



WFC Annual Report

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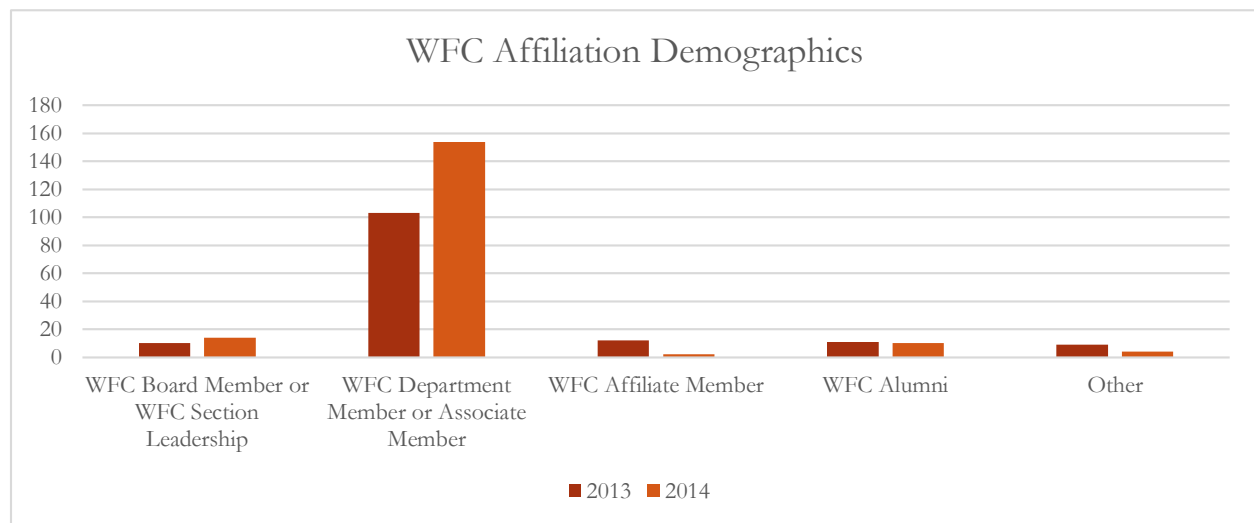
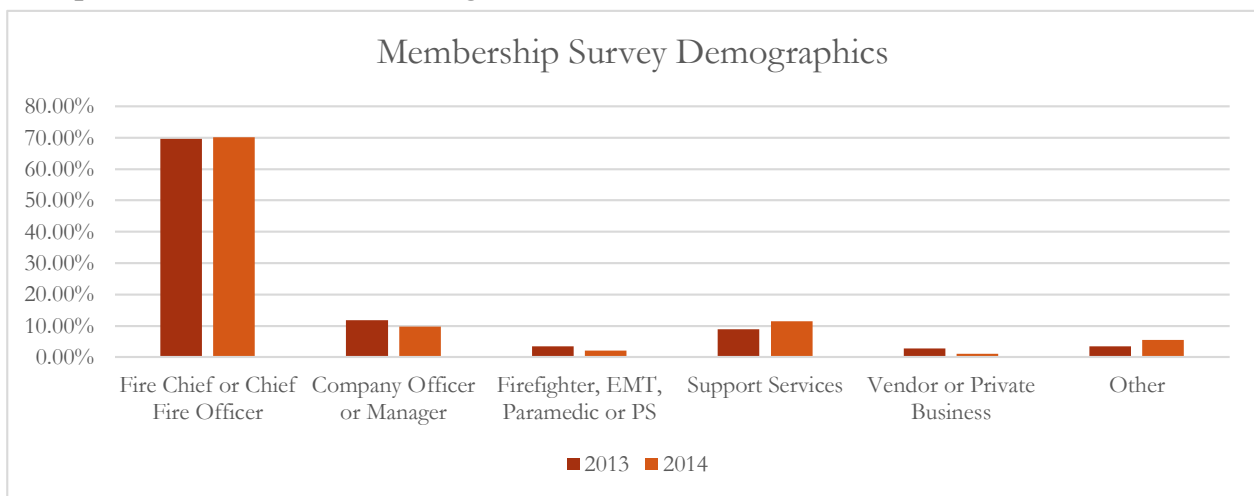
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Introduction

In an effort to continuously improve our Association we have created strategic goals which are used to evaluate our progress. We based the performance of each Strategic Goal on measurable results and concrete feedback provided by our members and other key external stakeholders. As an organization we are constantly looking for ways to improve the value of our membership as seen through our members' eyes.

Our motto is: "Serve, Educate & Lead". We embrace this at every level within our organization.

Throughout this document you will see a reference to our membership survey. We received 184 responses from our members regarding our 2014 services, and 145 responses regarding our 2013 services in our base line year. You will see these results compared and contrasted during the narration.



The WFC has 2231 members and represents 409 fire department members throughout Washington State. The Association is led by a Board elected by its members. It includes six sections: EMS, HazMat & Special Ops, Fire Mechanics, Fire Administrative Support, Fire Training, Safety & Officers, and Public Fire Educators.

WFC Board members are:

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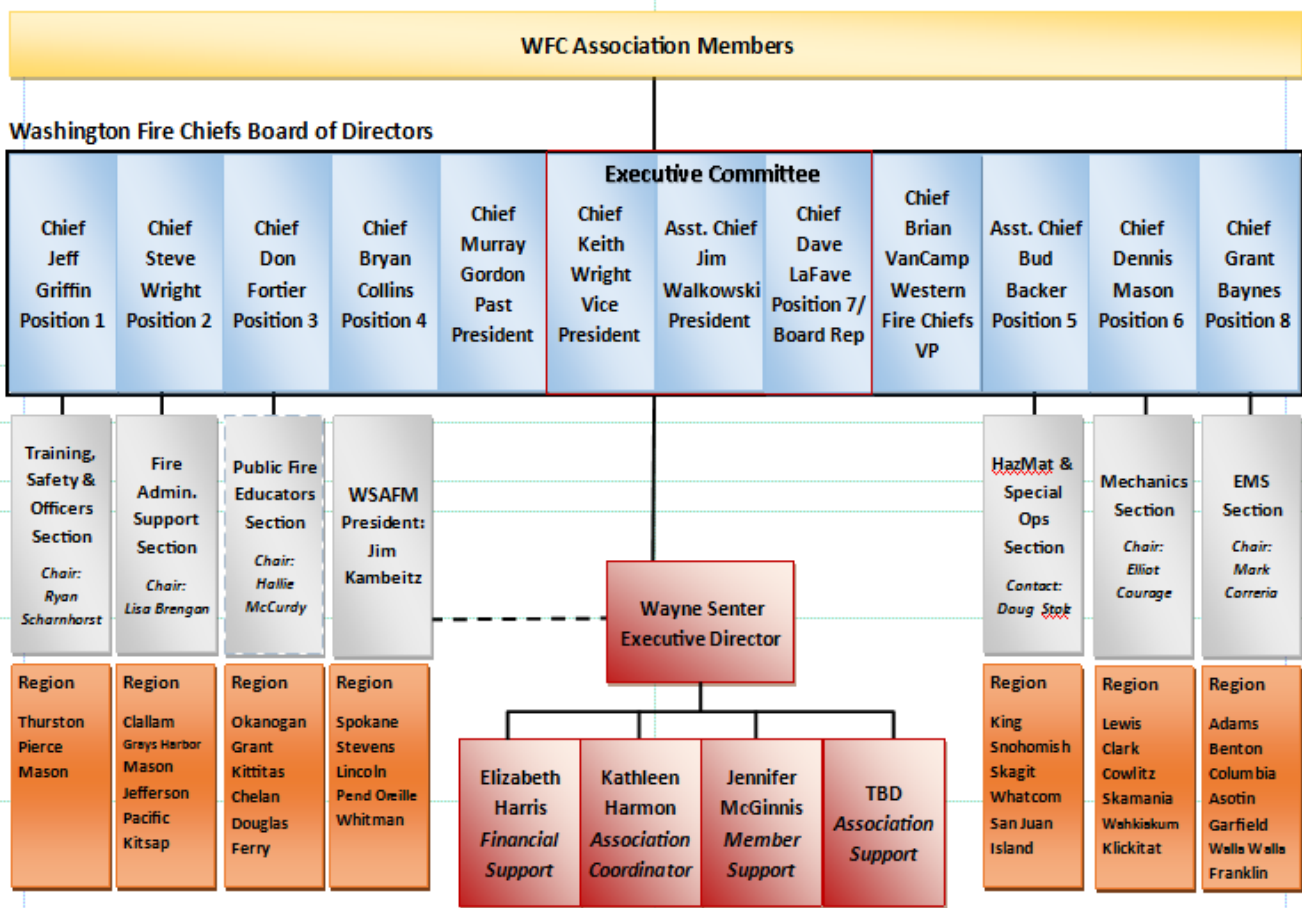
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Brian VanCamp

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WFC section leaders are:

- Ryan Scharnhorst, Training, Safety & Officers
- Lisa Brengan, Fire Administrative Support
- Elliot Courage, Fire Mechanics
- Doug Stolz, HazMat & Special Ops
- Mark Correira, EMS
- Melanie Taylor, Public Fire Educators

The WFC staff includes:

- Wayne Senter, Executive Director
- Kathleen Harmon, Association Coordinator
- Liz Harris, Financial Support
- Jennifer McGinnis, Membership Support

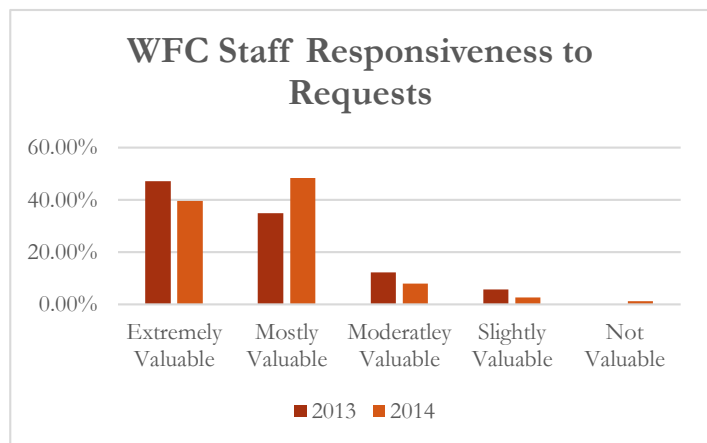
Goal 1

Strengthen and improve internal relationships with our members as measured by a reduction of distracting conflict and increased interest based problem solving resulting in improved outcomes.

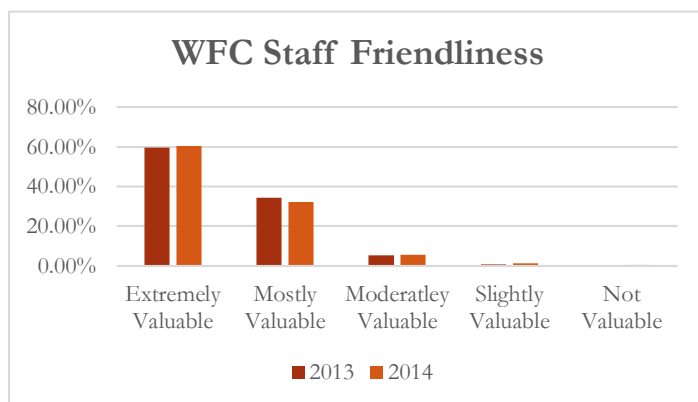
The Washington Fire Chiefs strives to improve its value by meeting member needs. The WFC works to meet member needs by looking for root causes and interest based solutions that cause no unintended negative consequences for the WFC.

Often, WFC staff is asked to assist members in resolving an issue that is a symptom of a larger issue or the proposed solution does not meet the interests of all involved. This is facilitated by working through a simple problem solving model that serves the customer and maintains relationships. Staff may not be able to help implement a specific solution suggested by the member, but the majority of the time is able to develop several other creative solutions that meet their needs. WFC staff does refer subject matter experts, especially Bugle member services, to assist fire department members in finding a workable local solution.

Staff proactively implements new programs and ideas to resolve potential conflicts before they happen. For example, this year staff sent out “WFC Annual Dues Renewal Packets”. These packets included frequently asked questions derived directly from member questions received during previous membership drives. This resulted in far fewer membership clarification contacts for staff to resolve, and a greater understanding of the WFC benefits and membership value.



The 2014 customer satisfaction survey shows a 6% improvement from the previous year. Most of the improvements were implemented in the third quarter of 2014 which may account for a lag in customer relevance. In 2014, 88% of the members who responded said that the WFC staff



responsiveness was extremely valuable or mostly valuable opposed to 82% in 2013.

Compared to the previous year, nearly 27% more responses were received in the 2014 survey. This certainly improves survey validation and may indicate a greater interest in the WFC by its members. In 2014, 184 responses were received opposed to 145 the previous year. In 2014, WFC staff friendliness

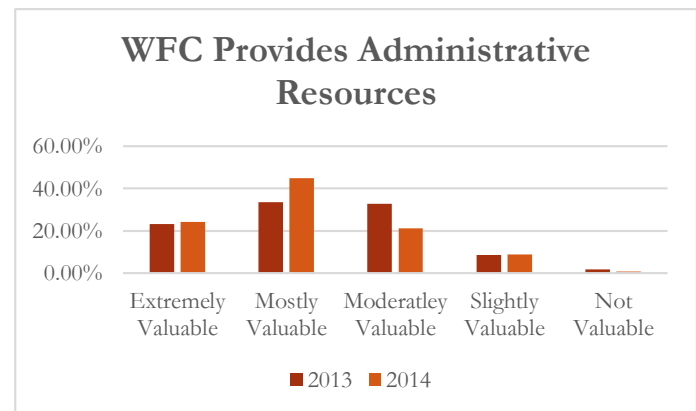
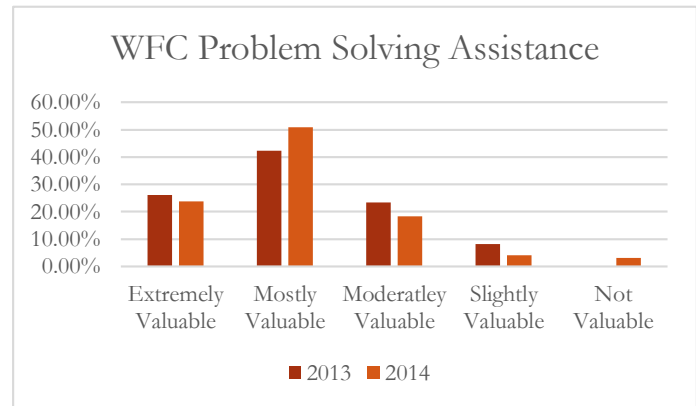
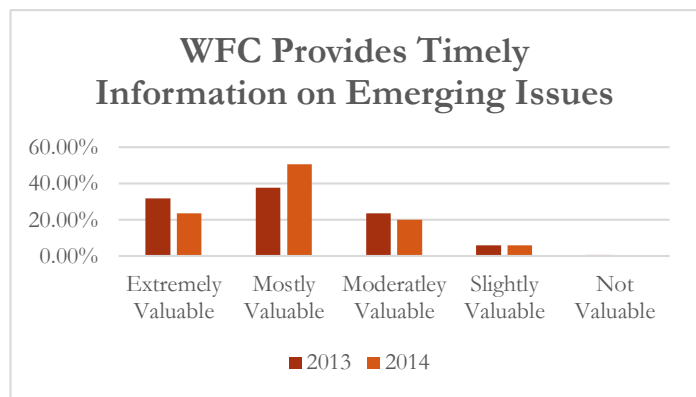
remained flat at 93% who ranked staff friendliness as extremely valuable or mostly valuable, opposed to 94% in the previous year.

This year the WFC faced staffing transitions both at a leadership and support level. These changes created opportunity to improve staff functions and office systems through a reorganization. Despite all of the challenges of training new staff and converting existing staff responsibilities, the WFC was able to maintain or improve customer confidence as determined through feedback and survey results.

The WFC staff reorganization resulted in a better fit for existing staff and more hours of staff time worked while it reduced overall staff costs. By separating the finance and membership functions staff are better positioned to meet members' needs.

WFC staff provided information on emerging issues and proactively responded to member concerns through networking at the local, state and federal level. Staff remained vigilant and alert for issues that may impact local fire agencies. This activity positively impacted the survey results by a slight increase of 1% in how members rated if the WFC provides timely information on emerging issues. An example of this would be the situation that developed regarding the IRS determination of volunteers as it relates to the Affordable Care Act. After hearing member concerns, the WFC contacted the IRS and through that focus staff was able to send out the IRS exclusion ruling to members the same day it was issued. This information was vital to members who were facing the possibility of providing each volunteer with medical insurance. That member communication was read by over 422 members which indicates timely and valuable information.

There was an increase of 6% in the value of WFC problem solving assistance. The Association regularly receives calls from members asking for assistance with a wide variety of issues, which will be addressed more specifically in goal 9. There was a moderate increase of 12% in the value of WFC administrative resources for 2014. The Association develops and refers targeted resources for its members. Nothing illustrates that point better than the work that has been put into the SHIP



grant awarded late in 2014. This grant is from Labor & Industries, and with the help of Kris Alberti, the WFC will be developing a two year training calendar with all of the associated training resources which will be distributed in print and electronically to all fire agencies. In addition, this grant will facilitate a needed update of WAC 296-305 Sample Policies/SOP's so that departments can ensure compliance.

Goal 2

Build on existing legislative relationships to maximize influence in the legislative process as measured by our effectiveness on a collective fire service agenda.

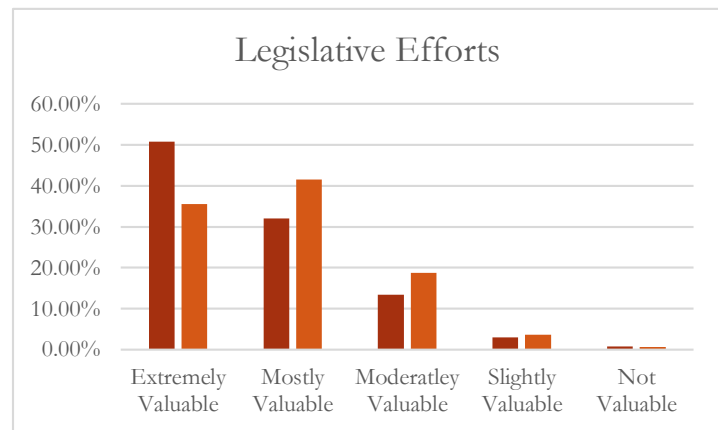


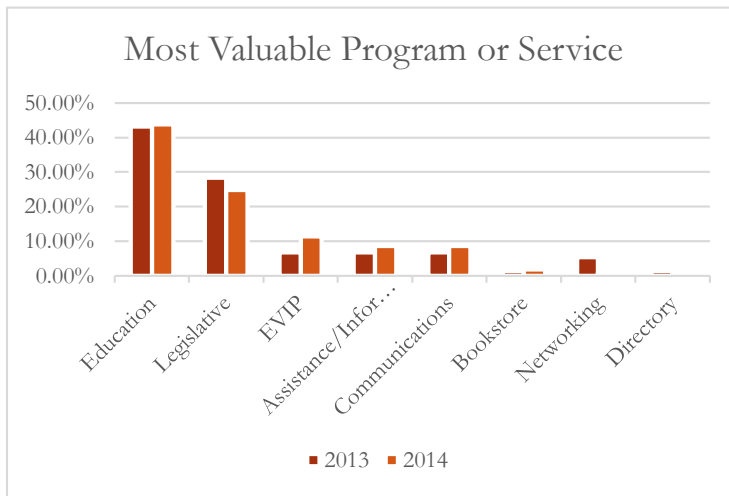
The WFC works closely with all fire service groups, state agencies, elected officials of all types, and so on to ensure, to the best of ability, that the needs of the overall fire service community are met. The WFC has done great work by reaching out to all probable stakeholders to ensure that WFC efforts are successful and that efforts have no unintended negative consequences for the fire service as a whole. The WFC works hard to ensure that non-fire stakeholders have a seat at the table because WFC issues often-times have many far-reaching effects. The WFC will continue to build upon these efforts which will lead to greater success for the WFC.

Primary fire service partners external to the WFC include the Washington State Fire Commissioners Association, Washington State Fire Fighters Association, Washington State Council of

Fire Fighters, State Fire Marshal's Office, Washington State Association of Fire Marshals, DNR, State Military Department, State Emergency Management, State Emergency Management Association, Association of Washington Cities, Washington Association of Counties, Washington Ambulance Association, Department of Ecology, Washington Hospital Association, and many others. In addition, advocacy through collations related to specific issues such as safe fire retardants in plastics, Bakken oil response, emergency fuel, alternate fuels, and the like present another opportunity for influence.

The membership survey indicated the WFC legislative effort as the second most valuable program and rated it extremely or mostly valuable at 77% which is a decrease of 6% from the previous year. It is noteworthy that this favorable opinion is given in a time when fire service issues seem to take a back seat to larger issues such as funding basic education, road infrastructure, and tax reform. Of those surveyed in 2014, 25% saw the WFC legislative efforts as the single most valuable service the Association provides.





It is estimated that approximately 1050 WFC staff hours are spent each year for this service which is headed by lead legislative lobbyist Dylan Doty. In addition, the WFC legislative chair Dr. Allen Church, Fire Chief of South King Fire and Rescue leads the legislative committee that meets twice monthly to navigate Association efforts. WFC Executive Director Wayne Senter is a lobbyist and along with Kathleen Harmon serves as primary staff to the legislative support efforts.

WFC top five legislative issues for 2014 were:

- Raise EMS Levy Cap to \$.75
- All Risk Mobilization Funding
- Public Record Request Controls
- Volunteer Firefighter Incentives
- Regional Fire Authority Bills

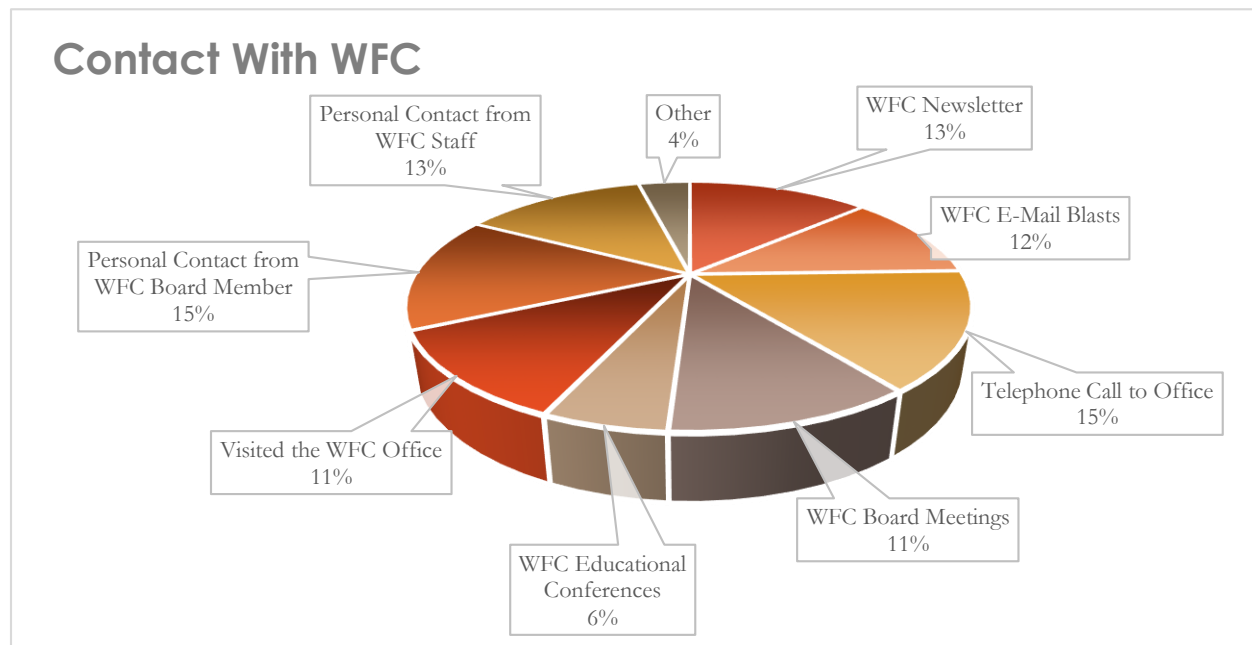
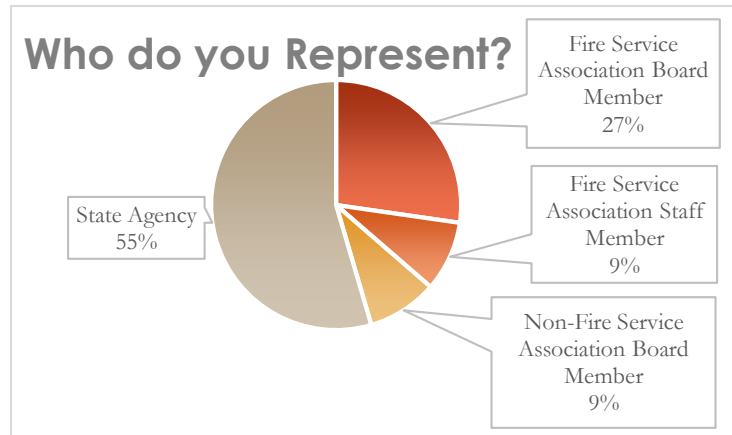
Goal 3

Strengthen and improve external fire partnership relationships, especially the WFC, WSFFA, WSCFF, DNR, Military Department-EMD and WSP as measured by feedback from Board Members and Staff from those organizations.

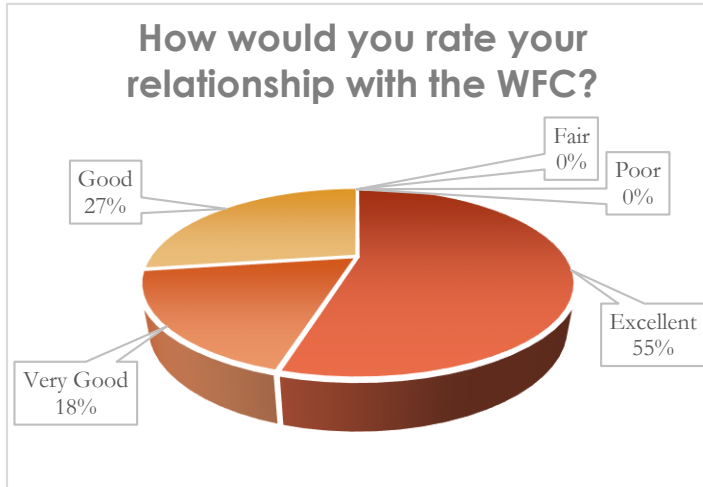
The WFC Staff has worked extra hard this year to develop and build on WFC relationships with external organizations. A relationship survey aimed at soliciting feedback went to multiple contacts within key external organizations. This was the first year that the survey was offered and 11 agencies responded.

Those that responded noted the biggest benefit to working with the WFC as things like collaboration, common goals and working for the good of the fire service. Overall, when asked to rate their relationship with the WFC, 100% expressed a favorable relationship with the majority (55%) expressing that their relationship with the WFC was excellent.

The survey asked how the WFC could improve relationships in the future and the majority of those that responded suggested periodic meetings and regular communications.



WFC staff has already put much of this advice into practice through monthly meetings with the Washington State Fire Marshal, regular meetings with the WFCA and regular contact with a host of other state agencies such as LNI, EMD, DNR, MD, and more.



The WFC intentionally streamlined the communication process to include these external organizations in the WFC board meetings, giving them a chance to report on an activity in their organization. WFC staff contacts external organizations to remind them of Board meeting and invite them to submit a written report. WFC staff will continue to streamline the reporting process to include a video report at the annual conference in 2015.

Goal 4

Increase proactive communication and contact with members on critical issues as measured by feedback from the county chief organizations.

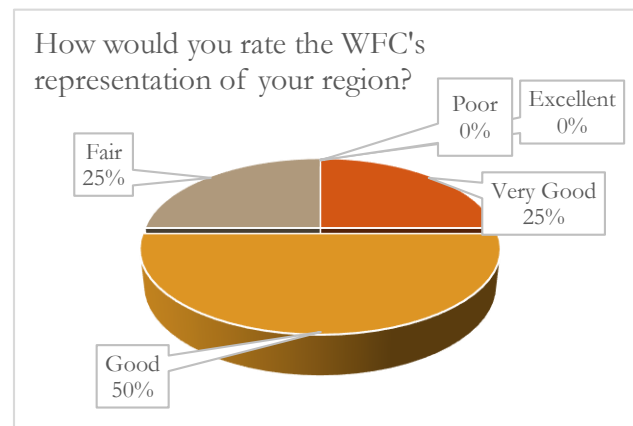
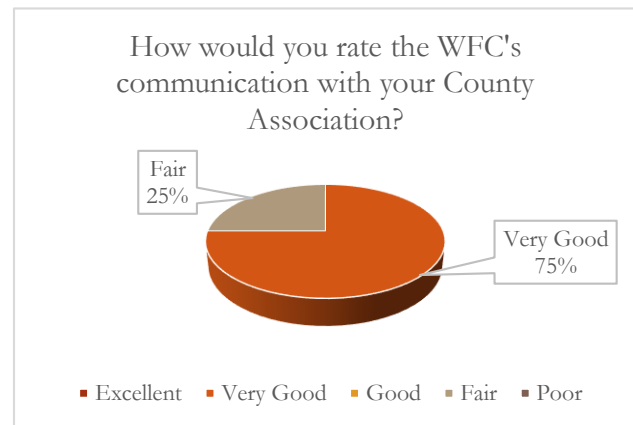


In 2014 the WFC staff developed a three year plan for the WFC Executive Director to visit all the county fire chiefs associations. As of the end of 2014, thirteen county fire chief associations received at least one visit. In addition to meeting with these organizations, staff delivered six leadership presentations at no charge. This has been well received and allows for open discussion about ways the WFC can support these associations.

WFC staff continues to look for ways to improve attendance, involvement and membership. The Association plans to conduct the first virtual meeting for the county fire chiefs Presidents forum meeting in 2015. A virtual meeting should allow greater involvement without a commute for even the smallest of groups within Washington.

The WFC customer service survey was sent to each county fire chief association and 75% of the respondents expressed that the communication between the WFC and their county association was very good. When asked to rate the WFC's representation of their region, the response was still favorable with the majority that responded, 75% choosing either good or better.

As timely and relevant communication with the county fire chiefs associations improves, a corresponding increase of involvement with the WFC is a natural result. Several years of consistent and meaningful communications will result in an improved perception of the WFC as seen through the eyes of the county fire chief associations.



Goal 5

Strengthen support for staff and continue to meet the needs of our customers as measured by staff/customer feedback during six month and annual reviews.



With a transition of new leadership for the WFC came an opportunity to take a fresh look at what and how things were being done and to make changes that allow staff to focus on priorities. One example of this is fully utilizing the existing phone system, setting up an automated menu and utilizing other features to allow staff to focus on important and urgent work. This also allows staff time to plan together and then to quickly triage phone messages for prompt response. These time management techniques are vital for a small office and allow better quality without sacrificing customer service or creating any cost increases.

The Executive Director's office and the copy room received a face lift that included patching, paint, shelves, furniture and other improvements that create a better work environment. Minor office projects produce overall improvements for staff and give staff an opportunity to work together on non-traditional projects which serve to build the team.

Occasional staff breakfasts and lunches prepared by the Executive Director for staff demonstrates respect and appreciation for all of the effort staff performs day in and day out. It also provides a much needed time for socialization with all staff and the opportunity to discuss issues, problems and projects in a relaxed social atmosphere.

The WFC staff was restructured leading to clearer expectations through staff monthly action steps which serve as objectives to the WFC strategic goals. The staff reorganization in September allowed staff to focus on areas with an emphasis on cross training. This has developed a much more effective and agile office staff. WFC staff receives six month and annual performance reviews which give the opportunity to discuss progress and identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

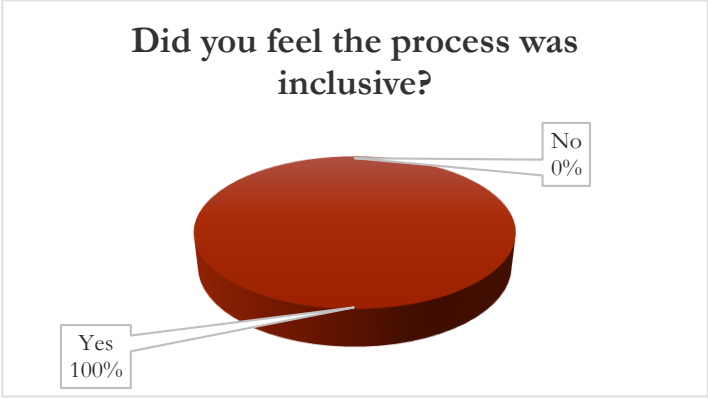
WFC computer hardware was updated, and a dedicated internet connection was put in, this year, to facilitate a more reliable connection for the internal computer network. The WFC website was migrated to a more stable server service to make the Association website more reliable for customers and relieve staff response to frequent outages.

All of the WFC staff are very pleased with the support they receive and the direction the WFC is heading.

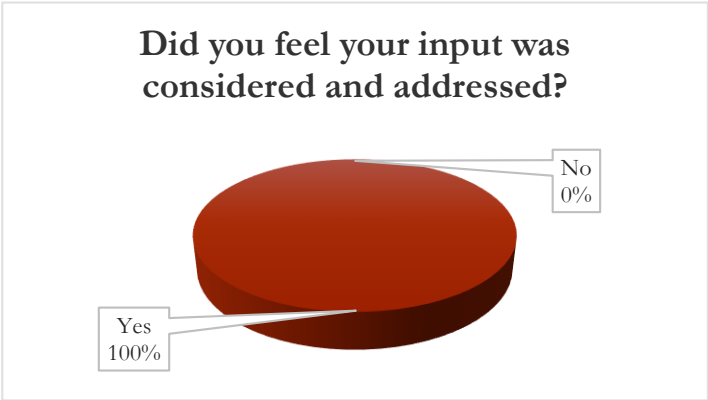
Goal 6

Increase involvement and participation of our members in the strategic plan development and the execution of that collaborative document as measured by post development surveys.

A strategic planning session was held in December of 2014 in Yakima. The session was attended by fifty key stakeholders including WFC Board members, WFC Section leadership, Committee representatives, Bugle members and other external stakeholders. These attendees actively participated in the two day process of shaping the future of the Association.



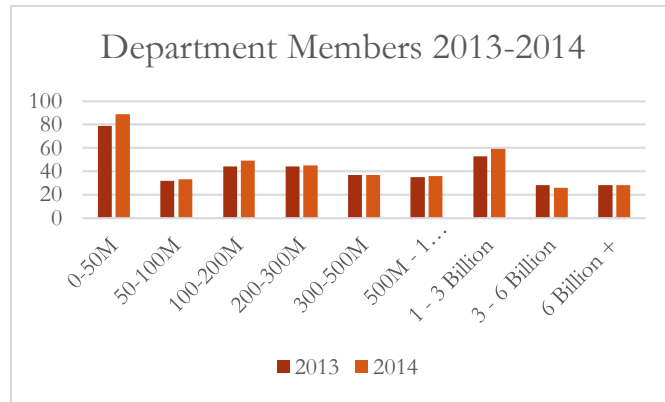
It was important for the WFC to approach this process in a new way. Over the last ten years the WFC had used ESCI and other local individuals to facilitate the strategic planning process. Everyone appreciates the efforts of those involved and the positive outcomes they produced. To get a different perspective the WFC contracted the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and their Technical Advisory Program (TAP) to facilitate this year’s strategic planning process. The facilitators were Rick Fagan who leads the TAP program and Paul Brooks who recently retired as the Executive Director of the CPSE. Both have extensive experience with association strategic planning. Of the fifty attendees twenty responded to the post session survey. Through that survey 100% of the participants indicated that the process was inclusive and they felt their input was considered and addressed.



Goal 7

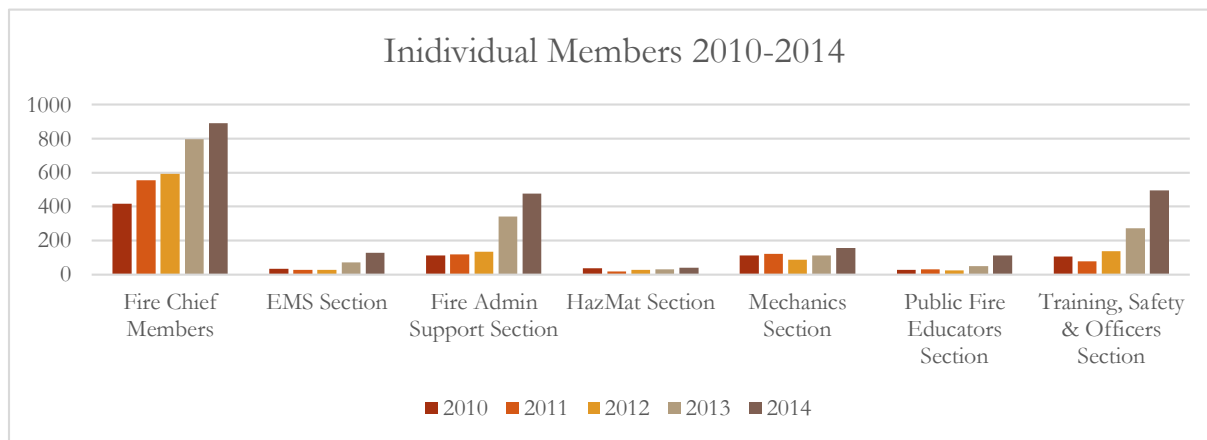
Increase membership value in the eyes of current and potential members as measured by recruitment and retention data.

Membership is the heart and soul of the organization and as such recruitment and retention of members is a primary focus. In 2012 membership voted to change the membership structure to be more inclusive and simple to understand. The dues tiers were adjusted and several new tiers were created to improve equity. Perhaps the most significant change is a free membership for organizations with an assessed value of 50 Million or less.



Previously that threshold was set at 25 million or less. The WFC goal remains at 100% even though that level has not ever been reached.

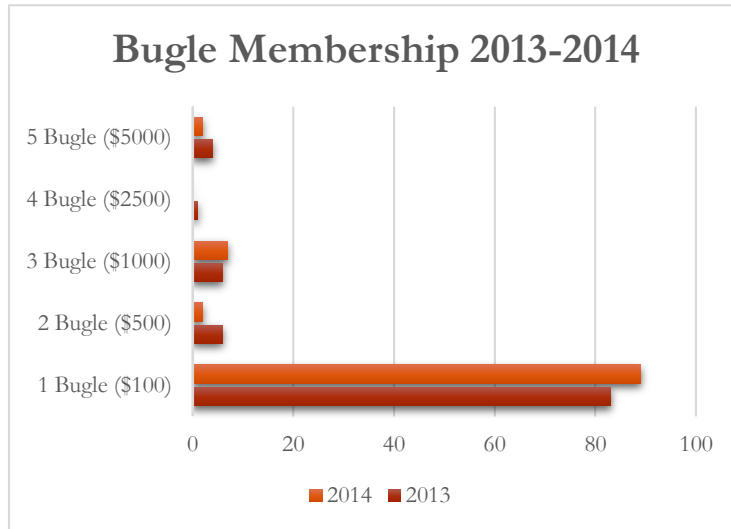
Over the past five years the WFC has seen steady growth in membership and 2014 was no exception. In 2014 the organization gained twenty-two fire agency members and 83% of all Washington fire agencies as members.



Individual memberships within the Association have also grown. Part of the membership revisions in 2012 provided unlimited membership in sections as well as staff chiefs within the member agency. The WFC has seen significant growth due to this change in the Training, Safety & Officers Section and the Fire Administrative Support section where membership has more than tripled since 2010. Fire chief members, which are limited to chief officers and comparable positions, have also grown from 418 members in 2010 to 890 members in 2014. This shows a greater involvement per agency and ensures that as officers move up the ranks in their fire agency they are aware of and more likely involved in the work of the WFC.

Goal 8

Increase revenues through partnerships with vendors, fire service partners and the Fire Rescue Wellness Corporation as measured against historic annual revenues.



The WFC associate membership program underwent a major change that was approved in 2012. This program came to be known as the bugle membership program. The bugle membership has not shown the growth that the department membership has to date. Although many of the bugle members retained membership in 2014, the 100 Bugle Members the WFC had in both 2013 and 2014 downgraded their membership classification which explains a slight decline in bugle member revenue.

The WFC believes revenue from the bugle membership program presents the greatest opportunity for growth. The membership drive for 2015 takes a different approach for the bugle program. The renewal forms emphasize renewal at the previous level or a membership upgrade with better information on membership benefits.

The WFC has set aside time for the membership support position to personally call potential new bugle members, or past members that have not renewed. Experience indicates that personal contact is much more effective than a generic packet of information in these cases.

The WFC created greater opportunities for fire service related businesses who previously entered into contracts with the WFC outside of the membership structure. Moving these partnerships into the bugle program is easily managed and removes any perceptions of favoritism. This consolidation should boost these memberships and lesson the staff management time.

In addition to Bugle opportunities, the WFC has encouraged diversification of the resources available through the Fire Rescue Wellness Corporation. Through products such as “Benz Out” the corporation is able to pursue wellness on a variety of levels and find stability in funding. Even though this income benefits the corporation, the WFC benefits as the sole shareholder of the corporation.

Goal 9

Continue to be the premier resource fire chiefs use when they are facing a crisis within their agency or region as measured by documenting the contacts and outcomes.



The WFC aims to be the first place members contact when they need help or are facing a crisis. On average the WFC office receives approximately 35 calls or emails per month from members looking for resources and assistance when they are facing a crisis. Response to these contacts range from being as simple as emailing resources, to as complicated as needing a personal meeting to discuss the situation.

The WFC recently developed a way to track the 35 contacts per month received from members in need. These contacts are logged in a member management system which allows better historical tracking. This will also provide a more accurate accounting of the 30 NFIRS calls and 10 EVIP calls which are received each month on average.

The WFC provided assistance through the member request program to seven fire agencies in 2014. All of these requests were unique and required very different paths for remediation. This program is viewed as one of the top three values from fire chief members. The WFC feedback provided from members who received assistance indicated that the service was high quality and timely.

