

Benton County Fire District **4** NEWS



SPRING 2018

COMMUNITY PARAMEDICINE PARTNERS

Fire District 4 has introduced FD Cares, a community paramedicine program designed to improve patient care and reduce non-emergency calls to 911. As part of the program, the fire district has introduced Lock Boxes to allow emergency responders quick access to homes of residents with known medical conditions. Lock Boxes reduce damage to a residence too when trying to gain access during a medical emergency.

It also has partnered with several organizations to refer patients in need of community assistance for issues such as wheel chair ramps, responding to changing medical conditions, and in-home inspections to mitigate fall hazards. One partnership is with Chaplaincy Health Care where the team focuses on the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of patients referred to them. Ultimately, both agencies work to provide a mobile integrated health system with better patient outcomes.

“We are very proud of our partnership with Fire District 4 and the assistance we provide FD Cares,” said Executive Director Gary Castillo.

MESSAGE FROM FIRE CHIEF BILL WHEALAN

The year has gotten off to a great start here at Benton County Fire District 4. The first thing I'd like to say is thank you. We couldn't save lives and property without your support.

We have spent the past year communicating with you about plans for a fire station and apparatus replacement. While operations are funded from a fire and EMS levy, large capital projects are financed through bonds. This is because the operations budget is not enough to cover these purchases and maintain the same level of service. (In 2016 Fire District 4 paid off a bond that purchased ambulances and renovated a station to improve our community's EMS program.)

We plan to build and equip a fire station in the western part of our service territory, where it can take almost 17 minutes to respond to an emergency currently. Our goal is to purchase three fire engines for some that are approaching the end of their usable lives and maintain our community's insurance rating. These capital projects will balance our emergency response district-wide, reduce response times, and provide additional units to respond during back-to-back emergencies.

Call volumes have increased 62.5% since 2010. This is reflective of the population increase in the City of West Richland and the unincorporated areas we serve. Interestingly enough, the fire district has a history of building a station every 20 years, and we're right on track.

Our Board of Fire Commissioners will consider a resolution to place a bond issue on the August Primary Election ballot. The bond would be for 20 years or less, and cost 28-cents per \$1,000 of assessed value (\$7 per month for the owner of a \$300,000 home). Join us for one of the meetings at 6 p.m. on March 22 or April 5 at Station 420 on 2604 Bombing Range if you have questions.

If you're unable to make the meeting, please feel free to contact me with questions at (509) 967-2496 or wwhealan@bcfd4.org. All communication is welcome and becomes part of the public record.



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Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

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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 6:00 p.m. at 2604 Bombing Range Road, West Richland. All meetings are open to the public!

Station Tours

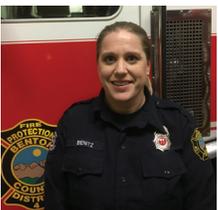
We provide station tours on request to anyone who is interested in learning more about their local fire district - all ages welcome!

EMPLOYEES ON THE MOVE

Benton County Fire District 4 appreciates the community support for our firefighters and paramedics. We are proud to announce recent promotions of emergency personnel.



Tom Harper joined BCFD4 as a volunteer in 2003. He was hired full time in 2007 and was promoted to Lieutenant in 2011. In 2017 he was promoted to Captain. Capt. Harper was born and raised in Richland and now lives in West Richland with his two children.



Bonnie Benitz has the distinction of being the first female Lieutenant and now Captain with our fire district. Capt. Benitz debated between becoming a nun or a firefighter from a young age. As the middle child of seven, all her siblings have been driven to serve their communities either in the fire service, military, hospitals, or law enforcement. Capt. Benitz holds extensive training credentials and is working for a fire science and emergency management degree.



Captain Paul Carlyle has accepted the position of EMS Officer for the fire district. This is a new, full-time position that reflects the high use of emergency medical service by our community. Capt. Carlyle was born and raised in the Tri-Cities, and started with the fire district as a volunteer Firefighter/EMT in 1999.



Tony Vining was hired as a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic, and was promoted to Lieutenant after six years with the fire district. Lt. Vining chose emergency services as a career because of the challenges it provides, and to make a difference in his community.

Interested in Becoming a Firefighter or EMT?

We'd be happy to discuss your future plans and provide information about volunteer opportunities or career paths in the emergency services industry. Please contact Capt. Benitz at (509) 967-2945.