

STATter 911
from Dave Statter

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Homeowner whose house burned down gets \$20,000 bill from Rural Metro. A subscription controversy from Arizona.

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This controversy over a subscription fire department in Surprise, Arizona gets a little complicated. It involves Rural Metro, a for profit company that has filed for bankruptcy. It occurred in an area that is more than 20 miles from Rural Metro's closest fire station. Rural Metro was also the second fire company to arrive to the fire in an area where there is no written mutual aid agreement. It's also a location where, according to KSAZ-TV, Rural Metro only recently began marketing its subscription service.

A state senator told the TV station fire service coverage in rural areas of Arizona is a mess and has called for oversight.

Rural Metro charged \$1500 for each of the two fire engines it provided and \$150 per hour for each of the firefighters.

I urge you to watch the video above and read the entire article from [Jill Monier at KSAZ-TV](#) about the fire that destroyed Justin Purcell's home. Here's an excerpt:

The bill shows one truck stayed on scene for six hours, a second truck was there for four. Each truck included three firefighters.

“Those numbers are set based on 65 years on tradition buying equipment, training, operating a fire service,” said Colin Williams, public information officer for Rural Metro.

“In this case, firefighters responded, they did receive mutual aid from other departments.. once fire is knocked down and brought under control, Rural Metro units provide the

overhaul and do essentially the mop up, if you will — that takes a significant amount of time and resources,” explained Williams.

Surprise firefighters were on the scene within 13 minutes. It took Rural Metro 24 minutes to get there.

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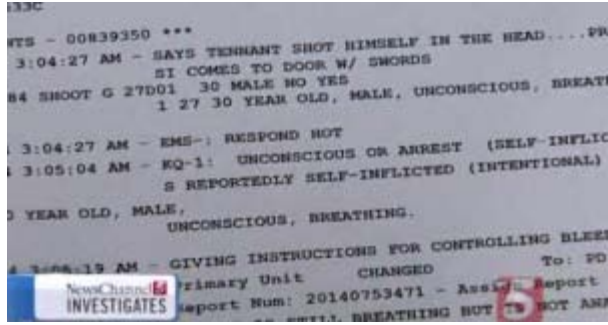
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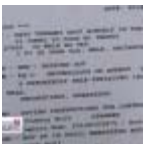
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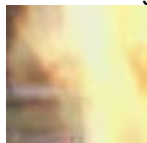
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