

ASOTIN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 NEWS

Spring 2016

Chief's Corner

Asotin County Fire District 1 is proud to serve 14,000 people over 120 square miles of land and 35 miles of shoreline. Our volunteer firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics respond to an average of 2,600 calls per year – 90% of which are for emergency medical service (EMS).

Fire District 1 has the lowest levy rate for fire protection and EMS of any provider in the county. We operate under a balanced budget and have passed all financial and accountability audits by the state. Our dedicated volunteers donate their time to save lives and property, which saves our taxpayers approximately \$1,000,000 every year.

We are the only fire district in the county to guarantee a fire and EMS response 24-hours a day. Speaking of EMS, our Board of Fire Commissioners likely will ask voters to renew the EMS levy at the same rate this fall and remove the expiration date. EMS accounts for 90% of all calls. It's important that we have a stable funding source for our most widely-used emergency service.

There is more information about the EMS levy renewal in this newsletter, and we hope you will take part in those discussions.

We are continuing to make progress on the new fire station. Our goal is to finance the building renovations with a federal grant. However, there is only one grant of this kind and it is a very competitive process. The fire district recently completed a required wage survey of our community, and the next step is to apply for the grant this summer. As we have said all along, taxpayer funding may be necessary if we are not selected.

Our fire district continues to add new ways for communicating with our taxpayers, too. It's important that we report back to you about important public safety issues and projects that we accomplish. We have launched our first web site (www.acfd1.org) and even have a Facebook page (search: Asotin County Fire District 1)! If you think of other things we should be doing, I would appreciate hearing from you. Contact me anytime at (509) 758-5181 or nhardin@acfd1.org.

Sincerely,

NOEL HARDIN
Fire Chief



Yard Debris and Burning

Winter is nearly over and you may be left with a yard full of wind-blown limbs and debris. Burning is a popular way to clean up your yard. To do so safely, precautions should be taken and local regulations followed.



In Asotin County open burning is allowed from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on the following days, provided there are no air-quality or weather-related restrictions:

April 1 - May 31

October 15 - December 15

Fires and embers must be completely extinguished by 5 p.m.!

To verify that conditions are suitable for the day, please call Asotin County at (509) 243-2002.

The term 'open burning' may be misleading—not everything can be burned. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, lawn clippings, leaves, railroad ties, demolition debris, or building materials.

Burn piles must be 4' x 4' x 3' and located at a distance of 50' from any structure or combustible material. As a reminder, burn barrels are prohibited in Washington State and carry a hefty fine for usage.

If you have questions, you can also contact Asotin County Fire District 1 at (509) 758-5181. Thank you!



ASOTIN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1

2314 Appleside Boulevard

Clarkston, WA 99403

(509) 758-5181

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Expanding Communications

Asotin County Fire District 1 is taking steps to improve communication with its taxpayers.

Our new website will be a resource of information about your local fire district: www.acfd1.org. And, please "Like" our



new Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/asotincountyfd1

to receive regular updates!

EMS Levy Renewal

Fire District 1 responded to 2,626 calls for help in 2015 – 90% of which were EMS-related. Calls for EMS have increased almost 38% since voters approved funding for the program in 2011. It provides Basic Life Support with firefighter/EMTs and Advanced Life Support with paramedics through a partnership with the city of Lewiston. The EMS levy will expire if not renewed by voters.

This August, the fire district will likely ask voters to renew the EMS levy and to remove the expiration date. A permanent EMS levy would provide a stable funding source for the most widely-used emergency service. It would save money on elections, which can cost as much as \$25,000 every time the fire district needs to be on the ballot. This money would better serve the community by funding life-saving equipment or emergency personnel.

If approved by voters, the EMS levy would continue funding at 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. That means the owner of a \$200,000 home would pay \$100 per year or approximately \$8.33 per month for a 24-hour paramedic response. The EMS levy pays for emergency personnel, training and certifications, ambulances, maintenance, medical equipment, first aid supplies, and equipment replacement.

The Board of Fire Commissioners will hold two public meetings to discuss the EMS levy renewal. The first will be held April 6 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the new facility (2377 Appleside Blvd., Clarkston, WA 99403). On April 12, the second meeting will be held during the regular board meeting at 5:00 p.m. in the fire station (2314 Appleside Blvd., Clarkston, WA 99403). Fire commissioners will vote on a resolution to place the EMS levy renewal on the August Primary Election ballot this year. The public is invited to attend and comment on the proposal. Those unable to attend the meetings are encouraged to mail their comments to Fire Chief Noel Hardin or email him at nhardin@acfd1.org.



Asotin County Fire District 1 recently acquired a new ambulance with funding from a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters grant, saving taxpayers \$145,000.