

## **WINTER 2023**



## FROM THE CHIEF Jon Parkinson

ust like that, 2022 is gone, and 2023 is off and rolling. I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments of East Pierce Fire & Rescue over the last year; below is just a small snapshot of what we've been working on:

STANDARD OF COVER: In the spring of 2022, the district kicked off an evaluation of community risk and emergency unit deployment, known as a community risk assessment: standard of cover. Many employees and community stakeholders assisted us through the evaluation over a period

# Happy (Belated) New Year!

of nine months. Once completed, the Board of Fire Commissioners reviewed and accepted the assessment. They will use it as a guide for the district in future decisions regarding fire station location, additions of emergency personnel, and deployment of emergency units.

**BOND SALE:** In July, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the sale of the second half of the 2018 voter-approved bonds needed for fire station construction projects. We were able to capture low-interest rates, and in doing so, we lowered the repayment term from 20 years to 16 years, which resulted in taxpayers' savings of approximately 14 million dollars. The total bond rate is now .18 cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation versus .25 cents per thousand initially projected in 2018.

SAFER GRANT: In September, East Pierce Fire & Rescue was awarded a SAFER grant (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) from FEMA. This grant provides funding for 12 firefighters for three years with 100% federal funding that requires no local match. This group

of new firefighters began their fire academy training in February 2023.

BUDGET: In November 2022, the district adopted the 2023 operating budget. I am pleased to report the budget was limited to an increase of 2.10% over the 2022 budget, resulting in a \$17 per year increase to the average homeowner in the district.

#### **STAFFING IMPROVEMENTS:**

As part of the 2023 operating budget, the hiring of additional personnel was approved to staff Station 124 in Milton in the fall of 2023 and Station 117 in Tehaleh in 2024.

In 2023, East Pierce Fire & Rescue will have no shortage of accomplishments. As the year moves on, we will continue to share updates. You can always keep up to date by following us on social media via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as the district website at www.eastpiercefire. org.

On behalf of the district, I would like to thank you all for entrusting us with protecting the community. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated!

# **Firefighters Host Easter Events**

East Pierce firefighters are excited to once again sponsor three annual Easter Egg Hunts around the fire district on Saturday, April 8. All three events are free. Firefighters will also accept food and monetary donations for the area food banks.

#### SUMNER

The 31st Annual Sumner Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by East Pierce Firefighters Local 3520, will be held at Sunset Stadium, 1707 Main Street. Children ages 1-3 years will be allowed on the field at 9 a.m., followed by 4-7-year-olds at 10 a.m., then 8- 11-year-olds at 11 a.m.

#### **SOUTH PRAIRIE**

Join the East Pierce Volunteer Firefighters' Association for the 64th Annual South Prairie Easter Egg Hunt. The free event starts at 10 a.m. at the South Prairie City Park located at Third and Tacoma Streets.

#### **EDGEWOOD**

The annual Edgewood Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by Local 3520, starts at 10 a.m. at Edgemont Park, located adjacent to Edgemont Junior High School at 24th Street East and 110th Avenue East. Come early. Parking is limited.



# **EPFR to Launch PulsePoint Verified Responder** to Improve Survival of CPR Patients PulsePoint

ater this spring, East Pierce Fire & Rescue will launch an upgraded version of the PulsePoint application to alert off-duty firefighters, along with on and off-duty police officers, when a suspected cardiac arrest victim is nearby and requires CPR and treatment with an automated defibrillator (AED).

Pierce County residents can already sign-up for the free "citizen" version of the app - PulsePoint Respond - which will notify persons who have signed up for the program of a cardiac emergency with "CPR needed" within one-quarter mile of their location. Citizens only receive dispatch information to a public place, such as a park, restaurant, or gym, sign-up for the program, are notified

and never to private residences. The PulsePoint program, widely implemented throughout the United States and Canada, saves lives by getting citizens to the scene fast, even before 911 responders can arrive, to start CPR. Every minute delay in starting CPR drops a victim's chance of survival between 7-10%.

EPFR is working with partner law enforcement agencies to use the Pulse-Point Verified Responder program to allow off-duty firefighters, paramedics, and law enforcement officers to respond to calls when life-saving CPR is needed. Off-duty personnel, who voluntarily

of "CPR needed" calls in all locations, including private residences.

Allowing trained first responders to be dispatched, in a voluntary capacity, to private residences significantly increase the chances of a patient surviving a cardiac arrest since more than 80% of patients who need CPR collapse in private homes. In your neighborhood, these responders will often be able to get to a "CPR needed" call minutes before on-duty crews coming from a further away fire station can arrive.

An additional benefit of the PulsePoint

See **PULSEPOINT** page 4

Hop on by our Easter Egg Hunts, Saturday, April 8th, sponsored by East Pierce firefighters.

# **EPFR Receives Clean Audit Status from State**

Office of the Washington State Auditor Accountability Audit Report East Pierce Fire & Rescue For the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021

Permit No. 71 Kent, WA **DIA9** U.S. POSTAGE Prsrt Std

## Postal Customer **ECRWSS**

East Pierce Fire & Rescue goes through a required and in-depth financial and accountability audit each year conducted by WA State Auditor's Office.

Due to COVID precautions and low staff levels at the State Auditor's Office, the 2022 audit covered fiscal vears 2020 and 2021. We are pleased to report that EPFR met all the requirements outlined by the Board of Fire Commissioners and WA State RCWs, with no findings reported.

To view the EPFR official audit report, go to sao. wa.gov, scroll down to "Quick Search Audit Reports," and enter report number 1031931. Then click "search." The audit report should appear.

### 2022 Total Emergency Calls

Your EPFR firefighters responded to 12,653 calls last year, up 1.2% from 2021. For more statistics, please view the 2022 Annual Report at eastpiercefire.org.

CALL TYPE	Emergency Medical Calls	9,334	
	*Good Intent	1,185	
	Public Assist		
	False Alarm	637	
	Fire		
	Hazardous Materials		
	Other	13	
	Total Emergency Calls	12,653	
* No omorgonou found queb as steam mistoken for amake, urang address given			

\* No emergency found, such as steam mistaken for smoke, wrong address given, controlled burn, etc

"Where Compassion and Action Meet"

## WINTER 2023

# HEALTHEPFR DEPLOYS MEDICALWATCHSERVICES OFFICERS

Monday, February 6th, marked the first Medical Services Officers (MSO) deployment by East Pierce Fire & Rescue. One Medical Service Officer works on each of the department's three shifts.

MSOs respond to high-priority EMS calls to help provide clinical oversight and support for our fire/EMS providers.

Fire departments throughout the Pacific northwest commonly deploy EMS-focused clinical supervisors, usually called Medical Services Officers or MSOs.

These MSOs help support the increasingly sophisticated response by crews of firefighter EMTs and paramedics to 911 emergency medical services (EMS) incidents.

East Pierce's three new MSOs are all firefighter-paramedic certified officers with more than 60 years of combined fire and EMS experience. The three EPFR MSOs are:

- Captain/MSO Shawn Wagner
- Lieutenant/MSO Adam Lathrop
- Lieutenant/MSO Jeff Berry

In their role as Medical Services Officers, they will take on new tasks to improve the medical care we deliver to patients daily throughout the fire district.

The MSOs respond to critical medical 911 incidents, including cardiac arrest calls, shootings, mental health crisis calls, car crashes, and drownings. The MSOs can add themselves to other EMS calls to help mentor and support new firefighter-EMTs and paramedics; and respond to incidents when they are the closest paramedic unit to help treat and stabilize patients while waiting for a medic unit to transport the patient.



EPFRs new Medical Services Officers Capt. Shawn Wagner, Lt. Adam Lathrop, and Lt. Jeff Berry assumed their new roles on February 6.

The MSO vehicle, a fire department F-250 truck, carries a range of Advanced Life Support (ALS) equipment used by paramedics. The MSOs have specialized disaster and "Active Shooter" kits for response to multiple-casualty incidents, and an automated CPR device to improve fire-EMS provider safety while transporting patients with ongoing CPR to area hospitals. Soon, they will be deployed with diagnostic ultrasound units and refrigerated whole blood for treating trauma and medical patients needing immediate blood replacement to increase their survival odds.

In addition to medical equipment, the MSOs carry their turnout gear and firefighting and safety equipment since they respond to fire ground incidents, technical rescue calls, drownings, and other complex calls. The fire officer running an incident usually assigns the MSO to other roles, including Safety Officer, Rehab Officer, Medical Group, or supervising crews performing fire operations.

The MSOs provide training and mentoring to help our personnel in the field, focusing on training new probationary Firefighter/EMTs and Firefighter/Paramedics.

Although the MSOs provide training and mentoring to personnel in the field, they also deliver "station-based" EMS training for crews while they remain in service in their stations, such as required quarterly EMS training, like CPR and advanced airway classes. MSOs meet with crews to review clinical data and patient outcomes from critical incidents as part of a departmental quality improvement plan.

The Medical Service Officers completed more than 100 hours of additional training to help prepare for their new position. They work regular 24-hour shifts, like other fire/EMS crews. While the MSOs will be based out of the new Station 118 in Edgewood when it opens later this spring, they will respond to 911 calls throughout the district, anywhere from Milton to Lake Tapps and Sumner, and to incidents in areas outside South Prairie or Buckley.

To backfill the three full-time MSOs when they are off for vacation or sick days, a half dozen officers and acting officers will receive training to fill in as "acting" MSOs. The department's goal is to have full-time 24/7 coverage by May 1st. ■

## FIREFIGHTERS PROVIDE COATS FOR KIDS

East Pierce firefighters again teamed up with the Coats for Kids Foundation for the annual Operation Warm, an effort to provide new coats to kids in the community who would otherwise not have one.

In December, firefighters visited ten schools throughout the fire district to fit more than 250 children with a much needed new, cozy coat.



The East Pierce Firefighter's Local 3520 funds the cost of the coats through donations. The Local purchases the jackets from the Coats for Kids Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization established in Alexandria, VA in 2004. It is the distribution partner of Operation Warm, Inc.

# Volunteer Firefighter Program - End of an Era

December 31st, 2022, marked the final day of the volunteer firefighter/EMT program at East Pierce Fire & Rescue, observing a significant milestone in the organization's history and worth reflecting on. While EPFR serves over 100,000 residents today, we can all remember when it wasn't that way. Each community we serve once solely relied on volunteer firefighters to protect their homes and loved ones. As the orga-

has allowed us to increase our daily staffing and expand to six stations staffed 24/7/365. This number will soon extend to seven stations in 2023 and eight by early 2024. Our ability to adequately cover our urban areas has substantially improved, but so has our ability to reach many rural communities with a timely response. As our staffing and deployment model has improved,



the demand for volunteer services has steadily decreased. Along with the demand decrease, organizations across the United States have struggled to recruit and retain new volunteers for meaningful amounts of time.

Volunteer firefighters' impacts on our community are tremendous, as they laid the foundation from which EPFR

stands. We are incredibly fortunate that many of our full-time firefighters who now serve the community came directly from our volunteer ranks. Thank you to our last group of volunteer firefighters (Kevin Bellack, Patrick Caviness, Noel Fitzgerald, DeAnn O'Leary, and James Walker) who have served with honor through their volunteer time. "We often are asked if we accept coat donations for this event, however we cannot," says East Pierce Captain Troy Sterrenburg. "All of the coats come from the *Coats for Kids Foundation*, so we need monetary donations to make this possible." The Local is accepting donations from corporate sponsors and individual donors.

To make a donation, access the East Pierce Professional Firefighters Operation Warm page through this QR code.

nization evolved and our communities grew, so did the demand placed on the fire department. With that demand came the need to incorporate full-time (career) firefighters, build additional fire stations, and so on.

Today, we are fortunate to be the recipients of community support, which

EPFR's last group of volunteer firefighters, left to right, Kevin Bellack, Noel Fitzgerald, Patrick Caviness, James Walker, and DeAnn O'Leary.







"Where Compassion and Action Meet"

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## **WINTER 2023**

**BOND UPDATE: Construction Progressing** 

#### **Fire Commissioner** Meetings

Board of Fire Commissioner meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are in person with an option to attend virtually. Agendas and links to the meetings are posted at www.eastpiercefire.org.

#### 2023 Meeting Schedule

March 21	August 15
April 18	September 19
May 16	October 17
June 20	November 21
July 18	December 19

#### n November 2018, voters approved La bond to replace all six frontline fire engines and a ladder truck, replace four fire stations, and build a new fire station in Tehaleh. Many projects slowed due to COVID impacts but are once again

Here is a brief snapshot of the status of these projects.

#### **Fire Station Construction Status**

moving along.

- Station 118 Edgewood: Under construction. Opens in spring of 2023.
- Station 111 Bonney Lake: Under construction. Opens in January 2024.
- Station 114 Lake Tapps: Bid awarded. Construction to begin in spring of 2023.

- ► Station 117 Tehaleh: Construction to begin in summer of 2023.
- ► Station 112 Prairie Ridge: Construction to begin in fall of 2023.

#### **Vehicle Status**

► Ladder 113 and Engines 111, 112, 114, 116, 118, and 1119 are received and serving our communities.

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



Architectural rendering of Bonney Lake's new Headquarters/Station 111 slated to open in Jan 2024.

# **Example 1** C-a-l-l-i-n-g All Scouts!

scouting groups up to fifth grade to attend the seventh annual Scout Night from 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 20, at the Headquarters Station in Bonney Lake, 18421 Veterans Memorial Drive East.

The free event is geared toward groups within the fire dsitrict's service area, including Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, Milton, Edgewood, South Prairie, Tehaleh, and unincorporated Buckley.

Scouts rotate through various learning stations, including:



Scouts learn to tie a bowline knot at Scout Night, one of several engaging learning stations

- A ast Pierce Fire & Rescue invites all Home Safety: Identify various home hazards, learn the importance of smoke alarms, and when to call 911.
  - Basic First Aid: Learn first aid basics like cooling a burn and treating cuts, nose bleeds, and bee stings.
  - Home Escape Planning: Design a home escape plan identifying two ways out of every room, designate a meeting place, and learn to crawl low under smoke.
  - Emergency Preparedness: Learn why it's essential to have an emergency plan, how to assemble an emergency kit, and the importance of an out-ofarea contact.
    - Firefighter and Law Enforcement Tools, Equipment, and Careers: Get an up-close look at the equipment firefighters and police officers use to stay safe and do their job, and ask why they chose their careers.

• Ropes and Knots: Watch firefighters demonstrate various knot tying, then practice the skill.

Advance registration is required. Visit eastpiercefire.org for more event details and to register.

# **Training Up Safe Sitters**

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. EPFR 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, emphasizing child and infant CPR and choke saving. In addition to fire and injury prevention, it also teaches business skills for running a babysitting business.

EPFR offers two class options to choose from, both scheduled in July. The cost is \$45 per student.

For more information and to register, visit www.eastpiercefire. org. Classes fill quickly, so register early.

#### **2023 SAFE SITTER CLASSES**

July 11, 12, and 13 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Location: Headquarters Station

18421 Veterans Memorial Dr E Bonney Lake -OR-



Location: Station 116 10515 234th Ave E Bucklev

CIA BROWN // ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SPECIALIST

important life-saving CPR

skills during class





#### EMS DIVISION / MEDICAL RECORDS

Tricia Brown began her fire service career in 1994 as the District Secretary with Pierce County Fire District #12. She has served the last 20+ years as Administrative Support Specialist for EPFR's EMS Division. The fire service is rooted in Tricia's family; her father served as a volunteer firefighter before becoming a career fire chief.

In addition to supporting EMS Division members, Tricia coordinates EMS billing for the 6,000+ ambulance transports provided by EPFR crews annually. She provides outstanding customer service to residents who have questions about ambulance bills, reassuring them that they won't have any "out-of-pocket" ambulance fees since the EPFR's EMS Levy covers these costs.

Tricia has extensive records management and HIPAA privacy standards training and facilitates the department's EMS records requests for patients and their attorneys. She has also managed our customer satisfaction survey program for 15 years, the first in Pierce County.

Tricia and her husband, Randy, have made Buckley their home for the last 35 years. Their three daughters live throughout the Pacific Northwest.

## WINTER 2023

## 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 department and its employees' actions. Exceptional customer service and concern for employees and their families have become hallmarks of our culture.

EPFR was formed 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 to provide a seamless response to emergencies.

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 approximately 100,500 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 seven stations - six staffed 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 medical emergencies and fires.

An independently-elected Board of Commissioners governs the agency.

# Commissioners

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

# Local Drug Take Back Events

Medicine disposal programs are an excellent way to remove expired, unwanted, or unused medicines from home and reduce the chance that others may accidentally take a medication.

To help provide safe disposal alternatives and reduce environment polution, Edgewood and Bonney Lake Police Departments will host free drug take-back events in April.

Before dropping off your medications, consolidate pills to fill bottles or put

> Be alerted to sudden cardiac arrests in your immediate vicinity, so that you can start CPR in the critical minutes before EMS teams arrive.

Verified Responder program is

that off-duty EPFR firefighters

County can be equipped with

AEDs to respond to emergen-

cies, allowing the deployment of

community. A prominent tag is

dozens of additional AEDs in the

attached to each AED containing

a photo of the firefighter that ver-

ifies the identity of the responder

Police officers in Milton, Edge-

vehicles. They can sign up for

PulsePoint Verified Responder,

quickly respond to nearby "CPR

needed" calls, and help save lives

Station.

wood, Sumner, and Bonney Lake

already carry AEDs in their patrol

dressed in civilian clothes.

and paramedics who live in Pierce

PULSEPOINT, cont. from page 1

Learn more at pulsepoint.org Download PulsePoint Respon

Available on the App Store Google Play

PulsePoint BEALIFE Upcoming Drug Take-Back Events

• April 22 / 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Bonney Lake Public Safety Bldg. 18421 Veterans Memorial Dr. E., Bonney Lake Hosted by Bonney Lake Police

April 29 / 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Northwood Elem. School 9805 24th St. E., Edgewood Sponsored by Edgewood Police

them into a sealed Ziplock bag. Blister packs can be left intact. Remember to remove labels containing personal information.

with their training and AEDs. For

first responders, the notification

range is changed from 400 yards

to a full mile to expand the op-

portunity for early treatment of

In the future, don't be surprised

to see a neighbor who might be

an off-duty firefighter running

down the street with an AED

to help save one of your other

neighbors. When every minute

counts for someone who needs

CPR, your off-duty firefighters

and start life-saving care minutes

before on-duty fire engine and

Medic crews arrive on-scene.

and paramedics can respond

CPR patients.

Any dosage and form of medication are received except:

- × Herbal remedies
- × Vitamins/supplement
- Cosmetics/personal care products
- ✗ Medical devices
- × Batteries
- Mercury-containing thermometers
- × Sharps
- × Illicit drugs
- × Pet pesticide products

Can't make a scheduled event? No worries! Yearround medicine disposal bins are located in Edgewood, Bonney Lake, and Sumner Police Departments (call ahead to confirm lobby hours).



The scheduled take-back events and the disposal bins are easy to use - no forms, no paperwork, and no fuss. Just drop off your unwanted or expired medicines. ■

# New Medic 116 Hits the Streets

East Pierce Fire & Rescue's new Medic 116 went into service in early February and is housed at Station 116 to serve the foothills communities.

The medic unit is one of six ordered through budgeted equipment apparatus replacement reserve funds. Two new medic units are receiving graphics and being upfitted with equipment and supplies. The remaining three are awaiting chassis.

Medic 116, a 4WD diesel Ram 4500, is a little taller and longer than our current medic units, contains liquid spring suspension for ride comfort, a Howler Siren System (a lower tone that grabs the attention of drivers on the road), and a HAAS Alert System (a collision mitigation system that alerts both drivers and other emergency responders of an approaching emergency vehicle responding).

# The new Medic 116 begap serving the fact-tills commu

The new Medic 116 began serving the foothills communites in early February.



- FREE PROGRAMS -To residents of East Pierce Fire & Rescue

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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 1605 210th Ave. E.

Station 116 - Foothills 10515 234th Ave. E.

Station 124 - Milton 1000 Laurel St. LIFE JACKET LOANER PROGRAM Wearer must be present for fitting. Available at the Headquarters

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 currently suspended. 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 for groups of 10 or more.

HANDS-ONLY CPR CLASS One-hour, noncertification class for adult, hands-only CPR. Groups of 10 or more can schedule this training at their location or at our Headquarters Station.

#### CPR 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | BASIC FIRST AID 1:30-4:30 p.m.

- SERVICES OFFERED -

Mar 25 or 29 | Apr 15 or 19 | May 20 or 24 | Jun 21 or 24

The cost for citizens residing within EPFRs jurisdiction (including Sumner, Bonney Lake, Lake Tapps, South Prairie, Tehaleh, Milton, and Edgewood) is \$25 for either a CPR or First Aid class, or \$50 for both. The cost for nonresidents is \$40 for each class, or \$80 for both. All classes are held at our Headquarters Station.

To register, call 253-863-1800 during regular business hours or register on-line at 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 \$17 each. Headquarters Station.

SAFE SITTER CLASSES Jul 11, 12, and 13 | Jul 25, 26, and 27

Cost: \$45. To view class details and register on-line, visit www.eastpiercefire.org.

\* Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520