



SUMMER 2022



JON PARKINSON

During an awards ceremony on Saturday, May 7th, East Pierce Fire & Rescue celebrated the many accomplishments of our employees and their impacts on the community. Due to the COVID pandemic, it has

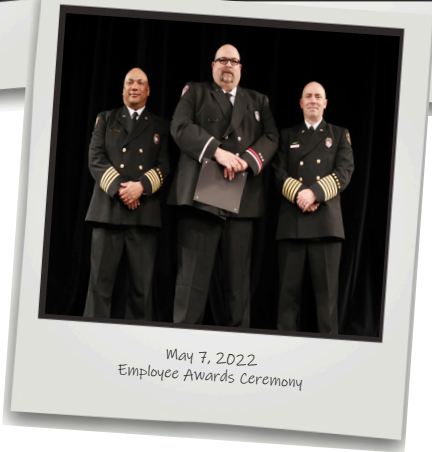
## FROM THE CHIEF

been difficult to properly recognize the achievements of our firefighters and support staff over the last couple of years. It is exciting to celebrate the successes of our personnel once again.

The event recognized several employees who have retired over the last two years, promotions of lieutenants, captains, battalion chiefs, and assistant chiefs, as well as the promotions of several support staff personnel.

Annual awards were presented for several employee

achievements, and a number of commendations were issued to select employees for their actions on 2020's Sumner Grade Fire and Highway 167 Fire, and for actions during the COVID-19 pandemic. ■



## Safe Sitter Classes Resume in August!



The Safe Sitter classes help equip students with life-long skills and create future generations of safety-conscious adults and parents.

For years, adolescent babysitters have been “stepping in” for parents who are “stepping out.” While many of these young people bring a desire to care for children, few are prepared for the magnitude of responsibilities they assume. East Pierce Fire teaches the Safe Sitter curriculum to help equip students with life-long skills and create future generations of safety-conscious adults and parents.

Safe Sitter is a medically-accurate program that teaches boys and girls in grades 6-8 how to handle emergencies when caring for children. The three-day class includes safe and nurturing childcare techniques, behavior management skills, and appropriate responses to medical emergencies. In addition to fire and injury prevention, it also teaches business skills for running a babysitting business. ■

### 2022 Safe Sitter Class Schedule

August 9, 10 and 11 8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. Location: Station 116 10515 234th Ave E, Buckley	- OR -	August 23, 24 and 25 8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. Location: Headquarters Station 18421 Veterans Memorial Dr E, Bonney Lake
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**Safe Sitter Course Covers**

- ★ Safety Skills
- ★ First Aid & Rescue Skills
- ★ Life & Business Skills
- ★ Child Care Skills

The cost is \$40 per student due at registration. For more information and to register, visit [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org). Classes fill quickly so register early!

## HAAS ALERT SYSTEM: Preventing Collisions with Digital Alerts

Traveling to and from the scene of an emergency call is more dangerous for emergency responders than ever before. In a world where drivers are dealing with multiple distractions, and sirens and lights can go unseen and unheard, East Pierce Fire and Rescue is looking for ways to improve firefighter and public safety while our apparatus is on the road responding to emergencies. That's where Safety Cloud's HAAS Alert System comes in.

HAAS Alert System is a cloud-based collision avoidance technology that sends real-time alerts to a motorist's mobile or navigation device in the vicinity of an emergency vehicle



that is en-route or positioned at the scene. Using the HAAS Alert, motorists on the road will be alerted to the incoming presence of an emergency response vehicle. Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, and Alfa Romeo, equipped with Uconnect, are the first automobiles capable of receiving these safety alerts directly on the vehicle's infotainment screen. HAAS Alert expects additional connected vehicles to receive these alerts later this year.

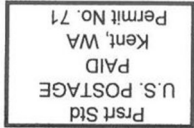
“East Pierce Fire & Rescue is evaluating the HAAS Alert System for one-year on our fleet of nine fire engines and a ladder truck,” said Assistant Chief Jeff Moore. “We hope the implementation of this new

technology will enhance situational awareness for all motorists on the road and help keep both firefighters and civilians safer by avoiding collisions.”

In addition, drivers using Waze and Apple Maps will also receive alerts through Safety Cloud's integration with those platforms. ■



When responders activate apparatus emergency lights, approaching drivers receive real-time digital alerts to slow down and move over. These are delivered via apps, navigation systems, or mobile devices to drivers up to 30 seconds in advance and reduce the risk of collision by up to 90%.



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## BOND UPDATE: Steady Progress

In November 2018, voters approved a bond to replace all six front-line fire engines, a ladder truck, replace four fire stations, and build a new fire station in Tehaleh. All apparatus have now been received and placed into service throughout the fire district.

The fire station construction projects slowed due to COVID impacts but are once again moving along. Below is a status update of these projects.

### FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION STATUS

- Station 118/Edgewood: Under construction with estimated completion in late fall 2022.
- Station 111/Bonney Lake: Construction to begin late summer 2022.
- Station 114/Lake Tapps: Construction to begin early fall 2022.
- Station 117/Tehaleh: Construction to begin late fall 2022.

- Station 112/Prairie Ridge: Construction to begin spring 2023.

Thank you for providing us with the equipment and facilities to serve you better! ■



Architectural rendering of the new Station 118.



Architectural rendering of the new Headquarters Station 111.

## Meet the NEW Marine 122

Have you seen firefighters training recently with EPFRs new rescue boat on Lake Tapps? Crews will continue to rotate through training the rest of this month and hope to have the new boat serving our communities by mid-July.

The new rescue boat will replace our nearly 30-year-old pontoon-style boat that has served well but is overdue for surplus.

The old Marine 122 was built and designed from a recreational shell that is now failing with dry rotted wood decking, an outdated motor, an insufficient fire pump, and old technology and electronics.

The new Munson boat is all aluminum and has superior response and maneuvering capabilities and increased water supply abilities for places around Lake Tapps with limited fire hydrants.

Give us a wave if you see us on the lake! ■

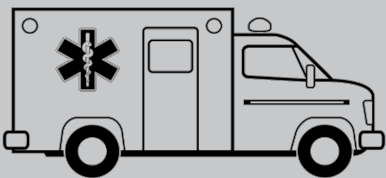


EPFRs new Marine 122 replaces a nearly 30-year-old pontoon-style boat. The new rescue boat is anticipated to be in-service mid-July



HEALTH WATCH

Answering Your Questions About Ambulance Fees



**Q:** Why did we receive a bill for ambulance service? I thought East Pierce Fire and Rescue residents receive free ambulance service from the fire district?

**A:** East Pierce ambulance service is not actually free. However, if you are an East Pierce resident, who is transported by an East Pierce medic unit (ambulance), you should have no “out-of-pocket” expenses. We bill your insurance company, Medicare or Medicaid for the cost of the ambulance ride. Any additional costs, such as co-pays that you would normally need to pay will be “written off” against the funds received through our EMS Levy. Some residents will receive a copy of the ambulance billing statement, indicating the cost of the service provided, and stating that this is NOT a bill which requires payment. Instead, this statement is provided to you along with a request that you provide additional information so we can bill your health insurance provider(s).

**Q:** What happens for people who have no insurance or those who live outside the fire district?

**A:** If you’re a district resident and don’t have health insurance, your entire bill is covered by the EMS levy. Non-residents, who happen to be in the district when they are transported by medic unit to the hospital, are responsible for

co-pays or any portion of the ambulance bill not covered by their insurance.

**Q:** Does East Pierce Fire and Rescue attempt to bill our insurance companies?

**A:** Yes. EPFR will bill your insurance company, Medicare and Medicaid providers to recover payments for ambulance transport. To be included in the “no out-of-pocket” cost EMS transport program, residents must complete and return any required paperwork sent to you by our billing service, Systems Design, or any paperwork sent to you by your own insurance provider. Correct, updated information is crucial for our ability to successfully bill insurance providers.

If district residents don’t comply with requests for information, they could end up being liable for the entire amount of the ambulance transport fee, and even end up being turned over to a collection agency.

**Q:** What happens to the revenues collected from medic unit patient transport fees?

**A:** More than \$2.8 million in ambulance transport fees are collected each year from health insurance companies, Medicare and Med-

icaid. These funds help cover a portion of the cost of providing EMS response and ambulance transport services to the community.

**Q:** What happens if East Pierce doesn’t have any medic units available for a 9-1-1 medical call? Who comes, and do I have to pay the other ambulance provider?

**A:** East Pierce has four medic units available 24/7. We handle more than 98% of the EMS ambulance transports with our own medic units. Last year we transported more than 6,000 patients to area hospitals.

However, when all of our medic units are busy on other 9-1-1 medical or fire calls, we need to request “mutual aid” from neighboring fire departments and private ambulances. They send units in to back us up if we don’t have any available medic units.

We have reciprocal “mutual aid” transport agreements with most of our neighboring fire districts. If one of their medic units responds into our fire district and takes you to the emergency department, you receive the same “no out-of-pocket cost” ambulance service as if an East Pierce medic unit took you to the hospital. We reciprocate when we respond into their districts when they need mutual aid, as well.

**Q:** What happens if a private ambulance takes me to the hospital?

**A:** In addition to our “mutual aid” responses from other fire departments, private ambulances are used occasionally to transport district residents to the hospital. In this case, patients will receive a separate bill from the private ambulance company and are responsible for any portion not covered by insurance. There is no mechanism to use the EMS Levy fund to cover any of those costs. Additionally, private ambulances are frequently used by urgent care clinics and assisted living centers to transport patients to hospitals for follow-up medical care. In this case, payment for these calls, which are not part of the 911 system, would be the responsibility of the patient.

Does this agreement apply if I’m a district resident, but get hurt in some area outside the district, such as Puyallup or Spanaway?

The reciprocal “no out-of-pocket expense” mutual aid agreement only extends to 9-1-1 calls inside our own district. If you become ill or injured in a neighboring fire district, even if we have a mutual aid transport agreement, you will be responsible for the ambulance bill if they transport you to a hospital. There is no EMS levy “write-off” provision when you are outside the district and become ill or injured. . ■



# Bathroom Exhaust Fan Fire Hazards

Can bathroom exhaust fans cause fires? Yes, definitely! In the first few months of 2022, EPFR crews responded to two residential structure fires started by bathroom exhaust fans.

Exhaust fans are found in almost all residences and many commercial properties to help prevent steamed-up mirrors, damp walls, fogged windows, and removing odors. However, they can also present a potential fire hazard if not cleaned and maintained regularly.

Lint accumulation varies depending on the frequency of use and the amount of particulate in the air. “Fans can overheat when clogged by lint, dirt, and dust, when left on too long, or because of simple failure. The lint provides an easy-to-ignite fuel source, which can quickly spread to the attic,” says East Pierce Assistant Chief/

Fire Marshal Chuck King. “The buildup of lint and dust within the fan and on the motor can increase the potential for fire but can be easily removed to reduce the risk.”

These fans are not designed to last forever, and many were installed when the houses or businesses were first built. As the fans age, the bearings wear out and may seize. Older exhaust fans are not thermally protected. Thermal protection causes the motor to shut off should it seize and overheat. Although this safety feature has been available since the late 1970s, it was not widely used until the early 1990s.

East Pierce offers a few safety tips to reduce fire risk and keep your ventilation fans running smoothly.

- All bathroom exhaust fans should be inspected and

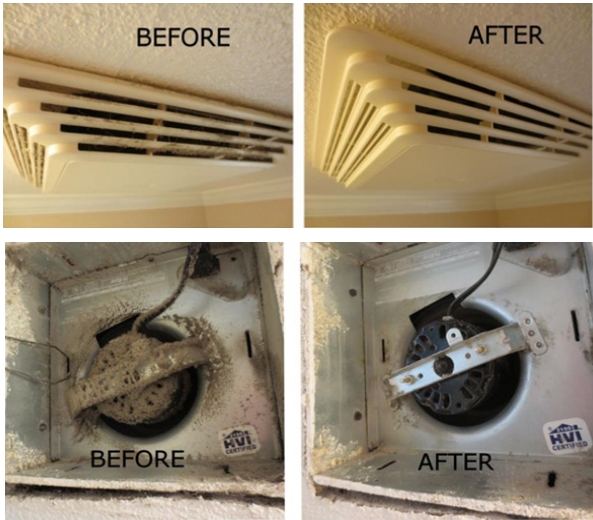
cleaned twice a year. If it starts to make noises or smells odd, it’s time to replace it. Pay careful attention to all air-flow areas.

- Fans that are old, appear to have heat damage, do not turn freely, or are not easily accessible to clean regularly should be replaced. New fans are thermally protected and will increase safety.
- Avoid prolonged use and turn it off before leaving home. Consider installing a timer switch instead of a manual switch to limit the unnecessary use of the fan.

Taking a few minutes a couple times a year to clean your exhaust fans and ensure they are running smoothly can help reduce fire risk and protect your families, homes, and businesses. ■

## Cleaning a Bathroom Exhaust Fan

1. Turn off the power to the fan at the breaker box.
2. Remove the fan cover.
3. Clean the fan cover on both sides with your vacuum’s brush attachment or wash thoroughly and let dry.
4. Reach your vacuum’s dusting attachment inside the space to clean the fan housing and motor. Use the crevice tool if areas are hard to reach.
5. Reinstall the fan cover onto the attachment clips and press it back into place against the ceiling.



# Gearing You Up for Summer Safety!

Whether cruising a bike trail or taking a dip in our area water bodies, we've got you covered! Bike helmets, multi-sport helmets, and life jackets are available for purchase at our Headquarters Station during regular business hours Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Cash and credit/debit cards are accepted.



Life Jackets  
\$14 each  
Sizes infant through adult.



Multi-Sport Helmets  
\$11 each  
Sizes small through large.



Bike Helmets  
\$8 each  
Sizes toddler through XL.

**Do you only need a life jacket for the day?** Short-term use life jacket loaners are available at the Headquarters Station. Loaner kiosks are also located at both Allan Yorke Park (7203 W Tapps Hwy E, Bonney Lake) and Lake Tapps North Park (2022 198th Ave E, Bonney Lake).

## 2022 Fire Commissioner Meetings

Board of Fire Commissioner meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Agendas and links to the webinars are posted on our website by the end of the week prior to the meeting.

June 21  
July 19  
August 16  
September 20  
October 18  
November 15  
December 20



# EMPLOYEE Spotlight



## MELISSA HANEY // BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

Welcome to Melissa who joined EPFR in April as our new Behavioral Health Specialist!

The mental health system can be complicated to navigate. Her extensive years of experience working closely with mental health systems and services in Pierce County enable her to help residents and their families connect to needed care.

Melissa’s experience includes working with individuals, families, and patients with complex health challenges and offering mental health expertise and care coordination. She can help individuals better understand mental health components, empowering them to positively impact their own mental health.

Melissa’s connections and in-depth knowledge of the various resources throughout the county will help fill the gap our residents often encounter when attempting to access care.



## WHO IS EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE?

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

EPFR was created when the City of Bonney Lake Fire Department, Pierce County Fire District 22/Lake Tapps Fire and Pierce County Fire District 24 merged in 2000 with the goal of providing a seamless response to emergency situations.

Since then, the following mergers or annexations into EPFR have occurred:

- 2006: Pierce County Fire District 12 and South Prairie/Fire District 20
- 2008: Sumner/Fire District 1
- 2010: Edgewood/Fire District 8
- 2013: Milton Fire Department

Today, East Pierce serves a population of approximately 100,508 residents living in and around Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, the Ridge Communities, South Prairie, Tehaleh, Edgewood and Milton. The district covers approximately 153 square miles and protects residents from 8 stations - six staffed and one 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 can respond to both medical emergencies and fires.

An independently-elected Board of Commissioners govern the agency.

## COMMISSIONERS

- Jon Napier, Chair
- Edward Egan, Vice Chair
- Mike Cathey
- Kevin Garling
- Randy Kroum
- Pat McElligott
- Cynthia Wernet

## STAFFED STATIONS

- Station 111 - Bonney Lake**  
Headquarters Station  
18421 Veterans Memorial Dr. E.  
(253) 863-1800
- Station 112 - Prairie Ridge**  
12006 214th Ave E.
- Station 113 - Sumner**  
800 Harrison St.
- Station 114 - Lake Tapps**  
3206 W. Tapps Dr. E.
- Station 116 - Foothills**  
10515 234th Ave. E.
- Station 124 - Milton**  
1000 Laurel St.

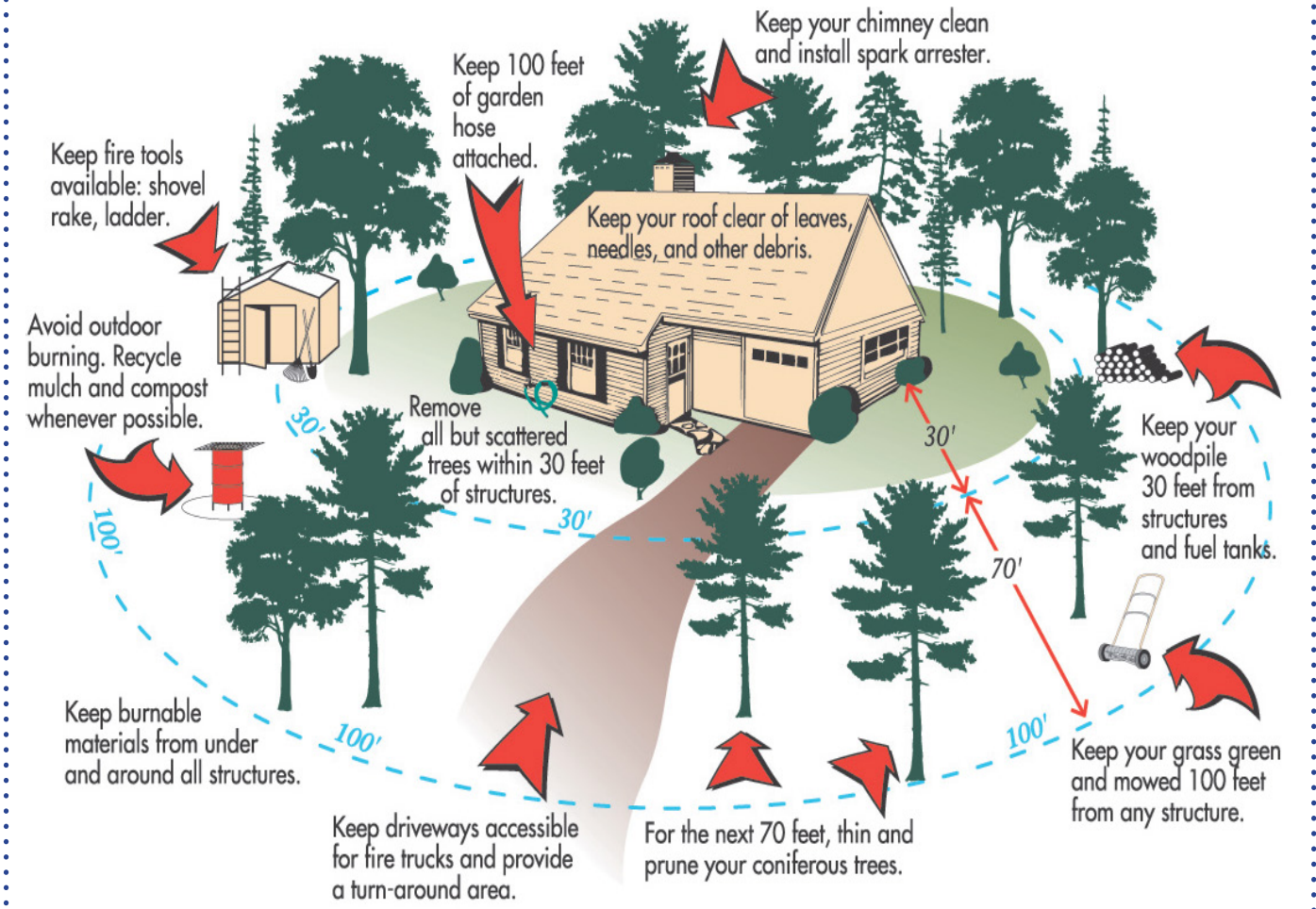
## VOLUNTEER STATION

- Station 119 - South Prairie**  
350 State Route 162

# ARE YOU PREPARED FOR WILDFIRE?

Every year, wildfires burn across the U.S., and more and more people live where wildfires are a real risk. But by working together, residents can make their property—and their neighborhood—much safer from wildfire.

You can make a difference! Increase your wildfire safety by making low-cost changes to your home and landscape today.



Visit [www.eastpiercefire.org](http://www.eastpiercefire.org) for more information on how to improve your home's wildfire survivability.

connect with us!

Facebook: @eastpiercefireandrescue  
Twitter: @EastPierceFire  
Web: [www.eastpiercefire.org](http://www.eastpiercefire.org)  
Headquarters: 253.863.1800  
Email: [info@eastpiercefire.org](mailto:info@eastpiercefire.org)

REMEMBER...

When passing emergency vehicles, Washington Law (RCW 46.61.212) requires drivers to move over to another lane if safely able to do so.

This law also applies to construction and maintenance vehicles in designated work zones where vehicles have warning lights flashing.

SLOW DOWN  
IT'S THE LAW  
MOVE OVER

Give us room to work safely so that our firefighters and law enforcement members can go home at the end of their shift.

## EastPierce Classes & Public Education

### - FREE SERVICES - To residents of East Pierce Fire & Rescue

- LIFE JACKET LOANER PROGRAM**  
Wearer must be present for fitting. Available at the Headquarters Station.
- CHILD SAFETY SEAT INSPECTIONS**  
District residents can schedule a free appointment. Certified child passenger safety technicians check to ensure your child is in the right seat, the seat is installed correctly, and your child is placed in the seat correctly.
- STATION TOURS** Station tours are suspended due to COVID precautions. Off-site visits are still available.
- SMOKE ALARM INSTALLATIONS** Includes smoke alarm equipped with 10-year battery (subject to availability).
- BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS** Stop by any staffed station (subject to staff availability).
- FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING** Learn how to use a fire extinguisher with our interactive, digital training prop either at your location or ours.
- HANDS-ONLY CPR CLASS** One-hour, non-certification class for adult, hands-only CPR. Groups of 10 or more can schedule this training at their location or at our Headquarters Station.

### - SERVICES OFFERED -

- CPR 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | BASIC FIRST AID 1:30–4:30 p.m.**  
Aug 13 or 17 | Sept 14 or 24 | Oct 15 or 26 | Nov 12 or 16
  - The cost for citizens residing within EPFR's jurisdiction (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. All classes held at the Headquarters Station.  
To register, call 253-863-1800 during regular business hours or register on-line at [www.eastpiercefire.org](http://www.eastpiercefire.org).
  - HELMET SALES AND FITTING\*** Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Bike helmets \$8 each. Multi-Sport helmets \$11 each. Headquarters Station.
  - LIFE JACKET SALES AND FITTING\*** Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life jackets \$14 each. Headquarters Station.
  - SAFE SITTER CLASSES** August 9-11 and August 23-25. Register at [www.eastpiercefire.org](http://www.eastpiercefire.org). Cost: \$40.
- \* Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520