

# Benton County Fire District **4** NEWS



SPRING 2015

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Benton County Fire District 4 is working to improve how we communicate with our community. We plan to share important information with your family through this newsletter, as well as Facebook and our new web site – [www.bcf4.org](http://www.bcf4.org).

Fire District 4 is proud to provide fire and emergency medical service (EMS) to 15,000 people over 52 square miles, including the City of West Richland. Approximately 36 volunteer and career firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and 6 paramedics respond to an average of 1,200 calls per year.

Many people in our organization continue to give back to the community through the local food bank, senior center, chamber, veterans groups, and our public schools. We appreciate your support and the opportunity to serve our community.

Fire District 4 is a good steward of your tax dollars and believes in being transparent and accountable to its taxpayers. We encourage you to attend a meeting of your locally-elected Board of Fire Commissioners and see how we do business.

We've cut costs by nine percent (\$200,000) and increased our reserves to improve the financial health of your fire district. We operate under a balanced budget and have a history of passing financial and accountability audits by the state. We also aggressively maintain our facilities, emergency apparatus and equipment to extend their usable lives.



Historically, a fire district was simply there to put out fires. Over time, our responsibilities have expanded to other emergency services including fire prevention, technical and water rescue, hazardous materials response, infectious diseases, Emergency Medical Service, and eventually, non-emergency care. Whatever happens, we have systems and plans in place to respond quickly and effectively to save lives.

Stay Safe,  
Chief Bill Whealan

## COME VISIT WITH US!

Your fire district is governed by a three member Board of Fire Commissioners elected by the community. The Board meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. at 2604 Bombing Range Road, West Richland, WA 99353. You can find a copy of the meeting minutes on our web site at [www.bcf4.org](http://www.bcf4.org) under "About Us."

All meetings are open to the public, and we would love to hear what you have to say. If you are unable to attend a meeting, but would like to share a comment or idea, please contact Fire Chief Bill Whealan directly at (509) 967-2945 or [wwhealan@bcfd4.org](mailto:wwhealan@bcfd4.org).

2604 Bombing Range Rd.  
West Richland, WA 99353  
(509) 967-2945  
[www.bcf4.org](http://www.bcf4.org)  
[www.facebook.com/BCFD4](http://www.facebook.com/BCFD4)



**Benton County  
Fire Protection District No. 4**  
2604 Bombing Range Rd.  
West Richland, WA 99353  
(509) 967-2945

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### Like us on Facebook!

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### Disponible en Español

Este boletín está disponible en español  
en nuestro sitio de Internet

[www.bcf4.org](http://www.bcf4.org)

### Volunteer

Fire District 4 is currently seeking  
qualified applicants for immediate and  
future resident firefighter openings.

To apply, or for more information,  
please visit our web site and click on  
VOLUNTEER, or call us directly for more  
information at (509) 967-2945.



Paramedic/Firefighter  
Bonnie Benitz with  
community member  
Marvin (not an actual  
patient)

*EMS accounts for 62% of our  
emergency calls – and that  
number is increasing.*

## EMS LEVY UPDATE

In 2014, medical emergencies  
accounted for 62% of all calls  
received by Fire District 4. In  
fact, we've seen a 45% jump in  
emergency medical service calls  
since voters approved funding for  
an EMS program in 2010.

Our EMS levy provides Basic Life Support with Firefighter/EMTs and Advanced Life Support with Paramedics, as well as an ambulance transport service. It pays for ambulances, medical equipment and supplies, as well as personnel costs to staff another fire station. This change alone has reduced emergency response times by two minutes on average!

Fire District 4 property owners pay 50 cents per 1,000 dollars of assessed value (approximately \$100 per year for the owner of a \$200,000 home) for a 24-hour emergency response. Our EMS levy expires in 2016, and our Board of Fire Commissioners are likely to ask voters to renew it sometime that fall.

## COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD

Fire District 4 was presented The Herb Ganz  
Community Spirit Award at the West Richland  
Area Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet  
on February 21, 2015.



*Pictured above (l to r): Commissioner AJ Hill,  
Commissioner Ralph "Woody" Russell,  
Commissioner Gregg Couch, Logistics Member  
Heather Newton, Paramedic/Firefighter  
Bonnie Benitz, Fire Chief Bill Whealan, and  
Administrative Assistant Slita Bradley*