



# FIRE HOUSE NEWS

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

SUMMER 2009

## New chief outlines future plans

**E**ast Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson has been on the job since March. During that time, he has visited all of the stations and spoken with the career and volunteer firefighters, met with city officials in Bonney Lake and Sumner and gotten to know the citizens served by East Pierce Fire and Rescue. He likes what he sees.

He says he is fortunate that East Pierce has a strong foundation of teamwork, commitment to customer service and a tireless work ethic. The dedication of its members and their high standards allows the District to continue to be a regional leader in public safety, providing quality care to all of our citizens.

"I don't see any areas of critical need that require change or fixing. I am so impressed with how well this department works to meet the needs of the community" Thorson said. "The challenge for us is to continue to move in a positive direction with today's economy."

Critical to that mission is remaining vigilant in efforts to manage the District's budget, especially during these trying economic times. "At the same time, we must continue to provide the quality of service you have come to expect from us," Thorson said.

As the District prepares to start the budget process for next year, Thorson expects revenues to fall short of last year's numbers. "We will have to tighten our belts just like our citizens and do our best to live within our means," he said.

Thorson is instituting a strategic planning process that will assist the District in planning for future needs. One of those needs is a new

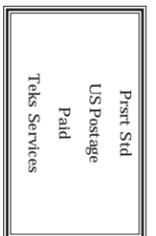
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East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson promises to find ways to manage the budget and still provide quality services.

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

ECRWSS  
Postal Customer



## BE AWARE OF CO POISONING

This summer hundreds of boaters and swimmers will be poisoned on lakes and rivers throughout our area. Many will never even know it, attributing the sudden onset of light-headedness and headache to seasickness, the flu, food poisoning or alcohol. Too often the real culprit is carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from boat exhaust.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas found in the exhaust of recreational boats. Because CO gas stays close to the water, it accumulates under the boat's swim platform and in enclosed cabins.

There have been several instances of CO poisoning on Lake Tapps, particularly among "teak surfers" – swimmers who hold onto the teak swim platform – as the boat motors along the water, exposing participants to deadly CO emissions.

Not only is "teak surfing" dangerous, it's illegal. In 2006, East Pierce Fire Chief Dan Packer was instrumental in helping to pass a law that bans the deadly practice.

Symptoms include the sudden onset of light-headedness and headache, irritated eyes, nausea and weakness, eventually leading to loss of consciousness. "It can take as little as 60 seconds of exposure to pass out," said East Pierce Public Education Specialist Dina Sutherland.

For more information about preventing CO poisoning, go to [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).

## Protect your home from wildfires



The East Pierce Wildland Firefighting Team has already been busy with several fires this season. You can help prevent fires like these by obeying burn regulations.

**A**ccording to all reports, it's shaping up to be a great summer, but a bad fire season. As if to emphasize that point, East Pierce crews have already been on several wildfires this year.

"Help us help you by being ready for this fire season," said East Pierce Firefighter Frank Gibbons. Gibbons heads the District's Wildland Firefighting Team, a special operations group made up of firefighters who are trained to battle brush fires that occur with some frequency in our area.

Citizens can help protect their homes by taking a few important precautions and following outdoor burning regulations and requirements.

Remember, it's always illegal to burn garbage or refuse, cardboard or paper – except what's necessary to start the fire – building materials, rubber products, plastics or anything that creates smoke that is harmful or offensive to neighbors. Burn barrels are also illegal. Land clearing burning is prohibited for this county.

You can still have a nice recreational fire, like a cooking fire, campfire or bonfire in designated areas or on private property. Just be sure that it's no larger than three feet in diameter and that you only burn charcoal, dried firewood or manufactured fire logs. All other fuel is prohibited. And don't forget to have water or an extinguisher near by.

Fires lit in fire pits, fire bowls and similar freestanding devices, commonly sold at home-improvement stores and mass retailers, are also considered "recreational".

If you build a recreational fire, you must be able to extinguish the fire and you are required by law to attend it at all times. No fires are to be set within 50 feet of structures. Every fire must be completely extinguished before leaving it.

Occasionally, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency or the Fire Marshal will issue a burn ban due to dry conditions or a weather-related inversion. A fire-safety burn ban temporarily restricts all outdoor and indoor fires. Notification of burn bans can be found at [www.pscleanair.org](http://www.pscleanair.org).

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## HEALTHWatch

### Save a life: learn CPR

If someone suddenly collapsed into cardiac arrest, would you know what to do? Many people in our area do because they have taken a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) class.

We offer CPR classes twice a month. Best of all, they are free to residents within the East Pierce Fire & Rescue District. The three-hour course covers infant, child, and adult CPR as well as procedures for administering aid to choking victims. You will also learn to recognize warning signs of heart attack and stroke in adults and breathing difficulties in children.

Does it work? You bet. East Pierce Lieutenant Mike McGinnis has been involved with the CPR program for 15 years. Last year, we trained 2,600 people in CPR, including junior high and high school students in our annual school program.

"The more people who know CPR, the greater the likelihood a life will be saved," McGinnis said. "That's why I feel teaching CPR to the community is so important."

Studies show that a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival doubles if someone starts CPR immediately. Our own statistics reveal that bystander CPR rates for a witnessed collapse were 58% last year – an outstanding number compared to documented rates nationally of as low as four percent.

"If just one student does CPR and saves a life, it's worth all of the time and effort," McGinnis said.

For a list of our classes, go to page 4 or to our Web site – [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org). Arrangements for groups can be made by contacting Dina Sutherland at [dsutherland@eastpiercefirerescue.org](mailto:dsutherland@eastpiercefirerescue.org).

You have the power to save a life.



East Pierce Firefighter Kirby Pollard helps teach CPR to students in a SafeSitter Class at Station 16.

# Have fun, stay safe in the water

East Pierce Fire & Rescue offers these tips for keeping safe around water:

- Constantly watch children in or near the water. Keep young children within arm's reach.
- Assign adults to watch children at social events.
- Never drink or allow the use of alcohol or other drugs during water and boating activities or while supervising children.
- Make sure children learn to swim. Upgrade their swimming skills each year.
- Do not let kids drive personal watercraft (such as jet skis).
- Never swim alone, always use the buddy system.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector aboard your motorboat.
- Be aware that cold water can kill, even on hot summer days. If a swimmer becomes cold or tired, stay close to shore and rest.
- Wear a life vest if swimming in Lake Tapps or nearby rivers and lakes. It's easy to misjudge the water and your swimming skills.
- Everyone should always wear a life vest when on a boat, inner tube or raft. Children also need life vests on docks and when they are near the water.
- Make sure the life vest is U.S. Coast Guard approved and fits properly. The life jacket should fit snugly and not allow the child's chin or ears to slip through the neck opening. Inflatable toys or "water wings" don't take the place of a life vest.
- Bring a cell phone or know where to find the nearest phone. Dial 9-1-1 in an emergency.

Come to our  
**Summer  
Splash-Tacular**  
from 1- 3 p.m.  
July 11 at the  
**North Tapps Park.**  
Have fun learning  
how to stay safe in  
the water.



## VOLUNTEER CORNER



The East Pierce volunteer firefighters at Station 19 are (from the left to right) Captain Mark Nevill, Firefighter Donnie Taylor, Firefighter Bill Dedge, Firefighter Luzia Ballew, Assistant Chief Layne Ross and Firefighter Sara Arneson. Not pictured is Firefighter Jonathan Holt.

## Volunteers aid community

The volunteers at Station 19 in South Prairie have seen a lot of changes over the years. East Pierce Fire & Rescue Volunteer Assistant Chief Layne Ross first became a volunteer firefighter in South Prairie in 1973. At that time, the fire engine – a Howard Cooper – used to sit at the corner of First and Emory in a garage that was built soon after the town established a fire service in 1956.

Before the introduction of 9-1-1, Ross said that South Prairie residents called his house to report an emergency.

Today the combination fire station and community center, built by the citizens in 1984, houses two fire engines, a medic unit and a tender – a specialized vehicle capable of bringing water, foam, or dry chemicals to fire trucks in the field that are engaged on the fireline. Seven volunteers, including Ross, respond from the station to fires, medical emergencies and all forms of disasters.

"I'm very proud of the way the station looks," said East Pierce Volunteer Captain Mark Nevill.

"It's one of the nicest stations in our District."

According to Volunteer Firefighter Bill Dedge, that's in large part to the conscientious efforts of Nevill. "He is an unsung leader among the volunteers," Dedge said. For almost twenty years, Nevill could often be found at the station repairing, cleaning and preparing for the next call. "He's always there," Dedge said.

In 2006, South Prairie residents voted to merge their fire department with East Pierce Fire & Rescue. The volunteers are still on call, but they are now backed up by career firefighters. The volunteers also back up the career crews at Stations 16 and 12. "We get to go on even more calls," Volunteer Firefighter Sara Arneson said.

Although it has been different getting used to working in a combined volunteer and career department, Ross said the merger has been great for the citizens of South Prairie. "The best thing is that we all work together to provide great service for our city," he said.

## Chief

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headquarters station that Thorson expects to start funding in 2011. "A new station will allow us to vacate the Bonney Lake Public Safety Building, giving the police department much needed space to expand," Thorson said.

The new station will provide a training center for the firefighters. Currently, the firefighters train in the parking lots of local businesses. "A proper training center will allow us to simulate conditions the firefighters will see, making us better prepared to respond to a variety of emergencies" Thorson said.

Part of the strategic planning process will include reviewing response times and other statistics for the stations. The goal is to make sure each station is centrally located to better serve our growing population.

"As the plan is developed, there will be opportunities for public input and involvement," Thorson said. "This will be the basis for what we will work on in the future."

"On behalf of the firefighters, volunteers, officers and support personnel at East Pierce Fire and Rescue it is my privilege to thank you for helping to keep us prepared for any emergency, both today and in the future," he said.

## Got Life Jackets?

If you need a life jacket, East Pierce sells vests in all sizes – children through adult – for just \$14. If present, the wearer will receive a free, custom fitting. Stop by the headquarters station on Old Buckley Highway during regular business hours.

If you just need a few life jackets for the day or a couple extras for guests, we provide loaner vests at North Tapps (Pierce County) Park at the concession stand, at the self-serve kiosk in Allan Yorke Park and at our Station 12, located at 12006 214th Avenue East, in Bonney Lake.

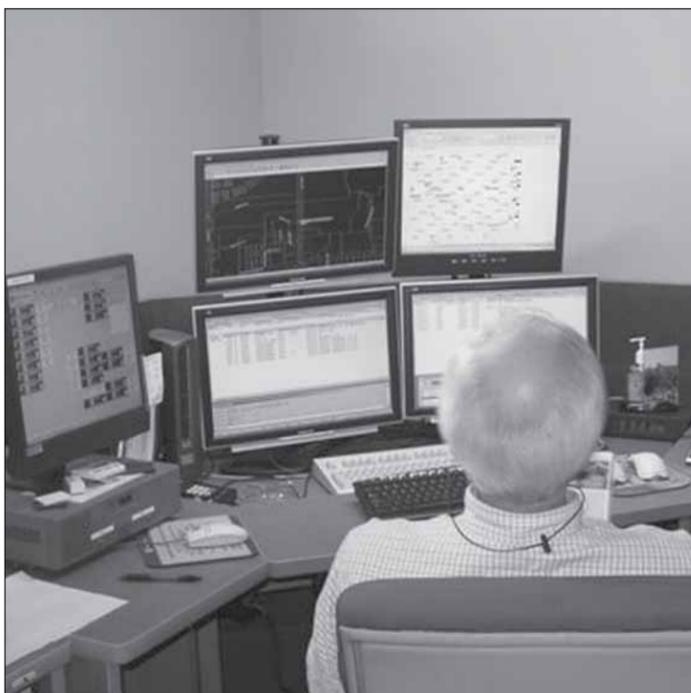
# Annual awards honor the best

**T**he recipients of the 2009 Recognition Awards were announced at East Pierce Fire and Rescue's annual banquet. Kirby Pollard was named the 2009 Firefighter of the Year. Firefighter-paramedic Mike Gladstone received the Emergency Medical Services Provider of the Year award. For the second year in a row, Captain Greg Reinke was named the Career Officer of the Year. Captain Mark Nevill was honored as the Volunteer Officer of the Year. The Volunteer Responder of the Year award went to Doug Mullins. Volunteer Firefighter Sean Slattery received the Ken Thawsh Inspirational Award. "The Thawsh Award is given to the person who most exemplifies the East Pierce mission statement - 'Exceptional people providing compassionate service and rapid response to our community's diverse needs,'" East Pierce Chief Jerry Thorson said. The annual Fitness Award went to Firefighter-paramedic Don Cole.

Shelly Nieman was presented the Administrative Support Staff of the Year award. Mike Giefer received the Mike Roberts Goodwill Award. The award is named for retired East Pierce Lieutenant Mike Roberts. It is presented to the firefighter who has done the most to embody selfless service. Giefer, who is well known for organizing Sumner's Easter Egg Hunt and participating in numerous community events, was also the 2008 recipient of the award. Volunteer firefighter Captain Bob McDonald was acknowledged for responding to more alarms than any other volunteer. Last year, McDonald answered more than 250 emergency calls. This year, the Chief's Company award was renamed in honor of East Pierce Fire Chief Dan Packer. Packer died on July 26, 2008 in a California wildfire. His widow Marylee Packer presented the awards to the 2009 Chief Dan Packer Company. They include Lieutenant Justin Doyle, Firefighter-paramedic Joe Worley, Firefighter-paramedic Kevin Stabenfeldt and Volunteer Firefighters Sean Slattery and Bill Dedge.

# Calling 9-1-1: Who answers?

**W**e are often asked, "What happens when I call 9-1-1?" It's a great question. East Pierce Fire is a member of a regional dispatch system that handles all 9-1-1 calls for police, fire and medical aid throughout Pierce County. Here's how it works. When you call 9-1-1 from a land line at your home or business, it's answered by an operator at a central public safety answering point. For many in Pierce County that's the Law Enforcement Support Agency (LESA), located in Tacoma.



When you call 9-1-1, don't hang up. Dispatchers at the Fire Communications Center (Fire Comm) in Lakewood can provide CPR or medical aid instructions over the phone before the firefighters arrive.

When you call, the operator will ask if you require police, fire or medical assistance. Fire or medical emergency calls in our jurisdiction are routed to a dispatch center in Lakewood that handles calls for most of the fire departments in Pierce County. "It sounds like a lot of layers, but it all happens almost simultaneously," said Lakewood Fire Department Assistant Chief Jim Sharp, who heads the Lakewood Fire Communications Center (Fire Comm). When a call comes in, the name of the homeowner or business name, phone number and address appears on the computer screen in front of the operator. You will be asked to verify this information. Then you will be asked a series of questions to determine the nature of your emergency. Sometimes callers think the firefighters haven't been dispatched yet because the operator is still asking questions. That's not the case. Within seconds of getting information from you, they have alerted the

dispatcher who is in contact with the appropriate fire stations. "The emergency responders are often already out of their stations by the time the 9-1-1 call has ended," Sharp said. When you call 9-1-1, it's important to stay on the line and remain as calm as possible. The operator can help until the firefighters arrive, providing CPR or medical instructions. They can even get a translator on the line, if the caller doesn't speak English. Calls made from cell phones are routed a little bit differently, but eventually end up at Fire Comm. Because cell phones are

mobile, the computer can only locate your latitude and longitude. It's important for you to let the operator know exactly where you are so the firefighters can find you. Fire Comm does not currently have the capability to receive text messages. "That's going to be the next generation of 9-1-1," Sharp said. "The technology is just not available from all the cell phone carriers." Once you dial 9-1-1, stay on the line. Sometimes it may take several minutes before your 9-1-1 call is answered. That just means the operators are very busy. Emergency calls are answered in the order they are received. If you

hang up, you go to the back of the line. In addition, the operators at LESA call back every hang up. If you don't answer, a police officer will be sent to make sure everything is okay. Only use 9-1-1 when it's an emergency and a prompt response is needed. You can help keep lines open for true emergencies by calling our business number instead of 9-1-1 for non-emergencies. The East Pierce Fire and Rescue non-emergency number is 253-863-1800. If no one answers after 5 p.m., it's because the crews are out of the station. It's best to call during regular business hours.

## Take care to keep kids safe

The sun is out and so are the children. That means taking extra precautions to keep the wee ones safe. One way to avoid a tragedy is to never leave a child in a car unattended. According to KidsAndCars.org, one child dies every 10 days in this country due to heat stroke from being left in a motor vehicle on a hot day. In most cases, the adults report they were reluctant to disturb a sleeping child and failed to realize how hot the vehicle would become.

"Never leave children alone in or around cars. It can take minutes for a car to heat to fatal temperatures," said East Pierce Public Education Specialist Dina Sutherland. "If you see a child alone in a vehicle, call 9-1-1 immediately."

Unfortunately, some children are left unintentionally. Most of the time a change in routine, a move or other distraction led to adults forgetting a child in a vehicle.

As part of their "Look Before You Lock" campaign, KidsAndCars.org recommends putting something you'll need like your cell phone, handbag or brief case on the floor of the back seat to help remember there is a child in the car seat.

Sutherland also suggests that you make sure all children are buckled in, even on a short trip. Statistics confirm that 40-50 percent of children who die in auto crashes were not in their seat belts or car seats.

Lastly, always look for children before backing up a vehicle or pulling into a driveway. For tips to help make sure the coast is clear, go to [KidsAndCars.org](http://KidsAndCars.org).

## Wildfires

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Violations of outdoor burning regulations are costly. Fines can exceed \$14,000 per day and typically start at \$2,000 plus reimbursement costs if the fire department responds. Residents may be held financially liable for damages caused by the fire.

"Wildfires can become very dangerous very quickly," Gibbons said. "This season is expected to be a busy one. Have fun, but don't take any unnecessary chances."

To learn more about how to protect your home this fire season, visit [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).

**Get Ready For Our Open House** Don't miss the fun! The annual East Pierce Fire & Rescue Open House will be Saturday, September 26, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the headquarter's station on the Old Buckley Highway in Bonney Lake.

# Scholarships awarded

The East Pierce Volunteer Firefighter's Association recently announced the winners of its annual Scholarships for Excellence. This year's winners are White River High School senior **Calli Stephens**; Bonney Lake High School senior **Sandra Meyer**; and Sumner High School senior **Katrina Marth**.

Three scholarships are conferred annually to a graduating senior at each of the high schools within the East Pierce Fire District. Eligible students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and intend to enter the fields of firefighting, law enforcement, medicine or social work.

Stephens impressed the Scholarship Committee with her extraordinary dedication to community service. Last year, she founded a summer camp for special needs kids. Stephens plans to study psychology at the University of Washington, in Tacoma.

Meyer will attend Western Washington University to study nursing. Her goal is to become a registered nurse gaining knowl-

edge in the medical field in order to help her family.

Marth intends to start her college education at Pierce College, with the goal of eventually going on to obtain a master's degree in sociology. She plans to become a social worker working with foster children.

**Joshua McCoy** received a special scholarship that is awarded to an East Pierce career or volunteer member, their spouse or dependent. McCoy is the son of East Pierce Captain Tim McCoy.

A biology and pre-med major at Seattle Pacific University, McCoy is on his way to becoming a cranio-facial surgeon. McCoy spends his free time volunteering for the Union Gospel Mission tutoring young children. Last year, he traveled to Africa to build homes for Habitat for Humanity.

The East Pierce Volunteer Firefighter's Association is pleased to present these worthy students with much needed financial aid. Congratulations to each of them.

## Calendar of Events

### CPR and Basic First Aid Classes

July 18 or July 25	<b>Where:</b> East Pierce Fire & Rescue headquarters station
Aug. 15 or Aug. 29	18421 Old Buckley Highway
Sept. 12 or Sept. 19	Bonney Lake, WA
Oct. 17 or Oct. 24	<b>When:</b> CPR classes are from 8:30 a.m. until noon
Nov. 14 or Nov. 21	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 and South Prairie. The cost for nonresidents is \$20 for a CPR or First Aid class, or \$30 for both. Call 253-863-1800 during regular business hours to register!

### SafeSitter Classes

Safe Sitter® is a medically accurate program that teaches boys and girls ages 11 to 13 how to handle emergencies when caring for children. The three-day class teaches safe and nurturing childcare techniques, behavior management skills and appropriate responses to medical emergencies. Classes are held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. July 15, 16 and 17 and again on Aug. 5, 6 and 7, at Station 16, 10515 234th Ave. E., Bonney Lake. The cost is \$30 per student, due at registration. Call (253) 863-1800 to register. The class is limited to 25 students, so register early!

### Fire Commissioner's Meeting

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.

## 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 and Sumner 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.

## Check out our new Web site



Stop by and see our new, improved Web site at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).

The new site was developed to provide current, timely information to citizens about upcoming classes, news and fire prevention and safety tips.

"We were looking for a more functional Web site

for someone seeking information about East Pierce Fire & Rescue," East Pierce Assistant Chief Dave Wakefield said.

The new site provides the ability to search for information about the various classes the department offers. A calendar feature highlights events, such as the Summer Splash-Tacular and annual Open House.

"I would like to recognize the hard work of the Web Development Team," Wakefield said. "They have created a site that is user-friendly, intuitive to use and will become a reliable resource for all residents living in the area served by East Pierce Fire & Rescue."

The Web Development Team, led by Wakefield, includes Mike Blaylock, Yvonne Hahn, Tanya Lynch, Teresa McCallion and Dina Sutherland.

## 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.

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).

## Staffed Fire Stations

### East Pierce Fire & Rescue

- 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



### 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."