



Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Benton County Fire District 4 passes 2017 budget

West Richland, Wash. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for Benton County Fire District 4 passed its 2017 budget at a recent meeting. Overall, the fire district is financially healthy with a balanced budget, another clean audit, and adequate reserve funds in case of an emergency.

“We want to thank the community for renewing our levy for emergency medical service,” said Chief Bill Whealan. “That’s a significant part of the funding we use to save lives every day, so thank you!”

Spending priorities for 2017 include an emphasis on funding emergency personnel, apparatus, and facilities maintenance to meet the increasing demand for service. Call volumes have increased 46.4% from 2010-2015. (Final numbers for 2016 won’t be available until after the first of the year.)

Fire District 4 also reports that it paid off bonds issued in 2010 to renovate a station, purchase ambulances, and buy equipment to improve its EMS program. The fire district is currently assessing the possibility of a replacement bond for key apparatus and a station to support the western part of its service area, which has seen significant growth.

Like most fire agencies, daily emergency operations are funded through two property tax levies – one for fire and another for EMS. More costly items, such as apparatus or station improvements, are paid for over time with voter-approved bonds.

In 2017, the fire district also will invest in its fire and emergency medical prevention education efforts. This includes more safety inspections and educating the West Richland community about fire prevention through local schools, homes, and area businesses. Fire district personnel also have introduced a Slip and Fall Prevention program to reduce injuries.

“My grandmother always said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” said Chief Whealan. “The role for fire districts is changing – and we’re ready.”

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Benton County Fire District 4 provides fire and emergency medical service (EMS) to 17,000 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. Learn more about Fire District 4 at www.bcf4.org, “Like” us on Facebook at /BCFD4 or follow us on Twitter @BCFD4Info.