B.5 Explore additional public and private partnerships that contribute to operational readiness.	3rd Qtr. 2026	Ongoing
GOAL 3C   Leader: Fire Chief & Captain		

Ensure there will be sufficient and functional apparatus and equipment resources for the period of the strategic plan.

OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
3C.1 Evaluate current apparatus and equipment status using a third party or consensus national standard, whichever is appropriate.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
3C.2 Identify any needed replacement or additional apparatus and equipment.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
3C.3 Enhance the apparatus and equipment maintenance program to ensure the contents meet manufacturer recommendations and/or consensus national standards.	3rd Qtr. 2025	1st Qtr. 2026
3C.4 Develop a financial resource plan that includes maintenance, repair, replacement and additional apparatus and equipment costs that are anticipated during the period of the strategic plan.	3rd Qtr. 2025	1st Qtr. 2026

GOAL 3D   Leader: Fire Chief		
Ensure Mescal-J9 facilities are sufficient, functional and compliant to applicable codes and regulations.		
OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
3D.1 Formally assess the condition of all Mescal-J9 facilities using third parties as applicable.	2nd Qtr. 2025	2nd Qtr. 2025
3D.2 Based on the completion of Objective 3D.1, prioritize deficiencies identified.	3rd Qtr. 2025	4th Qtr. 2025
3D.3 Budget for and rectify the deficiencies in priority as determined in Objective 3D.2.	3rd Qtr. 2026	Ongoing
3D.4 Determine if a new station will be required within the period of the strategic plan.	1st Qtr. 2026	1st Qtr. 2026
3D.5 If it is determined that a new station is needed, begin planning efforts for a new facility.	1st Qtr. 2026	2nd Qtr. 2026



#### Strategic Focus Area #4 Internal/External Communication

#### GOAL 4A | Leader: Fire Chief

Improve internal stakeholder communication that results in relevant and timely messaging within the organization.

OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
4A.1 Identify current internal communication methods and resources.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
4A.2 Identify from members what information they want to receive.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Update Annually
4A.3 Determine from members their most desired methods of communicating.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
4A.4 Determine from an organization's point of view what information members needs to receive.	4th Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
4A.5 Based on findings from Objectives 4A.1-4A.4, develop an internal communications plan.	1st Qtr. 2026	Ongoing
4A.6 Implement the internal communications plan.	2nd Qtr. 2026	Ongoing
4A.7 Evaluate the effectiveness of the internal communications plan annually, and adjust as necessary to maintain the goal.	2nd Qtr. 2027	Annually

GOAL 4B   Leader: Fire Chief			
Provide the community with consistent and credible messages about Mescal-J6's mission that include community risk reduction, public education and performance measures and outcomes.			
OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION	
4B.1 Identify current communication methods and resources.	2nd Qtr. 2025	2nd Qtr. 2025	
4B.2 Identify the most effective methods of communicating with the community.	3rd Qtr. 2025	3rd Qtr. 2025	
4B.3 Determine from an organization's point of view what information the community needs to receive.	3rd Qtr. 2025	4th Qtr. 2025	
4B.4 Based on the completion of Objectives 4B.1-4B.3, develop an external communications plan that includes identifying target audiences, the best communication methods and formats, timing, follow through and maintenance.	1st Qtr. 2026	1st Qtr. 2026	
4B.5 Implement the external communications plan.	2nd Qtr. 2026	2nd Qtr. 2026	
4B.6 Evaluate the effectiveness of the external communications plan annually, and adjust as necessary to maintain the goal.	2nd Qtr. 2027	Annually	
4B.7 Ensure compliance with ADA website guidelines.	1st Qtr. 2026	4th Qtr. 2026	



#### Strategic Focus Area #5 Community Risk Reduction

GOAL 5A | Leader: Fire Chief

Develop and implement a sustainable and effective community risk reduction (CRR) plan.

OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
5A.1 Explore adopting a district fire code that includes the support necessary to maintain the code.	1st Qtr. 2027	1st Qtr. 2027
5A.2 Determine the method/consensus national standard to be used as a guide for the development of the CRR.	1st Qtr. 2027	1st Qtr. 2027
5A.3 Following completion of Objective 5A.2, complete a community risk assessment for all risks Mescal-J6 is responsible for managing.	2nd Qtr. 2027	4th Qtr. 2027
5A.4 Following the completion of Objective 5A.3, develop the community risk reduction plan.	1st Qtr. 2027	1st Qtr. 2027
5A.5 Implement the CRR plan.	1st Qtr. 2028	3rd Qtr. 2028
5A.6 Evaluate the CRR on an annual basis to measure the desired outcomes, and adjust as necessary.	2nd Qtr. 2029	Annually

#### Strategic Focus Area #6 Safety, Health and Wellness

#### GOAL 6A | Leader: Fire Chief & Captain

Make every reasonable effort within the fiscal means of the district to reduce members' risk of accidents, injury and incident-related illnesses during incidents and training and at workplace facilities.

OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION
6A.1 Conduct formal safety assessments of facilities, apparatus and equipment to determine the status of compliance with applicable federal, state and county regulations and codes and applicable consensus national standards.	2nd Qtr. 2025	4th Qtr. 2025
6A.2 Develop action plans for gaps identified in Objective 6A.1.	1st Qtr. 2026	3rd Qtr. 2026
6A.3 Ensure members have the appropriate training for the apparatus and equipment they are responsible for operating.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
6A.4 Begin process to ensure that appropriate best practice safety policies and procedures are in place.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing
6A.5 Develop and implement an incident safety officer program that is applicable for Mescal-J6.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing



GOAL 6B   Leader: Fire Chief			
Develop and maintain a health/wellness program such that members are able to maintain physical and mental fitness to perform their job tasks and have a long and healthy retirement following their service.			
OBJECTIVES	INITIATE	TARGET COMPLETION	
6B.1 Begin to evaluate the current status of health/ wellness-related elements with Arizona Department of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH) regulations and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1550 Standard for Emergency Responder Health and Safety.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing	
6B.2 Prioritize items discovered in Objective 6B.1 needing attention and develop appropriate action plans.	3rd Qtr. 2026	1st Qtr. 2027	
6B.3 Explore establishing annual medical exams for sworn members in accordance with NFPA 1582, Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments.	3rd Qtr. 2025	1st Qtr. 2026	
6B.4 Develop and implement a formal firefighter mental health program.	1st Qtr. 2026	2nd Qtr. 2026	
6B.5 Develop and implement a formal cancer prevention program.	2nd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing	
6B.6 Begin process to ensure appropriate best practice health/wellness policies and procedures are in place.	3rd Qtr. 2025	Ongoing	

#### **Plan Implementation and Performance**

This strategic plan is the result of many hours of work by members of the Mescal-J6 Fire District. Key to the success of this effort is having an implementation and performance measurement system in place that ensures the plan remains contemporary and exercised.

The overall management of the strategic plan is the fire chief's responsibility. The fire chief has identified goal leaders for each of the strategic plan's goals whose responsibility will be to ensure that all objectives for their goals are achieved. Goal leaders, in turn, may develop their own teams to accomplish the associated objectives. The goal leaders will work together to balance human, physical and financial resources as the district moves forward with the plan.

Progress and performance measurement of the plan will be reviewed by the strategic plan team at quarterly meetings.



These meetings will cover each of the goals and provide a forum to recognize progress and determine if timelines for any objectives need to be adjusted.

The strategic plan team will perform an annual formal review of the plan and develop an annual report for the previous year that will be submitted to the district governing board. The review will include a progress assessment of the goals that may result in re-prioritization due to budget concerns and other significant factors that may require an adjustment to the plan. The review and report will be a tool for the fire chief in creating an annual operational plan that follows the strategic plan priorities. This process ensures the strategic plan will be used as the foundation for annual operating budget development, capital improvement plan (CIP) development and equipment and staffing planning.

The ultimate success of the plan will require support from the board, all members of the organization and the community as a whole.