

COME TOGETHER:

An analysis of fire department consolidation in Milwaukee County's North Shore



MUTUAL AID VS. CONSOLIDATED RESPONSE

Mutual aid is a way for departments to call on resources of surrounding jurisdictions when an incident exceeds the resources of a single fire department. It is a common practice for fire departments throughout the country and can be expanded both regionally and across state lines in the case of large-scale fires. Prior to 1995, the seven North Shore municipalities requested and provided mutual aid to one another on a regular basis. As described earlier in the report, mutual aid also was received from Milwaukee and other nearby municipalities for major fire events. With consolidation, this system of mutual aid within the North Shore was replaced with a unified response by a single department. To an outside observer, the difference may not be apparent. However, a unified response has several advantages over mutual aid, including the following:

- *At the scene there is a clear command structure.*
- *All of the equipment is compatible.*
- *The firefighters have had the same training on a single set of procedures.*
- *The department is able to redeploy on-duty staff when a station is emptied rather than calling in off-duty firefighters on overtime.*

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NORTH SHORE FIRE RESCUE
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