



Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

2604 Bombing Range Rd.
West Richland, WA 99353
(509) 967-2945
www.bcf4.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fire District 4 holds meetings to share information about EMS levy renewal

West Richland, Wash. – Benton County Fire District 4 is holding three public meetings to share information about its levy renewal for Emergency Medical Service (EMS) that is on the August 2nd Primary Election ballot. EMS calls accounted for 77.5 percent of all emergencies for Fire District 4 in the first part of the year.

Community members are invited and encouraged to attend a meeting to learn about the EMS program or ask questions about the levy that funds these services. All meetings will be held at District Headquarters (Station 420), 2604 Bombing Range Rd., West Richland, Wash. 99353:

- Thursday, July 14, from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.
- Thursday, July 21 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, July 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

EMS calls have increased 57% for Fire District 4 just since voters approved funding for the program in 2010. The EMS levy provides transport services, Basic Life Support with Firefighter/EMTs and Advanced Life Support with Paramedics. It also pays to staff a second fire station, which has reduced ambulance response times by three minutes on average.

Fire District 4 is asking voters to renew the EMS levy at the same rate (50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value) before it expires at the end of the year. 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.

The fire district also is asking voters to approve removing the expiration date for its most widely used emergency service. A permanent EMS levy will provide a stable funding source and allow Fire District 4 to plan long-term for this important program. It also will save money on election costs, which can be as much as \$36,000 every time the fire district needs to be on the ballot. Fire district officials say that this money would better serve the community by funding life-saving equipment or personnel.

The EMS levy renewal requires a 60% approval to pass, and ballots must be postmarked by August 2nd to count. More information is available on Fire District 4's web site at www.bcf4.org. Fire Chief Bill Whealan is also available to answer questions 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 17,000 people over 52 square miles, including the City of West Richland. Approximately 50 volunteer and career firefighters, emergency medical technicians and paramedics responded to 1,322 calls in 2015, 63% of which were for Emergency Medical Service. EMS calls have increased to 77.5% for the first quarter of 2016. Learn more about Fire District 4 at www.bcf4.org, "Like" us on Facebook at /BCFD4 or follow us on Twitter @BCFD4Info.