



# FIRE HOUSE NEWS

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF BONNEY LAKE, SUMNER, LAKE TAPPS, THE RIDGE COMMUNITIES AND SURROUNDING AREA

FALL 2009

## First steps taken in merger

### Edgewood and Milton consider joining East Pierce Fire & Rescue

The first step has been taken in the merger of the Edgewood and Milton fire services with East Pierce Fire & Rescue. Fire Commissioners for Pierce County Fire District No. 8 (Edgewood) and officials from the City of Milton have signed an Administrative Services Agreement with East Pierce. The agreement provides for the "exchange of services" at no cost to any of the three entities.

The next step will come in 2010, when the citizens of all three agencies will be asked to vote on a formal merger.

"This partnership will result in quicker response to emergencies,

more efficient use of tax dollars and expanded training for all the firefighters," East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson said.

He noted that East Pierce shares a long border with Edgewood and Milton west of State Route 167.

For Edgewood and Milton citizens, the most noticeable change will be the presence of a five-person career crew – three on a fire engine and two on a medic unit – at the Edgewood station 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This crew includes firefighter-paramedics who can respond with advanced medical aid.

Previous to this agreement,

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### MERGER BENEFITS

- An integrated workforce of career and volunteer firefighters providing high quality emergency services
- Fully-staffed fire and paramedic services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Quicker response times
- Lower cost services than each agency would be able to afford by itself
- Improved safety and expanded training for career and volunteer firefighters
- More resources, including firefighters and equipment, during an emergency
- Economies of scale when purchasing supplies and equipment
- Ambulance transport services provided with no-out-of-pocket expenses to patients
- Training, administration, operations and emergency response to 9-1-1 calls consolidated under a single management structure, reducing or eliminating duplication

For more information, visit [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org) or call East Pierce Fire & Rescue at 253-863-1800.

East Pierce Fire and Rescue  
18421 Old Buckley Highway  
Bonney Lake, WA 98391

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## Join us at our 16th annual Open House



One of the favorite activities at the Open House is the Junior Firefighter Challenge. Youngsters get a chance to put out a "fire" and perform a "rescue". Other demonstrations and games provide an opportunity for emergency responders to showcase programs and services.

East Pierce Fire and Rescue kicks off fall with its 16<sup>th</sup> annual Open House. The free health and safety fair will run from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26 at the Bonney Lake Public Safety Building, at 18421 Old Buckley Highway, Bonney Lake.

The annual event will feature more than a dozen booths with demonstrations and educational displays from East Pierce Fire & Rescue, Bonney Lake Police Department, Pierce Transit, Department of Natural Resources, and others.

Firefighters will give tours of the station and demonstrate some of the equipment they use to fight fires, conduct rescues and provide medical assistance.

"The Open House also gives us a chance to talk about important fire prevention and life safety issues in a fun, interactive setting," said East Pierce Lt. Eric McLeroy, one of the organizers of the event.

Parents and children can test their fire safety knowledge, watch a Jaws of Life demonstration, talk on the radio to Water Rescue Team divers, purchase life jackets

### OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

The schedule for the 16th annual East Pierce Fire & Rescue Open House is:

- 1:00 p.m. Doors open  
Activities include games, demonstrations, free ice cream and popcorn. Hot dogs and sodas may be purchased from the Bonney Lake Kiwanis.
- 1:00 p.m. Estimated time Airlift Northwest helicopter arrives\*
- 1:30 p.m. Jaws of Life Demonstration
- 2:00 p.m. K-9 Demonstration
- 2:30 p.m. Jaws of Life Demonstration
- 3:00 p.m. K-9 Demonstration
- 3:30 p.m. Jaws of Life Demonstration
- 4:00 p.m. Event ends

\*Pending emergency calls

**Free parking** is available at the Pierce Transit Park and Ride at 184th Avenue East, off State Route 410 East. A dedicated shuttle will run to and from the Public Safety Building during the event.

(\$14) and bike helmets (\$7), meet members of the bomb squad and the Pierce County Sheriff, Bonney Lake and Sumner Police K-9 units.

Children age 10 and younger can suit up in pint-size firefighter gear to put out a "fire" and perform a "rescue". Older children are offered a more challenging course.

Pending an emergency call, an Airlift Northwest helicopter will set down at approximately 1 p.m. for an hour-long visit.

For information, visit our Web site at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).

### THANK YOU



Thank you to all those who donated to the recent "Fill the Boot" Drive for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. With your help, the firefighters raised \$17,000 for families affected by muscular dystrophy in our communities.

### What's Hot

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# Commissioners unite to represent citizens

**W**ith the administrative agreement in place, the commissioners from East Pierce Fire & Rescue, Edgewood and officials from the City of Milton will hold joint meetings until the citizens vote on the merger.

"The good news is that the citizens are not losing a voice in their community by moving to a regional fire service," East Pierce Fire Commissioner Chair Rick Kuss said. "Their commissioners will clearly have a voice in every step from here on out."

Kuss explained that, while the fire district will be fully integrated, the Commissioners will maintain full statutory authority until the election. "We will work together as a team," he said. "But they will represent the interests of their citizens."

With the addition of the Edgewood commissioners, the board consists of 13 members. As a city-run fire service, Milton

does not have a board of commissioners. However, city officials attend the commissioner's meetings to represent the citizens of that community. Once the merger has been passed, Milton residents may run for an open board position.

Fire commissioners are elected by the public to set budgets, establish policy and provide administrative oversight for the fire district. Each commissioner is elected to a six-year term. Any resident, 18 years or older, who lives within the service area is eligible to apply for an open position on the board.

The Edgewood commissioners and Milton officials have already begun to attend regular meetings of the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Board of Commissioners, held on the third Tuesday of every month at the East Pierce headquarters station. Meetings are open to the public and offer residents an opportunity for citizen input.



## Home heating safety tips

Faced with mounting heating costs, many residents turn to supplemental heating sources in the winter. Fireplaces, wood stoves and space heaters can help keep a room toasty, but they can also be a major source of fires and carbon monoxide poisoning, if not used properly.

Go to our Web site ([www.eastpiercerefire.org](http://www.eastpiercerefire.org)) for tips on how to help keep your family safe this winter.

## Swine Flu Update

The flu season is here and the added concern regarding the H1N1 virus has many people confused. What makes the swine flu different from the regular, seasonal flu is that infections are 20 times more common in the 5- to 24-year-old age group than in people over 65. In addition, death rates resulting from the H1N1 virus are unusually high among young adults, particularly pregnant women.

Although the symptoms of the H1N1 virus are similar to the seasonal flu, there are warning signs that indicate the need for emergency medical treatment. If you become ill and experience any of the following symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately.

### Emergency Warning Signs

#### In children:

- Fast breathing / trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

#### In adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

For information, go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## Merger

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patients with critical medical emergencies had to wait for paramedics from one of the surrounding districts or a private ambulance.

"The benefit will be faster response times for both fire and medical calls," Thorson said.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue will provide ambulance transport for Edgewood and Milton citizens with no out-of-pocket expense to the patient – a service offered to all who reside within the East Pierce district boundaries. "For patients who desperately need to be transported to the hospital, this represents a considerable savings," Thorson said.

However, private ambulances may still be used when fire department crews are unavailable due to multiple calls.

To help recover operational costs such as staffing, equipment and medical supplies, the District bills insurance companies and Medicare. Residents who are not covered by insurance are not charged. However, those who live outside the district boundaries are billed for ambulance services.

According to Thorson, East Pierce will draw on previous experience with mergers to help make this a smooth transition. East Pierce was formed in 2000 through the merger of the Bonney Lake Fire Department, Lake Tapps Fire and Pierce County Fire District 24. Since then citizens in South Prairie, Sumner and other areas in Pierce County have voted to merge with East Pierce.

The District currently serves a population of more than 75,000 residents within approximately 142 square miles.

Mergers do save money and improve efficiencies. However, Thorson said, there will be some initial cost increases for the improved service. Property tax assessments would be adjusted to the levels paid by East Pierce residents – \$1.50 per \$1,000 for fire protection and \$0.50 per \$1,000 for emergency medical services. Citizens of Edgewood would pay an extra \$0.50 over their current assessment. Milton residents would pay an extra \$1.00 per \$1,000.

Thorson said the firefighters from all three agencies support the merger. "East Pierce, Edgewood and Milton have formed a solid relationship over the past several years," he said. "We work well together. When we need help, they send units down and when they need help we send units there."

In early spring, Edgewood residents will be asked to vote on the merger. Since the Milton Fire Department is operated by the City of Milton, those citizens will vote on annexation. Residents protected by East Pierce Fire & Rescue will also be asked to vote.

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

# No change expected in volunteer service

**T**he citizens of Edgewood, Milton and the area served by East Pierce Fire & Rescue won't see many changes when the volunteers of all three agencies join forces as part of the Administrative Agreement.

"The citizens of Edgewood and Milton will see the same volunteers they've always seen," Milton Fire Chief James Jaques said. "There will be no changes operationally at this point."

One of the few visible changes is the reassignment of Jaques to Chief of the East Pierce Volunteer Division. Jaques will take over for East Pierce Assistant Chief Jake Doty, who is retiring as the Volunteer Chief later this year. In addition to his duties as Volunteer Chief, Jaques will serve as Assistant Chief of Emergency Management and Information Technology.

According to Doty and Jaques, the Milton fire station will continue to be staffed with career firefighters during the day and volunteers in the evenings and on weekends.

East Pierce volunteers are on call 24/7 to staff stations when the career firefighters are called



Volunteers work alongside career firefighters on all calls including commercial and residential fires and emergency medical incidents.

to a fire or other major incident or when there are an unusually high number of calls.

All 84 of the volunteers representing the three agencies respond with career firefighters to a variety of calls, including fire and emergency medical incidents.

Jaques notes that the 10 Edgewood volunteers and 30 volunteers at Milton will get the benefit of an expanded command staff and administrative support.

All community events supported by the volunteers of the three

areas, including the annual Santa Run, Milton Days Parade and Picnic, Edgewood Open House and East Pierce Easter Egg Hunt, will also continue with no change.

The volunteers will train at their home stations, occasionally joining together for specific training opportunities. "The bottom line is that the volunteers will work together with no significant changes to the citizens in any of the three areas," Doty said.

# Ceremony honors fallen chief

On July 26, more than two hundred people attended a dedication ceremony at the East Pierce headquarters station in Bonney Lake to honor the memory of East Pierce Fire & Rescue Fire Chief Dan Packer, who lost his life battling a California wildfire last year.

On the first anniversary of his death, family, friends and firefighters recalled his commitment to the firefighters he led and the community he served.

The local International Association of Firefighters presented Packer's wife and children with a special commemorative coin.

The mayors of both Bonney Lake and Sumner declared the day an official day of remembrance.

As the flag was lowered to half staff, the Combined Fire Department Honor Guard assisted Marylee Packer in placing a wreath near a pond dedicated to her late husband. The pond and the surrounding landscaping were made possible by the City of Bonney Lake with donations of time and materials from local citizens and businesses.

East Pierce Chief Jerry E. Thorson encouraged the firefighters of East Pierce to recall the standard of compassion and service to others that Packer set, and to, above all, never forget their Chief. "Chief Dan Packer joins those who have a special place in our history, and in our hearts – one of the brave who gave their all for their community and nation," he said.



The Combined Fire Department Honor Guard assisted in placing a wreath honoring fallen Fire East Pierce Chief Dan Packer during a dedication ceremony July 26 at the East Pierce Fire & Rescue headquarters station in Bonney Lake.

## Reward your hero with a brick on the Walk of Honor

Applications are being accepted for engraved bricks to be installed in the Fire Chief Dan Packer Walk of Honor. The purpose of the Walk is to pay tribute to those who have dedicated themselves to protecting or improving the lives of their fellow citizens. These include firefighters, law enforcement personnel, other first responders and any citizen who has made a significant contribution to their community.

A special location on the Walk is reserved for career or volunteer firefighters, officers, staff members and fire commissioners of East Pierce Fire & Rescue or any of the agencies that now make up East Pierce.

"These bricks are a lasting tribute to the men and women who have served their communities with distinction," Association Vice President Sean Slattery said.

On July 26, the Walk of Honor was dedicated during a ceremony honoring Chief Packer. The Walk is located in front of the Bonney Lake Public Safety Building as part of the Dan Packer Memorial.

"It's our hope that the names that will appear on the bricks next to his will not only pay tribute to those who have given so generously of their time and energy, but also serve as a reminder to the rest of us of what we can achieve when we dedicate ourselves in service to others," Slattery said.

Each inscribed brick sells for \$50. Proceeds go to the Chief Dan Packer Memorial Fund and the Association's Scholarship Fund.

Applications can be found online at [www.eastpiercefir.org](http://www.eastpiercefir.org). Brochures are available at the headquarters station, 18421 Old Buckley Highway, in Bonney Lake.

The East Pierce Fire & Rescue Volunteer Firefighters' Association represents the volunteer firefighters and EMTs who work with the career firefighters to protect the residents and visitors of Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, South Prairie, Wilkeson, the Ridge communities, Edgewood and Milton.



Engraved bricks for the Walk of Honor may be purchased from the East Pierce Volunteer Firefighters' Association. Applications can be found online at [www.eastpiercevfa.org](http://www.eastpiercevfa.org).

## When in doubt, check it out

### For heart attack patients, saving time saves lives

Thirty years ago, treatment for heart attack victims was limited. Even patients who survived often had permanent damage to the heart and a lifelong disability, making it impossible for survivors to climb a flight of stairs without becoming short of breath.

Advanced treatments can often stop a heart attack in its tracks, but they are most effective if initiated in the first few hours after the attack starts.

Today, most people, however, either fail to recognize the signs of a heart attack or take a "wait and see" approach, unwittingly delaying lifesaving treatment.

Some patients don't call 9-1-1 because they aren't sure if their chest pain is indigestion or a heart attack. They don't want to "cause a scene" or aren't sure what is happening and don't want to be embarrassed at the hospital if it turns out they didn't have a heart attack.

Other patients are in denial that this could be happening.

As a result people typically wait two-to-four hours after they are first aware of their symptoms before calling 9-1-1.

"We'd rather be called, and have it not be a heart attack, than have patients delay calling 9-1-1," said East Pierce Assistant Fire Chief Russ McCallion.

This delay is critical since the risk of sudden cardiac arrest —

### Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, just like in the movies. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help.

Call 9-1-1 if you experience these warning signs:

- ✓ **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or even indigestion.
- ✓ **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- ✓ **Shortness of breath** with or without chest discomfort.
- ✓ **Other signs** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

Women face an additional complication in receiving timely care because they are less likely to experience chest pain or discomfort. The most common heart attack warning signs for women are shortness of breath, or dizziness, or sweatiness.

in which the heart stops and CPR is required — is greatest during the first hours of a heart attack.

McCallion states that every hour of delay worsens the short- and long-term recovery and survival for patients. "In fact, every hour of delay increases a patient's chance of death within a year after the heart attack by 15 percent," he said.

He also noted that there is no

charge for firefighter-paramedics to come out and examine patients. "It's what we are here for," he said.

To do our part to reduce time to treatment, East Pierce firefighter-paramedics are trained to begin treatment as soon as we arrive — up to 30 minutes sooner than if someone drives to the hospital by car.

As trained, emergency responders, they can interpret complex 12-lead electrocardiograms (ECGs) and administer advanced care to treat pain, stabilize blood pressure, breathing and heart rhythms.

They also notify the cardiac hospital and send a copy of the ECG via Bluetooth cell phone to the hospital.

While the patient is en route, the cardiac team is mobilized and ready for the patient as soon as the ambulance arrives.

"The goal is to cut every minute possible between the time symptoms start and the time treatment begins," McCallion said.

Patients, who are driven to the hospital — or worse, drive themselves — run the risk of collapsing in cardiac arrest

before they even arrive.

In the back of a medic unit, paramedics can immediately defibrillate or "shock" a patient's heart that has stopped, start CPR and continue caring for the patient.

"With early notification of the hospital, East Pierce paramedics can save valuable time getting the patient to the cardiologist," McCallion said. "When every minute counts, it makes sense to call us."

# Good Samaritan Award presented to local man



East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson (right) presented Deeno Adkins with the Good Samaritan Award for his efforts to save the life of a stranger.

Lake Tapps resident Deeno Adkins and his wife were driving on State Route 410 inside Mt. Rainier National Park early in the morning on August 10, when they came upon a gravely ill man kneeling beside his vehicle.

Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, Adkins got behind the wheel of the stranger's car and drove him down the mountain to find a location with cell phone reception so he could call 9-1-1. East of Crystal Mountain, the man went into cardiac arrest. Adkins provided medical aid and CPR for more than 30 minutes until East Pierce crews arrived from Bonney Lake.

In recognition of his selfless actions in providing comfort and medical assistance to a dying man, East Pierce Fire & Rescue presented Adkins with the Good Samaritan Award at the August 18 East Pierce Fire Commissioner's meeting.

## East Pierce Calendar of Events

### CPR and Basic First Aid Classes

Oct. 17 or Oct. 24 **Where:** East Pierce Fire & Rescue headquarters station  
 Nov. 14 or Nov. 21 18421 Old Buckley Highway  
 Dec. 12 or Dec. 19 Bonney Lake, WA  
**When:** CPR classes are from 8:30 a.m. until noon  
 First Aid classes are from 1-5 p.m.

Classes are **free** for citizens residing within the jurisdiction of East Pierce Fire & Rescue, including Sumner, Bonney Lake, Lake Tapps, Wilkeson, South Prairie, Edgwood and Milton. The cost for non-residents is \$20 for a CPR or First Aid class, or \$30 for both. Call 253-863-1800 during regular business hours to register!

### 16th Annual Open House

Help us celebrate our 16th annual East Pierce Fire and Rescue Open House. The free health and safety fair will run from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26 at the Bonney Lake Public Safety Building on Old Buckley Hwy. Free parking with shuttle service to the station is available at the Pierce Transit Park and Ride at 184th Avenue East, just off of State Route 410 East.

### Fire Commissioner's Meetings

The public is welcome to attend the Commissioner's meeting at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month at the headquarters station, 18421 Old Buckley Highway, in Bonney Lake.

## Prevent poisoning

When most people think of accidental poisoning they think of small children getting into medications or cleaning products. It's true that over half of poisoning calls involve children under the age of six. Of those, 45 percent were poisoned by medications. However, the senior adult population – those over 65 – are also at risk for poisonings or accidental drug overdoses.

According to the Washington Poison Center, poisoning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death. That's why it's important to take precautions at home to help protect your loved ones.

If you believe someone has been poisoned and they are disoriented, unconscious or having difficulty breathing, call 9-1-1 immediately. This is a serious, life-threatening emergency.

### Help prevent a poisoning by following these safety tips:

- Store products in their original, labeled containers. Never store poisons in a food or beverage container.
- Never store food products with non-food items.
- Use child-resistant containers whenever possible. Be sure they are closed properly.
- Throw away expired medicine.
- Wear your glasses and keep the lights on when taking medicine.
- Never call medicine candy. Children should understand the difference.
- Put color dots on medication bottles - assign each family member their own color.
- Teach children to always ask an adult before eating, drinking or touching anything.
- Read the label and follow directions for medicines and cleaning products.
- Use cabinet safety locks.

## Who is East Pierce Fire & Rescue?

East Pierce Fire and Rescue was created when the City of Bonney Lake Fire Department, Lake Tapps Fire and Pierce County Fire District 24 merged in 2000 with the goal of providing a seamless response to emergency situations.

In 2006, voters in Pierce County Fire District 12 and South Prairie Fire District 20 overwhelmingly passed a special election to merge the two districts with East Pierce.

Two years later, the citizens of the City of Sumner and Pierce County Fire District 1 also voted to join the East Pierce family.

Today, East Pierce serves a population of more than 75,000 living in and around Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, the Ridge Communities, South Prairie, and Wilkeson. The district covers approximately 142 square miles and protects residents from eleven stations – five staffed and five volunteer and one station for the marine unit.

In August, 2009 officials from the Pierce County Fire District 8 in Edgwood and the Milton Fire Department entered into an Administrative Services Agreement as the first step towards merging with East Pierce Fire & Rescue.

All full-time firefighters are cross-trained as either emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or paramedics and are able to respond to both medical emergencies and fires.

An independently elected board of citizens governs the agency. Additional information is available at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).

## Public Education Programs

East Pierce Fire & Rescue offer the following services:

### Bicycle Helmet Sales and Fitting\*

Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Helmets are sold for \$7 each.

### Life Jacket Sales and Fitting\*

Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life jackets are sold for \$14 each.

### Safe Sitter Classes

Registration information and class schedules are available at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org). Cost: \$30

### FREE CPR and First Aid Classes

Registration information and class schedules are available at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org). Free for East Pierce residents.

### FREE Life Jacket Loaner Program

Wearer must be present for fitting. Free loaner jackets are available at the headquarter's station, at 18421 Old Buckley Hwy.

### FREE Child Safety Seat Inspections

Call for an appointment.

### FREE Station Tours

Call to arrange for a tour of any of our fire stations.

### FREE Smoke Alarm Installations

Call for an appointment. Includes smoke alarm with 10-year batteries.

### FREE Blood Pressure Checks

Stop by any staffed station during regular business hours. (Subject to staff availability.)

### FREE Fire Extinguisher Training

Learn how to use a fire extinguisher in case of a residential or commercial emergency. Call to register.

\*Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520.

## East Pierce Fire & Rescue Staffed Fire Stations

Station 11	18421 Old Buckley Hwy, Bonney Lake (Headquarters Station)
Station 12	12006 - 214th Ave. E., Bonney Lake
Station 13	800 Harrison Street, Sumner
Station 14	3206 W. Tapps Drive E., Bonney Lake
Station 16	10515 - 234th Ave. E., Buckley



18421 Old Buckley Highway  
 Bonney Lake, WA 98391

253-863-1800  
[www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org)



### Jerry E. Thorson, Fire Chief East Pierce Fire Commissioners

Rick Kuss, Chair	Cheryl Bylin	Raymond Bunk
Mike Cathey	Karlyne McGinnis	Rick Kilbourn
Andrew Longstreth	Victor Proulx	Roy "Red" Mendenhall

"Exceptional people providing compassionate service and rapid response to our community's diverse needs."