

Roswell Fire Department – Strategic Vision and Investment Plan

From the Chief's Desk

To the Honorable Members of the City Council, City Manager, and the People of Roswell,

Our department stands at a crossroads of tradition and transformation. The Roswell Fire Department has long been a proud, professional institution, staffed by some of the most dedicated firefighters, paramedics, and officers in the region. We serve not only as first responders, but as protectors, educators, technicians, and neighbors.

This document represents more than a spending plan. It is our roadmap — a unified vision of where we are, where we must go, and how we intend to get there. Our mission is clear: deliver the highest level of fire, rescue, and emergency medical service with integrity, efficiency, and care.

With this plan, we respectfully ask for your partnership in building a fire department that can meet the demands of a growing city, support the safety and health of our personnel, and take Roswell one step closer to becoming one of the most prepared, cohesive, and resourceful departments in the state — a team built on trust, seamless coordination, and a shared commitment to using every asset in service of our community. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Respectfully,

Steve Chavez
Fire Chief
Roswell Fire Department

Executive Summary

This Strategic Vision outlines the Roswell Fire Department's three-year roadmap for improving emergency response capability, firefighter safety, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability. It details key initiatives including the pursuit of ISO Class 1, the launch of a city-run ambulance service, critical apparatus and equipment upgrades, fire station infrastructure needs, firefighter wellness improvements, and strategic staffing. The goal is to provide a full picture of department priorities and funding needs in language that is accessible to all city stakeholders.

Who We Are: A Fire Department That Lives Where It Serves

The Roswell Fire Department operates seven fire stations across the city with a committed force of highly trained firefighters, paramedics, and emergency personnel. Our people work 48-hour shifts and live in the stations while on duty. This isn't a 9-to-5 operation — our firefighters sleep, eat, and operate from these buildings for half of their lives. These firehouses are not only work centers, but homes, medical hubs, and staging areas for city-wide emergency response.

Each year, we respond to thousands of fire, rescue, and EMS calls. We cover residential neighborhoods, schools, industrial areas, critical infrastructure like the Roswell Air Center, and miles of rural and county highways. We are also a regional asset for large-scale incidents like hazmat events, flooding, and wildland fires.

Our Vision: Where We're Going

The next three years are about building a stronger, smarter, and safer fire department. That means:

- Achieving ISO Class 1 certification by 2027
- Launching Roswell's own ambulance transport service
- Upgrading every station to support modern, inclusive living for all personnel
- Replacing aging and flood-damaged apparatus with safe, efficient vehicles
- Ensuring all personnel are equipped with modern rescue tools and gear
- Building specialized teams for regional support and disaster response
- Investing in firefighter wellness, safety, and cancer prevention
- Becoming a model of readiness, service, and professionalism in New Mexico

The Path to ISO Class 1: Why It Matters and How We Get There

The ISO (Insurance Services Office) Public Protection Classification is a nationally recognized score used by insurance companies to help determine property insurance rates. Ratings range from 1 (best) to 10 (no recognized fire protection). In our last ISO review, Roswell earned a Class 2 rating with a total score of 82.27 out of 105.5. We need a score of 90 or higher to achieve Class 1 — and we believe it's within reach.

Here's how Roswell scored in the last inspection:

- Emergency Communications: 7.74 / 10

- Fire Department: 38.52 / 50
- Water Supply: 33.06 / 40
- Divergence Penalty: -3.05

Where we can gain points and how we're addressing them:

- Dispatch Circuit Redundancy:
 - We scored 1.57 out of 3. By completing the remodel of our dispatch center and establishing Station 3 and a mobile command unit as additional dispatch nodes, we will have three operational centers — improving disaster redundancy and boosting our score.
- Ladder Company Credit:
 - We scored 2.8 out of 4. The City has already purchased two aerials: Ladder 1 (mid-mount) and a rental used during the flood. We're positioning Ladder 1 (central), Ladder 4 (south), and Ladder 3 (north) for complete coverage.
- Deployment Analysis:
 - We scored 7.66 out of 10. Adding a service truck for a safety officer and better staffing models will help improve response capability and score.
- Company Personnel:
 - We scored 7.19 out of 15. Adding personnel to Station 3 and launching the ambulance service will increase fireground response staffing — giving us more points.
- Hydrant Inspection & Flow Testing:
 - We scored 2.4 out of 7. We are contracting a third-party vendor to flow test 100% of hydrants this year and 20% each year after to build a record of compliance.
- Community Risk Reduction:
 - We scored 4.21 out of 5.5. Our prevention team is working more actively in the schools and documenting every effort for full credit.
- Fire Inspector Training:
 - We scored 3.0 out of 6.0. We're sending more inspectors to certification and CE programs than ever before.

Launching Roswell Fire Department's Ambulance Transport Service

An Investment in Public Safety, Sustainability, and Response Strength

For decades, the Roswell Fire Department has provided high-quality emergency medical response across the city. Our EMTs and paramedics are among the most experienced in the region, and we've built a solid foundation of professional care. But there's a critical piece missing: Roswell does not currently operate its own ambulance transport service.

This means that even when RFD firefighters and medics arrive on scene first (which they almost always do), we must rely on external transport providers to move patients to the hospital. In time-sensitive cases, this creates delay, splits accountability, and limits our ability to provide continuous care.

We believe it's time for that to change.

Why Start a City-Run Ambulance Service?

- Improve Continuity of Care:
 - RFD personnel are already on scene and providing care. Transitioning to a fully integrated ambulance model allows our teams to stay with the patient, reducing errors and improving outcomes.
- Reduce Delays and Gaps in Transport Coverage:
 - Private services may not always be available or staffed appropriately during peak times. RFD transport units will guarantee consistent coverage during high-demand periods.
- Keep EMS Revenue Local:
 - The city is already incurring EMS-related costs (staffing, fuel, supplies), but not receiving transport billing revenue. A city-run ambulance service allows Roswell to recapture these funds and reinvest them into staffing, training, and readiness.
- Add Fireground Staffing and ISO Points:
 - RFD medics on ambulances will also respond to fires and special operations calls, increasing our on-scene personnel and supporting ISO credit for response strength.
- Regional Mutual Aid and Specialty Capabilities:
 - Ambulances can support mutual aid during mass casualty incidents and large regional events. Long-term, this service allows us to position Roswell as a hub for advanced EMS coordination.

What Will It Take?

Launching this service the right way — with professional standards, accountability, and growth potential — requires strategic investment:

Ambulances

- 8 ambulances are needed for initial deployment and reserve rotation
- Mix of Type 1 and Type 3 units to cover urban and rural needs
- Vehicles must be fully equipped with radios, stretcher systems, and drug/security systems

Housing & Facility Modifications

- Station 1 remodel (approved \$1.2M ICIP): Adds 6 dorms and full-size female restroom for EMS integration
- Station 2 planned for FY27 ICIP: Future accommodations for female personnel
- Station 7 truck room bay expansion: Houses ambulances and future in-house mechanic

Personnel & Scheduling

- Staffing phased in with transport rollout
- Cross-staffing models support sustainability and 911 call balance

Ongoing Operational Systems

- EMSRx: QA platform for patient care tracking and compliance
- 9th Brain: CE tracking, accreditation records, and performance coaching tools
- Both systems are already in use and will become recurring operational costs

How This Supports Long-Term Readiness

The ambulance service is more than a revenue tool or convenience — it's a core part of the department's future model. It integrates:

- Fireground support and ISO scoring
- Health data continuity and improved patient outcomes
- Mutual aid support across the region
- Community trust, visibility, and service consistency

Most importantly, it positions the Roswell Fire Department as a comprehensive emergency services provider, capable of operating across every aspect of fire, rescue, and EMS with professionalism, accountability, and community control.

Apparatus Modernization: Building a Safer, Smarter Fleet

Our fire apparatus is the backbone of emergency response. When engines, ladder trucks, or rescue units are delayed, in the shop, or unreliable, every call suffers. Our current fleet includes vehicles that are aging, damaged, or no longer cost-effective to maintain — most notably Engine 5, which has required frequent repairs since the flood of October 2023. It

has been in the shop nine times since then and should have been totaled, but necessity forced us to keep it in service.

To support ISO readiness, reduce maintenance costs, and ensure operational safety, we are prioritizing replacement of key apparatus. Additionally, we're adapting to rural response needs and modern highway demands by seeking lower-maintenance rescue pumpers for extended response areas.

Apparatus Priorities

- Engine 5 – Critical frontline engine nearing end of life and high maintenance burden
- Three Rescue Pumpers – Smaller, faster, more efficient for county and highway use (Stations 1, 2, 6)
- Service Truck – Needed for a dedicated safety officer on structure fire responses (ISO credit)
- ARFF Unit – Current crash truck near end-of-life; 2-year lead time for replacement
- Hazmat Trailer – Outdated, non-functional systems; modern trailer will support regional team
- Two Swift Water Rescue Boats – Needed to establish rescue capabilities safely

Fire Station Infrastructure: Supporting the People Who Live There

Unlike typical municipal buildings, fire stations are full-time residences. Our personnel live and sleep in these buildings for 48 hours at a time — and their comfort, safety, and functionality directly affect performance. Outdated facilities not only compromise morale, but create compliance issues when accommodating mixed-gender crews, specialty equipment, or added EMS personnel.

Current Infrastructure Needs

- Station 1: Remodel funded through ICIP (\$1.2M) to add dorm rooms and female restroom for co-ed EMS crews
- Station 2: Scheduled FY27 ICIP request to add female accommodations and privacy dorms
- Station 4: Ventilation system needed due to smoke infiltration from ARFF engines and persistent roof leaks
- Station 7: Truck room extension required to house ambulances and future in-house mechanic workspace
- All Stations: Ongoing roof repairs needed to protect buildings and meet living standards

Firefighter Wellness and Cancer Prevention

Firefighting is one of the most physically and mentally demanding jobs in the public sector. We are committed to investing in the health and long-term safety of our personnel — not just with equipment, but with programs that keep them strong and supported throughout their careers.

- Cancer Screening Physicals – Upgrading from standard exams (\$37K budget) to full diagnostics (\$82K) to catch cancer early
- Weight Room Equipment – Replacing outdated fitness gear to promote strength, mobility, and pride

Capital Priorities for This Fiscal Year

The following capital investments have been identified as our top priorities for this fiscal year. They are mission-critical to operations, firefighter health and safety, and ISO advancement. We recognize that not all items may be funded at once, but this list represents a balanced, essential starting point for long-term success.

Item	Estimated Cost
1. Engine 5	\$815,000
2. Two Rescue Vehicles	\$645,000
3. One E-Draulics Set	\$72,000
4. Roof Repairs at Stations 1 & 4	\$200,000
5. Firefighter Physicals (Cancer Screening)	\$82,000
6. Dorm Room Beds and Recliners	\$25,000
7. Ventilation System for Station 4	\$100,000
8. Hazmat Trailer	\$125,000

Total Estimated Capital Need: \$2,064,000

How City Council Can Help

City Council and City Manager Chad Cole play a vital role in helping us build the department Roswell deserves. Here's how you can support our plan:

- Advocate for increased operational funding so the Fire Fund is not exhausted by daily needs like fuel, supplies, and training.

- Support our capital funding requests — even partial funding helps move us forward.
- Collaborate with us on state and federal grants to match city contributions.
- Help us secure support for upcoming ICIP infrastructure requests (Station 2, Station 7 expansion).
- Continue engaging with our department to stay informed on our progress and priorities.

Conclusion: A Department With Vision, Purpose, and Resolve

This plan is more than a spending request — it's a blueprint for the next generation of emergency services in Roswell. It shows where we are today, what we need to improve, and how each investment fits into the bigger picture.

Through smart investments in apparatus, EMS, staffing, facilities, and prevention, we are building a department that is medically capable, ISO-ready, and strategically positioned to lead in regional response, internal collaboration, and operational excellence. This vision ensures that we are fully prepared to meet the challenges of a growing and dynamic community — today, and well into the future — while setting the benchmark for what a modern, community-focused fire service should be.

We thank the City Council and City Administration for your ongoing partnership and trust. Together — with our vision and your support — we will lead by example, setting the standard for what a modern, high-performing, and mission-driven fire department should be. Your leadership is not just supporting this transformation — it is making it possible.