

Benton County Fire District **4** NEWS



SUMMER 2016

BE FIRE-WISE ON YOUR PROPERTY

If you know a firefighter personally, you know that they see things a little differently. What you might regard as just an overgrown bush near your garage (or long grass in the yard), a person trained to fight fires sees as a quick burning fuel source and a long fight to save your home in case of a wildland fire.

Creating a fire barrier to your home and outbuildings is more important than ever in the summer and fall months when it is dry. Some simple tips to protect structures are as follows:

1. Keep landscaping and lawns well-watered
2. Remove dead vegetation near or under all structures
3. Prune trees six to 10 feet up from the ground
4. Move any combustible material (such as stored boxes, stacked newspapers, firewood, or even green plants that can burn easily – like ivy) from the perimeter of any structure

These are some of the most basic recommendations to help your home be resistant to wildfires. Please take a moment to review others at www.firewise.org. Fire District 4 also offers a free home inspection service to provide tailored recommendations to create a defensible space.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Dear Neighbor,

Call volumes for Benton County Fire District 4 continue to climb, particularly for Emergency Medical Service. As of this writing, 77% of all calls were EMS-related. This is up from 63% of all calls in 2015.

Even with higher call volumes, I want you to know that we are ready and prepared to help when you need us. Our taxpayers have built one of the best EMS programs in the county – and I am living proof of this fact.

A year ago, I survived a stroke thanks to the rapid response and skilled paramedics from Fire District 4. Our EMS levy will expire at the end of the year, and Fire District 4 is asking voters to renew it at the same amount during the August election. You can read more about this issue in our newsletter.

Wildland fires continue to be a significant threat for our area. A wet spring caused dense growth of grasses and other vegetation, which has dried out and turned into a dangerous fuel source. Please take a moment to review information in this newsletter about creating a defensible space around structures on your property to help defend them if a fire should happen.

We continue to make progress on our FD Cares program to prevent injuries and reduce health care costs for our community. Our Slip and Fall Prevention class has reached more than 200 people in the area. We're also working to help some local residents better manage a chronic illness, or help us reach them faster in an emergency using innovative lockboxes.

My mother always used to say, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." That's a large part of what we do at Fire District 4 to manage costs and provide you with a higher level of service. We appreciate your support and the opportunity to serve our community every day.



Stay Safe,

BILL WHEALAN
Fire Chief

2604 Bombing Range Rd.
West Richland, WA 99353
(509) 967-2945
www.bcfld4.org
www.facebook.com/BCFD4



Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

2604 Bombing Range Rd.
West Richland, WA 99353
(509) 967-2945

POP
Imprint
Esprit

Like us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/BCFD4

Disponible en Español

Este boletín está disponible en español
en nuestro sitio de Internet

www.bcf4.org

Board Meetings

The Board of Fire

Commissioners meets the 1st and 3rd
Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m.
at 2604 Bombing Range Road,
West Richland, WA 99353.
All meetings are open to the public!

EMS LEVY RENEWAL ON AUGUST BALLOT



EMS is the emergency service our community uses most. In 2015, 63% of all calls were for medical emergencies. (That number has increased to 77% as of the first quarter of 2016.) EMS calls have increased 57% since voters approved funding for the program in 2010.

The EMS levy will expire at the end of the year, and Fire District 4 is asking voters to renew the levy at the same amount (50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value) and remove the expiration date. That means the owner of a \$250,000 home would continue to pay approximately

\$10.42 per month (or \$125 per year) for a 24-hour paramedic response.

Paramedics have approximately 2,000 hours of training to provide Advanced Life Support, which is the highest level of pre-hospital, emergency care available. Fire District 4 also provides Basic Life Support with firefighters and emergency medical technicians, as well as transport services to area hospitals.

Funding from the EMS levy allows the fire district to staff another station, which has reduced ambulance response times by three minutes on average for area residents. In addition to emergency personnel, levy funding is used for training and certifications, ambulances, maintenance, medical equipment, first aid supplies, and equipment replacement.

Removing the levy expiration date will provide a stable funding source and allow Fire District 4 to plan long-term for the EMS program. It also will save money on election costs, which can be as much as \$36,000 every time the fire district is on the ballot. This money would better serve the community by funding life-saving equipment or personnel.

Information about Fire District 4's EMS levy renewal – including a video on its EMS program – can be found at www.bcf4.org/ems-levy-renewal.html. Fire Chief Bill Whealan is also available to answer questions at (509) 967-2496 or wwhealan@bcfd4.org. Thank you for considering our request.