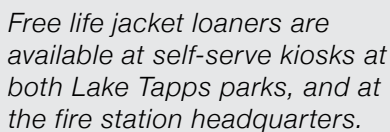




SUMMER 2014

Maintenance & Operations Levy Renewal on August Ballot



A life jacket can't do its job unless you wear it correctly. Buckle all clasps and zip the zippers. Pull the straps snug – there should be no gap in the front, and the jacket

Over the years the fire district has seen a steady increase of 911 calls. In 2013, the number of emergency calls increased by three percent to 8,519, compared to 2012.

would allow the fire district to maintain the current level of fire, rescue and emergency medical services, increase staffing and improve firefighter safety and efficiency.

The levy is necessary to help cover the gap in revenues collected by the fire district, says East Pierce Fire & Rescue Fire Commissioner Dale Mitchell. The district is funded at a rate of \$1.50 per thousand of assessed property value for fire services and 50 cents per thousand of assessed value for EMS services. As property values fell, so did

See **LEVY**, page 2

Wilkeson Decides to Withdraw from East Pierce Fire & Rescue

Following two years of talks between the Wilkeson Town Council and East Pierce Fire & Rescue, Wilkeson has decided not to renew its contract with the fire district.

East Pierce had been working with town officials to resolve a tax discrepancy between Wilkeson and the rest of the district's residents. A contract that predated the East Pierce merger allowed the town to pay a lesser rate for fire, rescue and emergency medical services than the rest of the citizens in the East Pierce service area. "That inequitable contract needed to be resolved," says East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson. East Pierce residents pay \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for fire protection and 50 cents per \$1,000 for emergency medical services (EMS).

At a May 12 meeting, Wilkeson town council members agreed to sign a new contract with East Pierce. Wilkeson citizens had approved two ballot measures last year that increased the town's levies, enabling them to pay the same rate as the rest of the district's taxpayers.

However, less than two weeks after agreeing to the contract, the town's attorney sent Thorson an email informing him that Wilkeson had, instead, contracted with the Buckley Fire Department. Eventually, Wilkeson contracted with both Buckley and the Carbonado Fire Department for fire protection. Since neither Buckley nor Carbonado offer EMS transport, American Medical Response (AMR) will provide paramedic services and ambulance transport for the town.

"If the AMR unit, which is based in Buckley, is out of service on a call and Wilkeson needs help, we will provide mutual aid. However, we will bill for

The Wilkeson City Council decided not to renew its contract with East Pierce Fire & Rescue. The response vehicles, supplies and equipment owned by the fire district were removed on June 18.

transport to cover our costs," says Thorson. Residents of the East Pierce fire district receive ambulance transport with no out-of-pocket expense. Non-residents are charged the standard rate for ambulance services, which is between \$700 and \$1,000.

On June 18, East Pierce removed its equipment from the Wilkeson fire station, including a fire engine, aid car and a brush truck used to fight wildland fires. While Wilkeson owns the fire station, East Pierce had been responsible for maintaining it. The fire district also

provided the response vehicles and paid for supplies, equipment and the cost of training and gear for the volunteers who staffed the station.

Thorson says that the apparatus and equipment, including a new generator that had recently been installed at the Wilkeson station, will be used at other stations in the district. "In the end, this allows us to consolidate our response area and focus our resources on the rest of the district where it's more densely populated," he says. ■

ECRWSS Postal Customer



SMOKE ALARMS - A
SOUND YOU CAN LIVE WITH

Recent studies reveal that three out of five home fire deaths in the U.S. resulted from fires in structures without working smoke alarms. Homes with working smoke alarms reduced the risk of fire fatalities by an astounding 50%.

Last winter, East Pierce Fire and Rescue received grant funding to purchase 2,500 smoke alarms, including 40 hearing impaired smoke alarms, which will be installed in citizen homes free of charge, throughout the fire district this summer.

The smoke alarm program is specifically intended for at-risk citizens, including older adults, low income households and those who reside in a mobile home. Firefighters will install the smoke alarms at no cost to the resident. The smoke alarms are equipped with long-life batteries which last approximately 10 years.

"In the event of a fire, properly installed and maintained smoke alarms can save your life," says East Pierce Captain Chuck King. "Smoke alarms provide early detection of a fire to allow your family time to escape safely." Alarms should be installed inside and outside all sleeping areas, and on every level of the home, including the basement. Since smoke and poisonous gases rise, installing smoke alarms on the ceiling is ideal and provides the earliest detection.

"A working smoke alarm continuously scans the air for smoke, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. It never sleeps," says King.

In addition to the hearing impaired alarms, which are equipped with a lower-frequency tone and bed shaker component, firefighters will install two primary types of smoke alarms: Ionization alarms that respond quickly to flaming, fast moving fires, and photoelectric alarms that are quicker at sensing smoldering, smoky fires. Each home will be equipped with both ionization and photoelectric alarms for the best protection.

To schedule a smoke alarm installation, call 253-863-1800.

To learn more about smoke alarms, or tips for home escape plans, go to eastpiercefire.org. ■

East Pierce Firefighters and Staff Recognized for Excellence

The recipients of the 2014 Recognition Awards were honored by the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Fire Commissioners and command staff in a ceremony held at the Edgewood station in April.

Acting Battalion Chief Matt Jewitt was named Officer of the Year. Career Firefighter of the Year went to Matt Gilbert. Firefighter-paramedic Mike Gladstone received the Emergency Medical Services Provider of the Year award.

Volunteer Firefighter DeAnn O'leary was named Volunteer Responder of the Year.

Firefighter-paramedic Rex Orcutt 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. Orcutt and his wife spearhead the annual Summer Pancake Feed to raise money for needy families at Christmas time.

Volunteer firefighter Sara Arneson was presented 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." Arneson is the chair of the

scholarship program and works with local Eagle Scouts on projects with the fire district.

The Chief's Company included Gilbert, Lieutenant Jason Sanders, Firefighter-paramedic Rob Ruzsala, Firefighter Corey Snope and Volunteer Captain Noel Fitzgerald. While all the other awards are voted on by the firefighters, the Chief's Company is determined by the command staff.

The annual Fitness Award went to Firefighter Jason Russell.

Mike Blaylock was recognized again for his work in the Information Technology Department. He received the Administrative Support Staff of the Year Award.

Congratulations to all of this year's recipients. Well done. ■

Save the Date



2014 Annual Open House · Saturday, September 27

LEVY, cont. from pg 1

the national standards for safety. "It's a start," he said.

"We need the staffing to provide an adequate response to the increasing requests for our services," Thorson said. Over the years, the fire district has seen a steady increase in the number of 911 calls, particularly for emergency medical services. "An aging population and changes to the healthcare system are expected to drive that number even higher," he said.

What does the levy mean for taxpayers? Using an example of a home worth \$364,200, the homeowners paid \$728.40 in 2008 for fire and EMS services, based on a tax rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 in assessed value for fire and an additional 50 cents per \$1,000 for EMS services.

In 2014, the same home is valued at \$253,600. The homeowners still pay the fire and EMS tax, plus the M & O levy. But because the assessed value of the home has dropped, so have the taxes paid to East Pierce. In 2014, the owners of this home will pay only \$601.03, or \$127.37 less than they paid in 2008.

"We have researched a number of different ways to maintain our current service levels and we have been unsuccessful," says Thorson. The combination career and volunteer fire department has cut costs and deferred maintenance. "Over the years, we have made significant progress in reducing expenses. We have kept personnel costs in line with other Pierce County fire departments, comparing our firefighter's salaries with others to ensure we pay a reasonable wage. But without the levy to bridge the gap in lost revenues, we are to going to reach a critical point," he says.

What Has the Fire District Done To Cut Costs?

- Pay cuts and unpaid furlough days for employees.
- Reduced overtime by more than 50%.
- Cut firefighter training by 70%
- Vacant positions have not been filled.
- Significant cuts made to public education programs, prevention and logistics.
- Additional cuts to each division including Operations, EMS, Training, Fire Prevention and the Volunteer Program.
- Delayed replacing older fire engines and medic units.
- Delayed station maintenance.

SCHOLARSHIP
WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Volunteer
Corner 

The East Pierce Volunteer Firefighter's Association announced the winners of its annual "Scholarships for Excellence." For the first time, seven scholarships were awarded in a single year. "The VFA has presented more than \$10,000 in college scholarships to area students since 2008," says East Pierce Volunteer Firefighter Sara Arneson. Committee members including, Volunteer Firefighters Tim Balding, Kyle Mosher, DeAnn O'Leary and Chris Schenk, contributed more than 100 hours performing application reviews, scoring, conducting candidate interviews, and participating in award presentations.

The 2014 scholarship winners are White River High School senior **Madison Budinich**, Bonney Lake High School senior **Tyler Wassom**, and Sumner High School senior **Sydney Roberts**. The community scholarship was presented to **Andrea Seaton**

from Cascade Christian High School

The 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. The community scholarship is awarded to seniors who live within the fire district, but attend high schools outside its jurisdiction.

Two scholarships awarded to an East Pierce career or volunteer member, their spouse or dependent. Bonney Lake High School senior **Sabrina Poe**, daughter of East Pierce Firefighter Will Poe, was one of the recipients. She will be studying nursing at Pierce College. **Jessica Nicolich**, who is currently studying nursing at Pierce College, also received a scholarship. She is the daughter of Firefighter Kirby Pollard.

The annual Doty Community Service Award with a \$250 scholar-

ship was presented to Bonney Lake High School senior **Laura Cook**. She will be studying nursing at Brigham Young University in the fall. "Laura has a tremendous amount of selfless community service over the last four years volunteering at Good Samaritan Hospital, area nursing homes on a weekly basis, food banks and at the Tacoma Rescue Mission," Arneson says. "She has done all of this in addition to working, being a Running Start student, and being a nationally recognized ballroom dancer. She is a truly caring individual committed to serving others."

Money for the scholarship is raised through donations to the association.

The Volunteer Firefighter's Association introduced the 2014 scholarship winners to the East Pierce Board of Fire Commissioners at their monthly meeting, July 15. Congratulations to all. ■

HEALTH WATCH: When it Comes to Strokes - Think FAST

Getting medical attention for someone suffering a stroke is critical to survival, but how can you tell if someone is having a stroke? Think FAST.

F is for Face: Ask the person to smile. Look for drooping on one side of the face.

A is for Arms: Have the person raise both arms. Is one arm weak or numb? Does one arm drift downward?

S is for Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase, like "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." Is their speech slurred or strange?

T is for Time: If you observe any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately. Note the last time you saw them behaving normally.

Every four minutes someone in the U.S. dies from a stroke, making it the fourth leading cause of death for Americans, and the leading cause of permanent disability. "In our area, we estimate that more than 150 residents suffer from a stroke each year," says East Pierce Medical Services Officer Jeff Moore.

The good news is that Pierce County has a stroke system of care that ensures patients are quickly assessed, treated and transported to the appropriate stroke center. Since, not all hospitals specialize in these advanced therapies, getting to the one where the stroke patient can be



immediately seen by specialists is critical.

It is more important than ever that the patient get to the hospital immediately. "Most people wait hours before calling 9-1-1 or go to a hospital," Moore says. By that time, most patients can't receive advanced treatments. To help improve outcomes for residents who suffer a stroke, East Pierce Fire & Rescue has adopted the slogan, "Spot the signs of stroke FAST and call 9-1-1." "It doesn't cost anything for us to check you out," Moore says.

What is a stroke?

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain is either blocked by a clot or ruptures, interrupting the flow of blood and oxygen to a part of the brain, causing brain cells to start dying. The part of the body

controlled by the impacted brain cells will not be able to function normally.

Treatment—Time is Brain!

"If there is any question about whether you or someone else is having a stroke, call 9-1-1 immediately. The responding paramedics can quickly assess the person for stroke signs and symptoms, provide advanced life support, and radio the physicians to ensure that a hospital has personnel and specialized equipment ready to receive an incoming stroke patient," Moore says.

For more information about strokes, visit the American Stroke Association's website at www.strokeassociation.org. ■

EAST PIERCE FIRE AND RESCUE SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

East Pierce Fire & Rescue will begin accepting applications for volunteer firefighters this fall. "We would like to bring on 10 or 12 volunteers," says Assistant Chief Ed Goodlet. "Volunteers help enhance our response to fire and medical emergency calls as well as assist with public education." They respond to 9-1-1 emergencies from outlying stations and when the career firefighters are busy with a significant number of calls or a large-scale emergency. "We are especially interested in volunteers who live in Milton and around Lake Tapps," Goodlet says.

To join, volunteers must be 18 years or older, possess a high school diploma or GED and have a valid Washington State driver's license, with an acceptable driving record. Volunteers must also live within the East Pierce Fire District boundaries. Following a written test and interview process, the volunteer candidates will need to pass a rigorous physical. A background check will also be conducted. Those selected will attend a firefighter academy and classes to become emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

The fire district is currently accepting applications for lateral residents. These are individuals who have already met the requirements of a volunteer firefighter, either with East Pierce or another fire department, and who will reside at a volunteer fire station. In addition to the volunteer requirements, residents be 19 years or older, possess a State of Washington Certification of Competency Firefighter I or equivalent upon application, Washington State EMT-B certification upon application, proof of Health Care Provider CPR certification, department approved driver/operator training program upon application, and the ability to comply with the Resident Program Manual and Resident Agreement.

Lateral resident applications are available online at www.eastpiercefirerescue.org. ■

WATER SAFETY, cont. from pg 1

should stay low on the shoulders when the arms are raised over the head.

Make sure your life jacket is in good working order. Although life jackets don't expire, destroy it if: there are tears or holes in the fabric; the stuffing is exposed or missing; straps, buckles or zippers are missing or damaged; or there are signs of mildew, mold or color fading.

Life jackets are just one of several layers of protection needed to prevent drowning. East Pierce Fire encourages you to use good judgment, watch out for each other and consider these safety tips for a swimsafe summer.

Know the water

- Our area lakes are cold – 55 de-

grees! Your body loses heat 30 times faster in water versus the air.

- The colder the water, the quicker cold water incapacitation will occur.
- Everyone's at risk, especially the elderly, children and people with low body fat.
- Males (whose bodies generally cool faster than females) are at greater risk.

Know your limits

- No matter how good of a swimmer you are, the cold water can be fatiguing and overpower your skills. Watch for shivering, altered judgment, blue fingers and lips – get out and rewarm.

Protect yourself and your loved ones

- Wear a life jacket
- Never swim alone – use the buddy system
- Learn how to swim
- Learn CPR

Visit eastpiercefirerescue.org for more water safety tips and information on our loaner and sale programs. ■

CAN YOU HELP?

Do you have extra life jackets you no longer need? Just drop new or gently used life jackets by our headquarters station. We'll inspect them and put them to good use in our free loaner program!

Making A Splash About Water Safety!

East Pierce firefighters will host two, free Summer Splash-Tacular events on Lake Tapps this year with help from Bonney Lake Police and the Pierce County Sheriff's Department.

Join us at one (or both!) of these family-friendly events, from 1-4 p.m., for an afternoon of fun and games – all while learning water safety.

- July 19 at Pierce County's North Tapps Park (1715 198th Ave E, Bonney Lake)
- August 9 at Allan Yorke Park (7203 West Tapps Hwy E, Bonney Lake)

Activity highlights include:

- Life jacket relay races – Stress the importance of properly

fitted life jackets

- Cold water incapacitation – See how long you can submerge your arm in a bucket of ice water to simulate the effects of Lake Tapps' cold water on your body
- Reach, throw THEN go!
- Practice to help a struggling swimmer without putting yourself at risk, too
- Water safety BINGO
- Talk to East Pierce Fire and Rescue Water Rescue Team divers on an underwater radio
- Squirt water from the fire hose on the East Pierce fire boat

"Drowning happens very quickly and very quietly," says East Pierce Public Education Specialist Dina Sutherland. "It's important to teach children how



East Pierce firefighters will host two, free Summer Splash-Tacular events on Lake Tapps this year with help from Bonney Lake Police and the Pierce County Sheriff's Department.

to be safe in open water."

Life jackets will also be available for purchase at a discounted rate of \$14 each in sizes infant

– adult. The wearer must be present for a custom fit.

For information on water safety tips, visit www.eastpiercefirerescue.org. ■

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 2011, the Milton City Council voted to contract for services with East Pierce, bringing expanded fire, rescue and emergency medical services to their city.

Today, East Pierce serves a population of approximately 88,600 residents living in and around Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, the Ridge Communities, South Prairie, Edgewood and Milton. The district covers approximately 152 square miles and protects residents from 11 stations – six staffed and four 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 governs the agency. ■

Commisioners

Dale Mitchell, Chair
Rick Kuss
Edward Egan
Karlyne McGinnis
Kevin Garling
Ron Scholz
Mike Cathey

Staffed Stations

Station 11	(Headquarters Station) 18421 Veterans Memorial Drive East Bonney Lake, 98391 253.863.1800 www.east.piercefirerescue.org
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
Station 18	10105 24th Street East, Edgewood

EAST PIERCE FOUNDATION LAUNCHES SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY PROGRAM

It started with an idea—to give hospice patients one last ride to someplace special, such as a family gathering or special event. It became a reality this spring when the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Foundation launched the Sentimental Journey program, a collaborative effort between the Foundation, MultiCare/Good Samaritan Home Health & Hospice and East Pierce Fire & Rescue.

Off-duty firefighters staff a back-up medic unit to transport a hospice patient and family member on the journey, which can last from two to five hours and go anywhere within Pierce, King and Thurston Counties. The Foundation reimburses the fire district for the use of the medic unit, fuel and any supplies, such as oxygen, that may be used during the trip.

"The journey allows hospice patients, who often have difficulty travelling in a private vehicle, a chance to go somewhere special one last time," says Foundation President Teresa McCallion. "We have taken patients to hear music at a club, have lunch with family at a favorite restaurant and even visit the local Harley-Davidson store."

Medical research has demonstrated that complementary programs such as the Sentimental Journey can be instrumental in relieving stress, decreasing pain and adding quality to one's remaining days. In a thank you note to the participating firefighters, Good Samaritan hospice social workers wrote, "We appreciate the contribution the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Foundation is making in the lives of our patients. Every day is precious, each hour has something to savor and even minutes count at the end of life. The ability to make that last trip to the mountains, clap your hands to live music, smell the salt air, is a gift beyond measure. You are bringing compassion in action to the person who will be leaving this



The Sentimental Journey is a collaborative effort between the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Foundation, MultiCare/Good Samaritan Home Health & Hospice and East Pierce Fire & Rescue.

world soon and also bring the gift of consoling memories to the ones who will be left behind."

The Foundation is a non-profit, community-based citizen organization that collaborates with the fire district to raise money for specific public education and life safety programs and support the Sentimental Journey program.

"We are blessed to live in such a wonderfully caring community where we have this unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our friends and neighbors," McCallion says.

If you wish to make a donation or want more information, go to www.eastpiercefirerescue.org.

STOP. SHOP. SUPPORT A GREAT CAUSE!

FIRE SALE

SATURDAY
AUGUST 2ND
8AM - 2PM

The East Pierce Fire & Rescue Foundation is holding a giant garage sale at the former Albertson's parking lot, South Prairie Road and State Route 410 E .

It Only Takes An Hour To Save A Life!

Register for our free, Hands-Only™ CPR class.

Visit www.eastpiercefirerescue.org for more information.

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 batteries. 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
Non-certification class for adult CPR, from 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. (1 hour) August 21, October 27, December 11

SERVICES OFFERED

CPR 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | BASIC FIRST AID 1:00–4:30 p.m.
Fire Headquarters Station 18421 Veterans Memorial Dr. E., Bonney Lake
Aug. 9, 23 or 29 | Sept. 13 or 19 | Oct. 11, 17 or 25 |
Nov. 15, 21 or 22 | Dec. 13

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 \$15 for either a CPR or First Aid class, or \$30 for both. The cost for non-residents is \$30 for each class, or \$60 for both.

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

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