



FIRE HOUSE

news

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF BONNEY LAKE, SUMNER, LAKE TAPPS, TEHALEH, EDGEWOOD, MILTON, SOUTH PRAIRIE,
THE RIDGE COMMUNITIES AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

WINTER 2016

SURVEY SAYS...

East Pierce Fire & Rescue announced the results of the department's annual EMS Customer Satisfaction Survey. More than 9 out of 10 emergency medical service (EMS) patients who responded applauded the department for outstanding service overall and within seven key areas.

Each year, ten percent of all EMS patients seen by East Pierce firefighters are randomly selected and mailed a seven-question, written survey.

For 2015, 44% of our patients returned their surveys, which is a return rate two-to-three times higher than typical of written customer satisfaction surveys.

Of those who responded, 95% rated their overall satisfaction with our response to their incident as "excellent". Less than 1% (2 out of 253 responses) rated our service as "below average" or "poor." For the all the other questions in the survey, 95-89% were in the "excellent" category. "These ratings are slightly higher than in past years," says EMS Chief Russ McCallion.

We asked the patients their feelings about whether the firefighters:

- were polite and courteous,
- provided professional care,
- responded promptly,
- were knowledgeable and competent, and
- took time to explain their actions.

The cost of conducting the EMS survey is approximately \$1,200 to \$1,500 annually. McCallion says that most of the costs involve stationary and mailing charges. The survey also requires 60-80 hours of administrative support time, along with additional staff time to analyze and review results.

The department discarded the idea of using a phone sur-

See SURVEY SAYS, page 2

East Pierce Firefighters to Join Santa on his Annual Visit

Santa and his firefighter friends are coming to your neighborhood! The East Pierce firefighters will cruise a few blocks ahead of Santa's sleigh to let you know that jolly St. Nick is here. Watch for the lights of the emergency vehicles and listen for the sirens and Christmas music.

The East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520 and the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Volunteer Firefighters' Association sponsor Santa's annual visit. The firefighters will also be collecting donations for local food banks.

Look for Santa in your neighborhood on these dates:

MILTON

Saturday | December 3
2:00p.m. - 5:40p.m.

BONNEY LAKE

Sunday | December 4
9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.

SUMNER

Saturday | December 10
9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.

PRAIRIE RIDGE / RURAL BUCKLEY

Sunday | December 11
PR. 9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.
B. 1:30p.m. - 5:30p.m.



Don't miss Santa and the firefighters in your neighborhood. Check out our website for exact routes, www.eastpiercefirer.org.

DRIFTWOOD POINT

Wednesday | December 14
6:00p.m. - 8:00p.m.

EDGEWOOD

Saturday | December 17
9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.

SOUTH PRAIRIE

Friday | December 16
6:00p.m. - 9:00p.m.

NORTH END OF LAKE TAPPS

Sunday | December 18
9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.

It's the Most Wonderful (and Riskiest for a Fire) Time of the Year!

Pacific Northwest winters often go hand-in-hand with cozy fires and holiday cooking, but the season also accounts for the highest occurrence of residential fires.

The threat of winter fires is real. During the winter months, particularly January, February and March, fires claim the lives of more than 900 people across the United States each year and cost \$2 billion in property loss.

Cooking is leading cause of home fires. They typically occur most frequently during the dinner hours between 5 and 8 p.m. To help make sure you don't have to invite your East Pierce firefighters over for dinner, here's a recipe for fire-safe cooking:

- Keep an eye on what you fry.
- Stand by your pan.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Wear short sleeves or roll sleeves up.
- Keep a pan lid or cookie sheet nearby to cover the pan if it catches on fire.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy somewhere in the kitchen. (Just not over the stove!)

Home heating is the second leading cause of house fires and yields an average of 45,200 fires in the nation each year. Home heating



equipment is involved in one in every six reported home fires, and one in every five home fire deaths.

Fires involving chimneys, flues or fuel burners account for 84% of home heating fires. Twenty-nine percent of home heating fires happen because the heat source (like a space heater or fireplace) is too close to things that can burn.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue suggests the tips below to help prevent a fire tragedy in your home.

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from any heat source – like fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators or space heaters,
- Have a qualified professional

clean and inspect your chimney and vents every year,

- Store cooled ashes in a tightly covered metal container, and keep it outside at least 10 feet from your home and nearby buildings, and
- Plug only one, heat-producing appliance (such as a space heater) into an electrical outlet at a time.

Visit www.eastpiercefirer.org for more home fire safety tips. ■

Check your smoke alarms!
They could save your life.
If you need assistance,
call us at 253-862-0607.

Postal Customer
ECR/WS



FROM THE CHIEF **BUD
BACKER**

about this after the first of the year.

The rising call volume in emergency medical incidents is stretching our resources to the breaking point. Several times a week, we are in situations where all of our medic units are committed to incidents and the calls just keep coming. Imagine if you live in Milton and the nearest medic unit is coming from Orting? That happens! While one of our fire engines may arrive within 5 or 10 minutes, the medic unit has a long way to travel before it can arrive to begin treating you

response times as well.

We are looking into different ways to address this need. Clearly, the growth in call volume has outpaced our ability to respond to every need, every time. The addition of a fifth medic unit into our system, while expensive, is necessary sooner than later.

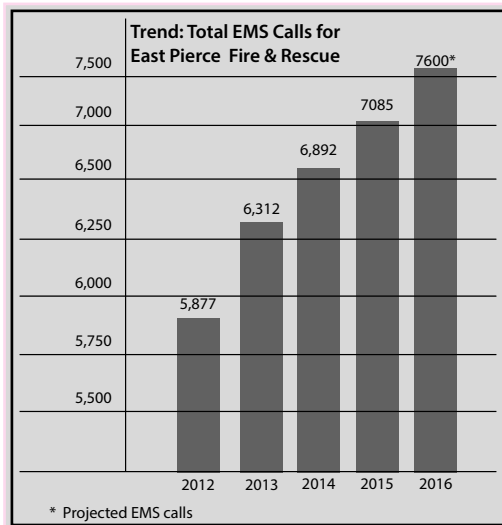
Addressing this need is complicated by the fact that our regular Fire Levy is now at the 1% growth limitation. This will reduce our collection rate for next year from the voter-approved \$1.50 per \$1,000 in assessed property value to \$1.39—a potential reduction of more than \$1.3 million in revenue. That's money that would have been used to help fund an additional medic unit.

I'm sure that you've heard by now of the tragedy that hit our department in October. Captain Tim McCoy's death is a terrible loss not only for us, but also for our community. He was a generous spirit, influential leader and passionate firefighter. He will be sorely missed. It's a good reminder for all of us of the fragility of life.

Please have a safe holiday season.

Thank you for your support.

East Pierce Fire Chief
Bud Backer



or your loved one.

Rising call volumes also impacts our neighboring fire departments. When they send us mutual aid medic units because we are all busy, their citizens face longer

Remembering East Pierce Fire Captain Tim McCoy

East Pierce Fire & Rescue lost a brother and a friend on October 22. Captain Tim McCoy died as the result of a dirt bike accident at his home. "Captain McCoy had been an integral member of this department for many years," says East Pierce Fire Chief Bud Backer. "His loss touches each and every one of us. He will be sorely missed."

The 59-year-old McCoy had joined the Bonney Lake Fire Department nearly 30 years ago. Bonney Lake Fire became a part of East Pierce Fire and Rescue in 2000. During those years, he rose through the ranks from firefighter to lieutenant then captain, often serving as acting battalion chief. He was planning to retire in June.

"I think he was cut out to be a firefighter because he was so calm and caring," says his wife of 30 years, Anna McCoy. "Tim was definitely passionate in everything he did. He didn't just want to be a firefighter—he wanted to be a great firefighter. He felt that it was such a privilege."

His family says that McCoy had been riding dirt bikes since he was a child. As an adult, he earned his professional motocross license and competed in a number of races. Most recently, he won the Desert 100 for the 50-plus class, one of the biggest desert races in the Northwest.

According to his family, his love of competition wasn't about winning or losing (although he liked



East Pierce Captain Tim McCoy

winning best.) The point was to spur others on to be better. "I think he tried to do that with his crew at the fire station," says his daughter Emily McCoy. Her broth-

er Joshua McCoy agrees. "There was something in him that made him want to excel at everything," he says.

In 2005, the family moved into the house McCoy helped build. Over the years, he filled the five-acre property surrounding their home with love and foster children. "They are a big part of our lives," Anna says.

McCoy served as an elder at Bonney Lake Community Church for more than 10 years. "His ultimate goal in life was to bring honor to God in everything he did. It was the source of his passion," says Joshua. After he retired, McCoy had planned to become a chaplain for the fire department.

Above all else, McCoy loved his family. He leaves behind his wife Anna (Koehler), their son and daughter-in-law Joshua and Charis, daughters Emily and Alise; his mother Frances Pickering; brothers Steve and Kevin McCoy and sister Diane Stracener.

His children knew they were special to their father. "He was such a dare devil, but such a gentle protector for us," says daughter Alise McCoy. However, they also knew something else. "Mom came first," admits Emily. When he was away from her working his 24-hour shifts at the fire station, he would listen to a recording of Anna's heartbeat before he went to bed.

"He was really looking forward to being with her [after he retired]," she says. ■

SURVEY SAYS, cont. from pg 1

vey since many experts believe that customers, particularly seniors, are reluctant to be critical while engaged in a phone survey. "More honest and critical answers are obtained in "anonymous" written surveys," he notes.

The information the department receives from the customer survey is an important component of our quality improvement program. "Survey question answers provide valuable insight for the department regarding the patient's perspective of the effectiveness and value of our EMS program and their overall satisfaction with East Pierce," McCallion says.

What's more, satisfaction surveys give patients, and other customers, a chance to comment on what is actually important to them versus what we think is important to the customer or patient.

“Interestingly, we are unaware of other fire districts in Pierce County conducting similar randomized, written customer satisfaction surveys,” he says.

On-going surveys of customers can provide “trend data” serving as an “early warning system” for changes in satisfaction. Additionally, if the department implements changes designed to increase customer satisfaction rates—such as improving patient pain management—trend data can quickly tell us whether the changes are working or not.

“Based upon a 94% “excellent” rating for overall satisfaction with East Pierce Fire & Rescue, we believe that district residents appreciate the service provided to them by the department,” McCallion says.

For additional information or details about the survey, go to our website at www.eastpiercefire.org. ■

WE'RE ALL EQUIPPED WITH LIFE SAVING DEVICES



HANDS-ONLY CPR

**REGISTER FOR OUR FREE,
ONE HOUR CPR CLASS.**

**Visit www.eastpiercefirer.org
for more information.**

HEALTH WATCH: Preventing Falls Can Save Lives

Did you know that falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans? In our state, falls are the number one cause of injury and death. Not traffic accidents. Not guns or knives. Falls. It's the silent epidemic.

With winter approaching, it's time to start thinking about keeping walkways well lit and taking extra precautions in icy conditions.

But the fact is, most falls happen in the home. Actual numbers are not available since many people don't report a fall, but according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one-fourth of Americans aged 65 and older fall each year, making falls the leading cause of injury-related hospital admissions and the leading cause for trauma center activations. Falls are also the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries.

Last year, East Pierce firefighters responded to more than 350 patient falls—or almost 5% of our emergency medical calls!

Falls threaten seniors' safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal costs. "In our area, we probably average 10-12 deaths from complications due to falls every year. More than 200 residents are hospitalized annually from falls," says Battalion Chief Jeff Moore, Medical Services Officer for East Pierce Fire.

Most patient's experience "ground-level" falls. They trip or get dizzy and hit their head. Seniors who take blood thinners, like heparin, warfarin (also called Coumadin) or Xarelto; or who have medical conditions, such as osteoporosis, are more vulnerable when they fall.

Falls can cause moderate to severe injuries—such as hip fractures and head injuries—and can increase the risk of early death. Be sure to tell your doctor if you fall, even if you don't get hurt. A person who falls once, is likely to fall again.

A major risk of falling is hip fractures. One fourth of patients who break a hip end up living the rest of their lives in a nursing home or assisted living facility. Up to one fourth of these patients will die within six months.

For half of all fall patients, this will be a life-changing event. Take steps to improve your safety or the safety of someone you love. In the end, we all need to work together. None of us is getting any younger! ■

PREVENTING FALLS

Research has identified a number of risk factors that contribute to falling. Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling. Many risk factors can be changed or modified to help prevent falls, such as:

- Ask your doctor or healthcare provider to review your medicines to see if any might make you dizzy or sleepy. This should include prescription medicines and over-the counter medicines—including nighttime sleep aids.
- Do strength and balance exercises. The Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) is a strength, balance and fitness program for adults 65 and older. Classes are offered at the Sumner Senior Center, Heritage House in Buckley and at the Orting Public Library.
- Ask your doctor or healthcare provider about taking vitamin D supplements.
- Get rid of things you could trip over, such as throw rugs or clutter.
- Older persons living alone should consider personal safety alarms in case they fall and are injured and can't get to a phone.
- Add grab bars inside and outside your tub or shower and next to the toilet.
- Have your eyes checked annually.
- Call East Pierce Fire & Rescue for assistance with fall prevention.

BEAT THE FLU- GET A SHOT

The best way to prevent the flu is to get the flu vaccination. Vaccinations keep you healthy and avoid spreading it to others. Flu viruses typically circulate widely in the United States from the late fall through early spring. Vaccination to prevent the flu (also called influenza) is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza.

The flu is a contagious, respiratory disease caused by different flu viruses infecting the nose, throat and lungs. Typical flu symptoms include:

- sore throat
- headache
- fever
- congestion
- muscle aches
- cough

Vomiting and diarrhea are not typical symptoms. Although most people who become infected will recover, it can cause serious illness and death, particularly among older adults, very young children, pregnant women and those with chronic medical conditions. Flu can also lead to pneumonia and blood infections, and cause diarrhea and seizures in children. If you have a medical condition, such as heart or lung disease, the flu can make it worse.

There is no live flu virus in flu shots. They cannot cause the flu. Just remember, it takes about two weeks for protection to develop after vaccination, but protection lasts through the flu season.

Flu vaccines are offered in many locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, pharmacies and college health centers, as well as by many employers, and even in some schools.

Do yourself—and those you love—a big favor and get vaccinated. ■

WHEN TO CALL 9-1-1 FOR THE FLU

For most people, the flu is not an emergency. For others it can be life threatening. People in high-risk groups—children under five, pregnant women and people under 65 who have a chronic medical condition—should call 9-1-1 right away if they have these symptoms.

- Trouble breathing or feel very short of breath.
- Severe headache or stiff neck, confusion or trouble staying awake.
- Chest pains.
- Signs of dehydration (very dry mouth or no urine in more than eight hours.)
- A baby younger than three months old who has a high fever or a fever that lasts more than five days.

Did you Stop By Our Open House?

The threat of blustery weather didn't keep approximately 3,000 people from coming down to the East Pierce headquarters fire station in Bonney Lake for a good time, Saturday, October 1.

The 2016 Open House by the Numbers:

- More than 30 flu shots were administered
- 88 bike helmets were sold and fitted
- 5 multi-sport helmets were sold and fitted
- 15 life jackets were sold and fitted
- 60 photo ID were cards sold
- We started with 672 ice cream cones and ran out. Fortunately, the firefighters were able to keep serving ice cream in bowls!



Who is East Pierce Fire & Rescue?

East Pierce Fire & Rescue was founded on a strong commitment to customer service. The department’s *Mission, Vision and Values* guide the actions of the department and its employees. Exceptional customer service and a concern for the employees and their families have become hallmarks of our culture.

EPF&R 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 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.

On February 9, 2010, Edgewood residents voted in favor of merging with East Pierce.

In 2013, Milton residents became part of the fire district when they voted to annex into East Pierce.

Today, East Pierce serves a population of approximately 90,000 residents living in and around Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, the Ridge Communities, South Prairie, Tehaleh, Edgewood and Milton. The district covers approximately 152 square miles and protects residents from 10 stations – six staffed and three volunteer, and one facility on Lake Tapps for the marine rescue 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 govern the agency. ■

Commisioners

Dale Mitchell, Chair
Mike Cathey
Edward Egan
Kevin Garling
Pat McElligott
Jon Napier
Victor Proulx

Staffed Stations

Station 111	(Headquarters Station) 18421 Veterans Memorial Drive East Bonney Lake, 98391 253.863.1800 www.eastpiercefire.org
Station 112	12006 - 214th Ave. E., Bonney Lake
Station 113	800 Harrison Street, Sumner
Station 114	3206 W. Tapps Drive E., Bonney Lake
Station 116	10515 - 234th Ave. E., Foothills
Station 118	10105 24th Street East, Edgewood

Join Firefighters and Santa for Breakfast

Grab your holiday appetite and join the East Pierce Fire & Rescue firefighters for the 21st Annual Sumner Pancake Feed from 7 a.m. to noon, Saturday, December 3 at the Sumner fire station, located at 800 Harrison Street.

The annual event, sponsored by the East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520, features firefighters, fire commissioners and local dignitaries flipping flapjacks and serving ham, coffee and orange juice. Music will be provided by the Victor Falls Elementary School choir.

The cost is a \$3 per person donation. Tickets can be purchased at the door. A silent auction, featuring items donated by local businesses, will be available during the event. We even hear that Santa will make an appearance!

Last year, the firefighters raised more than \$4,000 dollars through donations, ticket sales and the silent auction.

The money raised benefits several charitable organizations, such as the Sumner Family Center, a local program that provides support and services to families living within the Sumner School District, including Bonney Lake, South Prairie and the city of Sumner. Last year, the firefighters were able to purchase gifts for more than 600 needy children identified by the Sumner Family Center.

The firefighters will also be collecting nonperishable food items for distribution to local food banks.

Come have breakfast with the firefighters and support a great cause. ■



Come to our house for breakfast from 7 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Dec. 3 at the Sumner fire station located at 800 Harrison Street.

UPCOMING EVENTS Join Us for Local Tree Lighting Ceremonies

Bonney Lake Tree Lighting and Food Drive

The annual Bonney Lake Tree Lighting, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Bonney Lake, will be held beginning at 6 p.m. Saturday, December 3 at the East Pierce Fire and Rescue headquarters station, at 18421 Veteran’s Memorial Drive East.

The festivities include cookies and hot apple cider provided by the Kiwanis. The Bonney Lake Elementary School choir will perform holiday music. Don’t miss the gingerbread competition!

Join the Bonney Lake High School choir for a few songs around the tree before Bonney Lake Mayor Neil Johnson lights the tree to signal the official start of the holiday season. Then it’s back inside for more music and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus aboard a fire engine. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be available for photos (so don’t forget your camera!)

Food donations will be accepted all day from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Bonney Lake Food Bank (next door to the fire station) and during the event.

annual Edgewood Tree Lighting starting at 6 p.m. Friday, November 25 at the City Hall/ Civic Center, located at 2224 104th Avenue East. Santa will be there, escorted by the firefighters and the motorcycle group Old Coots on Scoots. At 6 p.m., the mayor and Santa will light the tree to officially start the celebrations.

Enjoy refreshments and holiday treats while listening to a performance by the Edgemont Junior High School band and the Edgewood Community Chorus. Non-perishable foods and new toys will be collected.

For more information, contact city hall at 253-952-3299.

Milton Tree Lighting

Kick off the holiday season with your neighbors from 3 to 8 p.m., Saturday, December 3 at the Milton Activity Center, 1000 Laurel Street. There will be holiday crafts for kids, music, food and beverages, plus a visit with Santa Clause and, of course, the lighting of the Christmas Tree!

For more information, visit the Events page at www.cityofmilton.net.■

Connect with Us



Did you know that you can connect with East Pierce Fire & Rescue through popular social media resources? Find valuable information and keep up with us through Facebook and Twitter.

We share emergency information, stories, photos and videos of emergency operations and safety messages. “The goal of our social media sites is to communicate with the community, not only during emergencies, but also to share safety tips and fire department-related news,” says East Pierce Fire Chief Bud Backer. “It’s a more personal opportunity for citizens to interact with us.”

You can also visit the district’s website. It provides a rich source of news, safety information and other resources. Visit us at www.eastpiercefire.org.

East Pierce Classes & Public Education

FREE!

TO EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE CITIZENS

LIFE JACKET LOANER PROGRAM
Wearer must be present for fitting | Headquarters Station
18421 Veterans Memorial Drive East, Bonney Lake

CHILD SAFETY SEAT INSPECTIONS
District residents can call 253.863.1800 for appointment. Our certified child passenger safety technicians will check to make sure your child is in the right seat, your seat is installed correctly and your child is placed in the seat correctly.

STATION TOURS Call to arrange a tour of any of our fire stations.

SMOKE ALARM INSTALLATIONS Includes smoke alarm with 10-year battery. Call 253.863.1800 for appointment.

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS Stop by any station during regular business hours. (Subject to staff availability)

FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING Learn how to use a fire extinguisher in case of a residential or commercial emergency. Call 253.863.1800 to schedule.

HANDS-ONLY CPR CLASS
Free non-certification class for adult CPR, from 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. (1 hour) January 24 or March 27

SERVICES OFFERED

CPR 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | BASIC FIRST AID 1:00–4:30 p.m.
East Pierce Fire & Rescue Headquarters Station
18421 Veterans Memorial Dr. E., Bonney Lake
2016: December 9
2017: Jan. 21 | Feb. 16 | Mar. 18 or 29 | Apr. 19 or 29

The cost for citizens residing within the jurisdiction of East Pierce Fire & Rescue, including Sumner, Bonney Lake, Lake Tapps, South Prairie, Milton and Edgewood, is \$20 for either a CPR or First Aid class, or \$40 for both. The cost for non-residents is \$35 for each class, or \$70 for both.

To register, call 253-863-1800 during regular business hours or register online at www.eastpiercefire.org.

HELMET SALES AND FITTING* Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Bike helmets sold for \$7 each. Multisport helmets sold for \$10 each.

LIFE JACKET SALES AND FITTING* Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life jackets are sold for \$14 each. Exact change is appreciated.
*Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520

Where Compassion and Action Meet