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**CAROLINA FIRE RESCUE EMS JOURNAL**

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***“Twenty Tips for Planning a Fire/Rescue Facility”***

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1. It is almost always less expensive to build a one story station versus a two story station, assuming that you have enough site to do so.
2. A full site survey, including topography and several other characteristics, will be necessary for design and construction. There is nothing to keep you from having the survey performed even before you hire a design professional.
3. There are several non-construction, soft-costs associated with a construction project. These can include: land acquisition, surveys, design fees, furniture, fixtures, equipment, etc.
4. Try to include “end-users” on your design team. Otherwise, the end user will invariably find things in the finished facility that they are not happy with.
5. “Free property” is often very expensive based on its development cost, unusable easements and right-of-ways or what is below the dirt line, ie, bad soil, rock, ground water, buried tanks, or buried trash.
6. If you intend to renovate an older facility, a hazardous materials survey will be required.
7. Before selecting an Architect, be sure to speak with several of their past *public safety* clients to gauge their satisfaction.
8. Your department may be eligible for grants or low-interest loans from government agencies like FEMA, FHA or USDA.
9. You can incorporate indoor/outdoor training props into the design for relatively little cost.
10. If there is ever the slightest possibility that you will have to add on to your facility, plan the site and building accordingly.
11. You may be able to get additional outside funding for your station if you provide minimal space for other agencies like EMS, a police substation or parks & recreation.
12. Fire sprinkler systems will typically pay for themselves through insurance savings in 3 to 6 years.
13. Select durable, maintenance-free materials for inside and outside the building.
14. If you’re spending critical dollars on abuse-resistant materials, you only need to do that in “touchable” areas. Very little abuse occurs above 6 or 7 feet.
15. Collect literature on the equipment you plan to purchase for the new facilities (extractors, cascades, etc.) This will be necessary during design.
16. If you use glass, overhead vehicle bay doors consider making the bottom row metal instead of glass. The row of glass at the bottom is the one that needs cleaning most often.
17. DO NOT apply color coatings to the bay floors after construction, unless you enjoy doing it every 2 to 3 years.
18. There are many ways to apply color to the bay floors during construction but very few of them include a UV color fastness guarantee in writing.
19. Before the contractor pours the concrete bay floors, show him an example of the finish you expect to receive on the finished product. That way there is never any question whether you got what you paid for.
20. The floor drainage system that you use in the vehicle bays will greatly affect your ability to use the bays for large meetings or gatherings.