

Sylvania Township In Agreement With Springfield Township For Greater Fire Protection - Both departments to roll on alarms in either jurisdiction under terms of the memorandum of understanding.

An agreement recently approved by Sylvania Township trustees should result in a greater fire response not only in the Sylvania community, but in Springfield Township as well.

Both fire departments operate under a mutual aid pact currently and its scope, under the new memorandum of understanding, will be expanded.

Under the new level of cooperation, the departments will "automatically send the nearest equipment from their jurisdiction to each other..." Chief Jeff Kowalski, of the Sylvania Township department, said that under current guidelines a department needs to be on the scene of a fire before they ask the other department for mutual aid response. "Now dispatchers will be sending equipment from both departments to the scene of a fire."

John Jennewine, chairman of Sylvania Township trustees, said the agreement is an example of "cooperation between the two townships," that should enhance the welfare of the residents." Difficult economic times for governments means, "We're all getting squeezed and may be a little more open-minded," in finding ways to work together.

He noted that fire departments are uniquely difficult to staff from an efficiency standard, because the demands on those departments can't be predicted.

Chief Barry Cousino, of the Springfield Department, said the planned for greater response to a fire call will result in greater safety for citizens and firefighters and retard the progress of a fire from the outset.

He too mentioned the economy, citing the ability to bring more assets to the scene of a fire without each department having to hire more firefighters and buy more equipment.

He noted that his department has had a similar agreement for two years with the Monclova Township department.

The agreement calls for a minimum of four training sessions each year, although Chief Kowalski said there will likely be more than that.

In addition to joint-training exercises, the firefighters have worked together in mutual aid situations and are generally familiar with each others equipment and methods of operation.

There will be a review of the operating agreement 90 days after it is put into effect. Chief Kowalski said it is anticipated that it will be in force July 1.

He said some of that time will be taken training dispatchers in the new method for sending forces to fight fires in the community.