

Benton County Fire District **4** NEWS



FALL 2017

WILDLAND FIRE SAFETY

With the recent wildfires around the region, it may be on your mind...what would I do? We don't want to cause anyone alarm - at this time there are no evacuation notices in Benton County Fire District 4. But, it never hurts to have the information in advance so that if you ever needed a plan to evacuate, you could start to answer questions like, "What would I bring?" "What do I do with my animals?" A few good resources for information are:

- The Washington State Department of Natural Resources provides excellent information about wildland fire preparedness. Learn more at: www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/wildfire/wildfire-preparedness/emergency-preparedness.
- The International Association of Fire Chiefs has prepared a document "Ready, Set, Go: Wildland Fire Action Plan" for homeowners. You can find this resource at: [www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Readysetgo\(1\).pdf](http://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Readysetgo(1).pdf).
- Sign up to receive evacuation alerts through Code Red at <https://public.coderedweb.com/cne/en-US/BF5CA95E04FE>.
- Reduce your risk by contacting our fire district to survey and make recommendations to protect your property from wildland fires. This service is free of charge for Fire District 4 taxpayers. Call our office at (509) 967-2945 to schedule a time for us to visit.

MESSAGE FROM FIRE CHIEF BILL WHEALAN

Fall is on the way, and we are looking forward to cooler temperatures. This summer has been one of the worst on record for wildland fires in our region. Your support for Benton County Fire District 4 means that we can dedicate personnel and apparatus and put these fires out faster. Thank you! When we help respond to wildfires not in our backyard, these costs are fully reimbursed by state and federal agencies, and do not impact our emergency service levels at home.



Your support also helped Benton County Fire District 4 improve its insurance rating with the Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau in the unincorporated areas of the fire district. We improved from a 6 to a 5 in the county. We maintained our rating of 4 in the City of West Richland, as well. (The lower the number, the better we are doing.)

The new rating took effect September 1, and is directly linked to the amount you pay in fire insurance premiums for your home or business. If you live in the county, we encourage you to contact your insurance agent or company to see if this improvement translates to a lower premium.

The WSRB rates fire districts based on their emergency service capabilities, including stations, apparatus and personnel. While we improved this year, we have some work to do to maintain this rating in the future.

For example, we need to improve emergency response times in the western part of our service area. (Residents in this area can wait as long as 16 minutes and 45 seconds for an emergency response.) To do this, we would build and equip a station in the Red Mountain area. Another station would benefit all fire district residents by improving our ability to respond to multiple emergencies that come in at the same time. Three fire engines owned by our community also are approaching the end of their 20-year life spans and will need to be replaced.

Response times, station locations and reliable apparatus are key to maintaining our community's insurance rating. Our operations budget is not able to cover these purchases and still maintain the same level of service. As a result, we are considering asking our community to approve a bond for these capital projects sometime in 2018.

Finally, we wanted to thank the West Richland Area Chamber of Commerce for selecting Benton County Fire District 4 as the Grand Marshal during the Veterans Day Parade. We are honored to represent the men and women in the United States armed forces during this event.



Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

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Board Meetings

The Board of Fire Commissioners meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at 2604 Bombing Range Road, West Richland. All meetings are open to the public!

Station Tours

We provide station tours on request to anyone who is interested in learning more about their local fire district - all ages welcome!

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

October 8-14, 2017

A large part of what we do is to prevent fires and injuries before they happen. We do this through prevention and public education activities in the community and local schools.

The theme for Fire Prevention Week this year is "Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!" In case of a fire, everyone needs to have an escape plan. Here's how you can be prepared in case of a fire:

- Draw a map of your home that shows all windows and doors.
- Mark two exits from each room and a path to the outside from each exit.
- Practice your home fire drill twice a year. Conduct one at night and one during the day with everyone in your home, and practice using different ways out.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- Make sure the number of your home is clearly marked and easy for the fire department to find.
- Close doors behind you as you leave – this may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.

More safety tips can be found at the National Fire Protection Association web site at <http://www.nfpa.org/escapeplan>.

THANK YOU, VETERANS!

Benton County Fire District 4 invites the community to the Veterans Day Parade sponsored by the West Richland Area Chamber of Commerce. The parade kicks off on Saturday, November 11 at 9:30 a.m. in downtown West Richland. We want to thank the men and women who have served or are serving in the military at home and abroad. On this day and every day, we remember the dedication, service and sacrifice you have made for this great country. Thank you!

