



# FIRE HOUSE NEWS

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

WINTER 2009

## Santa is coming to your town

**F**irefighters in East Pierce, Edgewood and Milton will accompany Santa during his annual visit to local neighborhoods starting in some areas the first weekend of December. East Pierce Firefighter James Parke is coordinating the much-anticipated event for East Pierce. "This is so much fun," he said. "It really puts us all in the Christmas spirit."

For exact days and neighborhoods for the East Pierce Santa Run, go to the East Pierce Web site ([www.eastpiercerefire.org](http://www.eastpiercerefire.org)).

On December 19 the Edgewood firefighters will chauffeur Santa Claus, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through the city streets. If you miss it, stop by the Edgewood Fire Station from 4 to 5 p.m. Santa will be handing out candy and visiting with the good girls and boys.

In Milton, the annual Santa Run and Christmas Tree lighting is scheduled for December 5. Look for the fire engine in your neighborhood featuring the Mayor and her firefighter 'elves'.

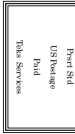
For safety, the firefighters ask that everyone stay on the sidewalk and out of the road. "Helpers will come to you," Parke said. "Watch for emergency vehicles with lights on. They will cruise a few blocks ahead of Santa's sleigh."



Firefighters from East Pierce Fire & Rescue, Edgewood and Milton fire departments will escort Santa around neighborhoods in their areas.

East Pierce Fire and Rescue  
18121 Oldhickley Highway  
Bonney Lake, WA 98801

ECRWSS  
Postal Customer



Additional crews, advanced life support for emergency medical calls and ambulance transport with no out-of-pocket expenses for the patient are just a few benefits the residents of Edgewood and Milton would see with the merger.

## Merger efforts progressing

Progress is being made towards a merger between Edgewood Fire (Pierce County Fire District No. 8) and East Pierce Fire & Rescue. The Edgewood Fire Commissioners will vote at their December 8 meeting on whether or not to ask for a public vote on the issue. If the commissioners decide on a public vote, the merger will be on the ballot on February 9, 2010.

Edgewood Fire Chief Ed Goodlet views the merger as a viable option for addressing the increasing demands for fire and emergency medical services. "As our community needs increase, it is imperative we pursue opportunities to meet those needs," he said. "This merger will provide the best option to better serve this community."

Goodlet stated that the number of emergency calls has jumped by 82 percent from 2003 to 2008. The majority of the increase is in 9-1-1 calls for emergency medical services. According to the fire department, medical calls in 2003 totaled 401. In 2008, they had more than doubled to 811.

Edgewood Fire provides basic emergency medical aid, but relies on private ambulance services and mutual aid from neighboring fire departments for more serious advanced medical aid and transport to hospitals. "We cannot continue to rely on our neighbors for aid," Goodlet said. "The merger would mean we would have a full-time medic unit staffed with firefighter/paramedics who can respond

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## Plan now to make this a safe winter season

**W**inter is a wonderful time of year, but it can also bring safety challenges. Your firefighters have a few tips to help make this a safe season:

- ⊗ Keep Christmas trees, decorations and wrapping paper away from heating sources. And don't forget to water your tree.
- ⊗ Turkey fryers are very popular, but we've seen several accidents that resulted in fires and severe burns. Always use fryers in an open area away from walls, fences and structures that can burn. Use thoroughly thawed meats and raise and lower the food slowly to avoid spilling hot oil. Turn the fryer off immediately if it starts to smoke.
- ⊗ Use a good, solid ladder when hanging outdoor lights. Remember, frosty mornings make for slippery roofs. Pick a day when the sun is shining to climb up on your roof to decorate your house.
- ⊗ Make sure all of your smoke alarms are in working order.
- ⊗ Practice fire drills with your family.

### Home Heating

Faced with mounting heating costs, many residents turn

to supplemental heating sources in the winter. Fireplaces, wood stoves and space heaters can help keep a room toasty, but they can also be a fire hazard if not used properly. Remember these tips:

- ⊗ When buying a new space heater, make sure it carries the mark of an independent testing laboratory and has a tip over safety switch.
- ⊗ Install fixed space heaters according to manufacturer's instructions or applicable codes or better yet, have it installed by a professional.

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## VOLUNTEER CORNER

# Assistant Chief Jake Doty to retire

In January, East Pierce Fire & Rescue Assistant Chief Jake Doty will retire after nearly 50 years of service as a volunteer and chief.

For nearly half a century, the citizens of South Prairie and beyond have depended on Doty to be there during an emergency. His towering frame has been a fixture at numerous fires and he has been a leader for hundreds of volunteer firefighters.

When Doty joined the South Prairie Volunteer Firefighters in 1962, firefighting was very different. Just getting to a fire was exciting. "If you made the fire truck, you stood on the tail board," he said. Volunteers who missed the truck followed in their personal vehicles. "If it was really cold, you made sure you didn't catch the truck," he laughed.

Born in Tacoma, Doty's family moved to South Prairie when he was a toddler.

Doty followed his father, a South Prairie volunteer, into the fire service. Responding to fires on a 1927 Howard



East Pierce Assistant Chief Jake Doty retires after nearly 50 years of service to his community

Cooper, they didn't have firefighter gear or air packs. "We responded in our street clothes," Doty said.

In 1966, Doty married Sue. The couple raised three children. After 10 years as a chicken farmer, Doty started his own fabrication business, called "Jakes Welding".

In 1983, Doty was named South Prairie fire chief. He served until the fire District began the process of merging

with East Pierce Fire & Rescue.

By then, times were changing. Citizens expected more of their firefighters, who were required to participate in more training than before. In addition to the fire calls, the firefighters provided emergency medical care.

"We went from 'come all, play all' to a professional, modern-day fire department," Doty said.

Under Doty's leadership as East Pierce assistant chief, the volunteers became a well-trained resource to the career firefighters, providing essential back up during major incidents and playing an important role in the district's fire and life safety prevention efforts.

It's with mixed feelings that we at East Pierce say goodbye. For the many sacrifices he and his family have made in order to serve his community, Doty has earned his retirement. We thank him for his dedication and commitment and wish him many years of happy hunting.

## Winter

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- ⊛ Plug your electric-powered space heater into an outlet with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- ⊛ Use the proper grade of fuel for your liquid-fueled space heater, and never use gasoline in any heater not approved for gasoline use. Refuel only in a well-ventilated area and when the equipment is cool.
- ⊛ Turn off space heaters when no one is in the room. Portable space heaters are so easy to knock over in the dark that they should be turned off when you go to bed.
- ⊛ Do not use your oven to heat your home.
- ⊛ Give space heaters space, at least three feet from things that can burn, including paper, bedding and people.

## Severe Weather

Typically, winter brings severe weather. Around here that usually means flooding and high winds. Be prepared with these safety tips:

- ⊛ Get a NOAA Weather Radio to monitor severe weather.
- ⊛ Develop a plan for gathering your family together. Have a child care plan if you are unable to reach your children at school or home.
- ⊛ Keep your child's emergency release card up to date.
- ⊛ Make arrangements with a person outside the immediate area for family members to contact in case you get separated.
- ⊛ Without power, cash machines don't work and merchants cannot take credit cards. Keep enough cash to purchase food and fuel.
- ⊛ Cell phones may not work and cordless phones need power. Keep an old-fashioned plug-in-type phone at home.
- ⊛ Without electricity, gas stations are closed. Whenever possible, keep the tank in your vehicle at least half full so you have enough gas to get home during an emergency or evacuate to a safer area.
- ⊛ Take care of your neighbors. Citizens with special needs are particularly vulnerable during an emergency. The elderly, those confined to bed or a wheel chair and those who rely on medical equipment that requires electricity to operate may need extra assistance.
- ⊛ Never use a generator or barbecue grille indoors. They produce carbon monoxide gas that can be deadly if inhaled.

## Commissioner Election Results

Voters reelected three East Pierce fire commissioners in the November 3 election. Raymond R. Bunk III, Karlyne McGinnis and Mike Cathey will each serve another six-year term. All three candidates ran unopposed.

Ron Scholz defeated Dick Willner for the open seat vacated by former East Pierce Fire Commissioner Cheryl Bylin.

Scholz is a retired fire lieutenant for the city of Tacoma and spent more than 25 years as a volunteer firefighter for Sumner and Orting. He also served on the Sumner Council and Pierce County Regional Council.

In Edgewood, Dale T. Mitchell was reelected fire commissioner in an uncontested race.

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**East Pierce Fire & Rescue is collecting new and gently used coats to be distributed to area residents in need. Drop off donations at our headquarters station in Bonney Lake or the Sumner station. For more information call us at 253-863-1800.**

## Annual Pancake Breakfast

Grab your holiday appetite and join us for the 14th annual East Pierce Fire & Rescue Pancake Feed and Food Drive, from 7 a.m. to noon, Saturday, December 5 at the Sumner fire station located at 800 Harrison Street.

The breakfast benefits the Sumner Family Center, a program that provides support and services to local families.

The cost is a \$3 donation per person. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

Santa will be there to meet good girls and boys.

Firefighters will also be collecting donations of nonperishable food items and new or gently used coats, gloves, scarves, hats and sleeping bags for needy families in our area.



Join us for a hearty breakfast of pancakes and ham and spend some quality time with Santa at the 14th annual East Pierce Pancake Feed in Sumner.

## Tree Lighting in Bonney Lake

Everyone is invited to an old-fashioned holiday celebration at the annual Bonney Lake Christmas Tree Lighting and Food Drive, Saturday, Dec. 5. The free event, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Bonney Lake, starts at 6 p.m. at the East Pierce Fire & Rescue headquarters station, 18421 Old Buckley Highway, in Bonney Lake.

The festivities include holiday music provided by area school children. Homemade cookies, hot chocolate and apple cider will be available.

Bonney Lake Mayor Neil Johnson will light the tree around 6:30 p.m. to signal the official start of the holiday season, followed by the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus aboard a fire engine.

Bring a donation of canned goods with you to the event or drop them off from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in front of the Bonney Lake Food Bank, located next door to the fire station.

## Fire department earns top rating



State auditors work with the fire department to help ensure the efficient and effective use of public resources. East Pierce has always received top ratings.

The Washington State Auditor's Office completed the annual financial and accountability audit for East Pierce Fire & Rescue, declaring no major findings or issues to address. "We have a long history of having very clear audits," East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson said. "We've never had a finding or management letter – that's pretty good for a fire department."

The State Auditor's Office serves the citizens of Washington by promoting accountability, fiscal integrity and openness in state and local government. Working with the fire department, auditors help to ensure the efficient and effective use of public resources.

The auditors look at internal controls and department policies and procedures to make sure East Pierce personnel are adhering to legal bidding processes, providing prevailing wages and are in general compliance to all Washington State laws and regulations.

Citizens can view all of the audit reports by going to [www.sao.wa.gov](http://www.sao.wa.gov) and searching under Pierce County Fire District No. 22.

## HEALTH Watch

### Precautions to avoid the flu

Every year, the seasonal flu affects up to 20 percent of the U.S. population and kills an average of 36,000 Americans. This year, the combination of the seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus could mean even more Americans will be affected.

"H1N1 has certainly awakened Americans to the fact that flu is a serious health threat," East Pierce Assistant Chief Russ McCallion said.

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It's spread from person to person in respiratory droplets produced every time the sick person coughs and sneezes.

Since symptoms begin to appear one to four days after the virus enters the body, you may infect someone else before you even know you are sick.

"The best way to avoid infecting someone else is to get both the seasonal and H1N1 vaccines," McCallion said. "It's especially important not to infect someone in your family who already has chronic health conditions such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes or an otherwise weakened immune system."

Protect yourself against the seasonal and H1N1 flu:

- Get vaccinated against seasonal influenza viruses.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

If someone in your household is ill, you can prevent the spread of the virus by:

- Keeping surfaces (especially bedside tables, bathroom and kitchen surfaces) clean by wiping them down with household disinfectant.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.
- Have the sick person stay in their room, rather than with the rest of the family.

If you have concerns about vaccines, McCallion suggests contacting a medical professional or going to a reputable Web site, such as [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or [www.tpchd.org](http://www.tpchd.org) for reliable scientific information about flu and H1N1 vaccines.

### COMMISSIONER KUSS HONORED

On October 20, the East Pierce Fire and Rescue Board of Fire Commissioners presented Chair Rick Kuss with a plaque and thanked him for his 20 years of service. Kuss was first elected fire commissioner in 1989.

"There have been a lot of challenges," Kuss said of his time as a commissioner. The toughest was the loss of Fire Chief Dan Packer, who was killed in 2007 fighting a wildfire.

East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson commended Kuss for his leadership. "He's been a major part of this organization and helped set the direction of the department. When we look at the service this organization provides, we owe him a debt of thanks for his years of service."



East Pierce Fire & Rescue Fire Commissioner Karlene McGinnis presented Commissioner Rick Kuss with a plaque thanking him for his 20 years of service as fire commissioner.

Everyone at East Pierce Fire & Rescue wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.

## Strategic planning process sets goals

Last fall, East Pierce began a strategic planning process that included personnel from throughout the organization, including the Edgewood and Milton fire departments.

"This is part of our effort to provide the best service possible with the most efficient use of the taxpayer's money," East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson said. "The process looks at every aspect of our organization from our level of service to our links with the community."

The Strategic Planning Team has been meeting regularly to address staffing, operations, training, infrastructure, leadership, health and wellness, fire prevention and public education. Among the goals are to improve service, develop future leaders, identify proper station locations and deployment and to establish effective communication both internally and with the public.

Each year the Strategic Plan will be reviewed and extended for another year. "This will continue to be a living document helping to guide our organization," Thorson said.

Already several key opportunities have surfaced, including the need for a firefighter training center. Currently, there is no training ground for the East Pierce firefighters at any of the stations. "We practice firefighting skills in commercial parking lots. Unfortunately, it's not easy to provide personnel with critical hands-on training in fire behavior, hazmat mitigation, building collapse and rescue techniques," Thorson said.

The Team is also examining station locations to make sure they are properly placed for maximum coverage.

"Once the framework is in place, we will be asking for public input," Thorson said. "The final plan will determine priorities that will be crucial when developing annual budgets."

### Customer Survey

If you have received medical care from East Pierce Fire & Rescue, you may receive a customer satisfaction survey from our Quality Improvement Committee. The survey is being sent to a random sampling of our patients. Feedback will be used to help improve the quality of medical care and customer service to our citizens. Answers to the survey are confidential, so let us know how we did. It is our goal to provide the best possible emergency medical care to all of our patients.

If you have any questions, call Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson at 253-863-1800 during regular business hours.



Customer feedback helps us to improve our training and the quality of our service we provide.

## Merger

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quickly when someone in our district is sick or injured."

In addition, Edgewood residents would receive a benefit offered to all residents in the East Pierce Fire & Rescue District – ambulance transport services with no out-of-pocket costs to the patient.

The merger would increase the number of firefighters on duty at the Edgewood station from 2-3 per shift to 4-5. "This allows for an additional crew to respond to more than one call at a time," Goodlet said.

If the Edgewood voters choose to merge with East Pierce, the board of fire commissioners for both districts would need to pass a resolution to authorize the merger. "If everything falls into place, it could be official as early as March 1st," Goodlet said.

In Milton, the City Council is evaluating a possible annexation, but there are some unique challenges to the proposal.

"We must resolve the taxation issues before we can move forward," Milton Fire Chief James

Jaques said. Approximately 10 percent of city residents live in King County, while the rest reside in Pierce County. "Milton residents who live on the King County side pay both the King County EMS and the Milton EMS levies," Jaques explained. "This creates an unequal taxation issue that must be resolved before we can consider annexation."

Jaques points out that while fire districts can merge, city fire departments like Milton must be annexed.

"If all goes well, we could have a public vote in April," he said. "In the meantime, we struggle with the same issues facing Edgewood – too few firefighters to meet an ever-increasing demand for emergency services."

**To help address questions from the public, community forums have been scheduled for December 9 and January 13 at the Edgewood Fire Station, 10105 24th Street East. The forums will run from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call the Edgewood Station at (253) 927-2313.**

## VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER BOB DIETRICH



Lt. Bob Dietrich

Former East Pierce Volunteer Lieutenant Bob Dietrich died following a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 44.

Bob was born in Tacoma, the second of four children. He graduated from Sumner Senior High School in 1982 and in 1985, completed his degree at Green River Community College.

In 1989, he married his sweetheart Becky Conklin of Bonney Lake. Together they have two children, Meghan and Blake.

Bob worked in the aerospace industry for Hexcel in Kent and for over 20 years he was a volunteer firefighter for East Pierce Fire & Rescue.

Bob was an active sportsman, enjoying hunting and fishing. He was a dedicated father and active with his kids, coaching their fast pitch and baseball teams for several years.

Those at East Pierce wish to thank Bob for his selfless service to his community. He is missed.

## Who is East Pierce Fire & Rescue?

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

In 2006, voters in Pierce County Fire District 12 and South Prairie Fire District 20 overwhelmingly passed a special election to merge the two districts with East Pierce.

Two years later, the citizens of the City of Sumner and Pierce County Fire District 1 also voted to join the East Pierce family.

Today, East Pierce serves a population of more than 75,000 living in and around Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, the Ridge Communities, South Prairie, and Wilkeson. The district covers approximately 142 square miles and protects residents from eleven stations – five staffed and five volunteer and one station for the marine unit.

In August, 2009 officials from Pierce County Fire District 8 in Edgewood and the Milton Fire Department entered into an Administrative Services Agreement as the first step towards merging with East Pierce Fire & Rescue.

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.

The FireHouse Newsletter is published quarterly by East Pierce Fire & Rescue. It is written and produced by Teresa McCallion.

## East Pierce Classes and Meetings

### CPR and Basic First Aid Classes

Jan. 15, 16 or 30  
Feb. 13 or Feb. 2  
March 13, 19, or 27  
April 17 or April 24

**Where:** East Pierce Fire & Rescue headquarters station  
18421 Old Buckley Highway  
Bonney Lake, WA

**When:** CPR classes are from 8:30 a.m. until noon  
First Aid classes are from 12:30 to 5 p.m.

Classes are **free** for citizens residing within the jurisdiction of East Pierce Fire & Rescue, including Sumner, Bonney Lake, Lake Tapps, Wilkeson, and South Prairie. As of the first of the year, the cost for non-residents is \$30 for either a CPR or First Aid class, or \$45 for both. Call 253-863-1800 during regular business hours to register!

### East Pierce Fire and Rescue Fire Commissioner's Meetings

The public is welcome to attend the Commissioner's meeting at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month at the headquarters station, 18421 Old Buckley Highway, in Bonney Lake.

## Public Education Programs

East Pierce Fire & Rescue offer the following services:

### Bicycle Helmet Sales and Fitting\*

Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Helmets are sold for \$7 each.

### Life Jacket Sales and Fitting\*

Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life jackets are sold for \$14 each.

### Safe Sitter Classes

Registration information and class schedules are available at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org). Cost: \$30

### FREE CPR and First Aid Classes

Registration information and class schedules are available at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org). Free for East Pierce residents.

### FREE Life Jacket Loaner Program

Wearer must be present for fitting. Free loaner jackets are available at the headquarters station, at 18421 Old Buckley Hwy.

### FREE Child Safety Seat Inspections

Call for an 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.

### FREE Station Tours

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

### FREE Smoke Alarm Installations

Call for an appointment. Includes smoke alarm with 10-year batteries.

### FREE Blood Pressure Checks

Stop by any staffed station during regular business hours. (Subject to staff availability.)

### FREE Fire Extinguisher Training

Learn how to use a fire extinguisher in case of a residential or commercial emergency. Call to register.

\*Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520.

## East Pierce Fire & Rescue Staffed Fire Stations

Station 11	18421 Old Buckley Hwy, Bonney Lake (Headquarters Station)
Station 12	12006 - 214th Ave. E., Bonney Lake
Station 13	800 Harrison Street, Sumner
Station 14	3206 W. Tapps Drive E., Bonney Lake
Station 16	10515 - 234th Ave. E., Buckley



18421 Old Buckley Highway  
Bonney Lake, WA 98391

253-863-1800  
[www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org)

### East Pierce Fire Commissioners

Rick Kuss, Chair	Cheryl Bylin	Raymond Bunk
Mike Cathey	Karlyne McGinnis	Rick Kilbourn
Andrew Longstreth	Victor Proulx	Roy "Red" Mendenhall

### Jerry E. Thorson, Fire Chief

"Exceptional people providing compassionate service and rapid response to our community's diverse needs."

