



Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Benton County Fire District 4 Plans for Population Growth

WEST RICHLAND, WASH. —Benton County Fire District 4 has a plan to respond to the population growth in its service territory. The city of West Richland has grown by almost 25% since 2010. The unincorporated areas of the fire district have experienced a 30% increase in the same amount of time.

“We’ve been on top of this trend for a while now,” said Fire Chief Bill Whealan. “It’s important that we be ahead of the game when planning for emergency services.”

Call volumes have increased 61% for Fire District 4 since 2010. This is reflective of the population increase in the city of West Richland and the unincorporated areas. In the western part of the fire district’s service territory, it can take almost 17 minutes to respond to an emergency call. As a result, the fire district is planning to ask voters to consider a bond to build and equip a station in the area, as well as purchase two fire engines for existing stations to replace those that are approaching the end of their usable lives.

The fire district has built a fire station approximately every 20 years to accommodate population growth in its service territory. Station 410, on Harrington Road, was built in 1977 and Station 420, on Bombing Range Road, was constructed in 1997.

“Adequate facilities and apparatus are important to community safety,” said Chief Whealan. “We’re looking to construct a basic facility that can be expanded as our community grows.”

The third station and apparatus will balance the agency’s emergency response district-wide, reduce response times, and provide additional units to respond during back-to-back emergencies. Architectural and engineering work is under way, which reduces the amount of revenue needed for the project.

If approved by voters, the bond would last for 20 years and cost 28-cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. (It could be paid off early if growth continues for the area.) This means approximately \$84 per year (\$7 per month) for the owner of a \$300,000 home.

The fire district will share more information with the public sometime in the spring of 2018 for consideration and comment. In the meantime, community members with questions about a potential bond measure are encouraged to contact Chief Bill Whealan at (509) 967-2496 or wwhealan@bcfd4.org.

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Benton County Fire District 4 is proud to provide fire and emergency medical service (EMS) to 18,232 people over 52 square miles, including the City of West Richland. Approximately 50 volunteer and career firefighters, emergency medical technicians and paramedics respond to an average of 1,400 calls per year. We appreciate the support of our community and give back through our involvement with the local food bank, senior center, chamber, veterans’ groups, and public schools. Learn more about Fire District 4 at www.bcf4.org, “Like” us on Facebook at /BCFD4 or follow us on Twitter @BCFD4Info.