



Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 17, 2017
Contact: Bill Whealan, Fire Chief
Office (509) 967-2496 Cell (509) 430-7993 wwhealan@bcfd4.org

Response times improve for Benton County Fire District 4 *Improvement needed for west side of district, says Fire Chief*

WEST RICHLAND, WASH. – Emergency response times for Benton County Fire District 4 have improved in the first quarter of 2017. In 2016, it took the agency an average of 8:47 to reach an emergency after being dispatched. As of March 31, 2017, that time had improved by 1:06 for an average response time of 7:41.

“Every second counts in a fire or medical emergency,” said Fire Chief Bill Whealan. “We are pleased with these numbers, but there is still room for improvement.”

Chief Whealan is referring to the west side of the fire district. Response times vary depending on where an emergency occurs in Benton County Fire District 4’s service territory. For example, emergencies that occur close to the agency’s two staffed stations on Bombing Range Road and Harrington Road see a response time of 5:31 to 10 minutes.

More concerning for fire district personnel are residents in the west side of the fire district. Response times can take as long as 16:45 minutes in these areas.

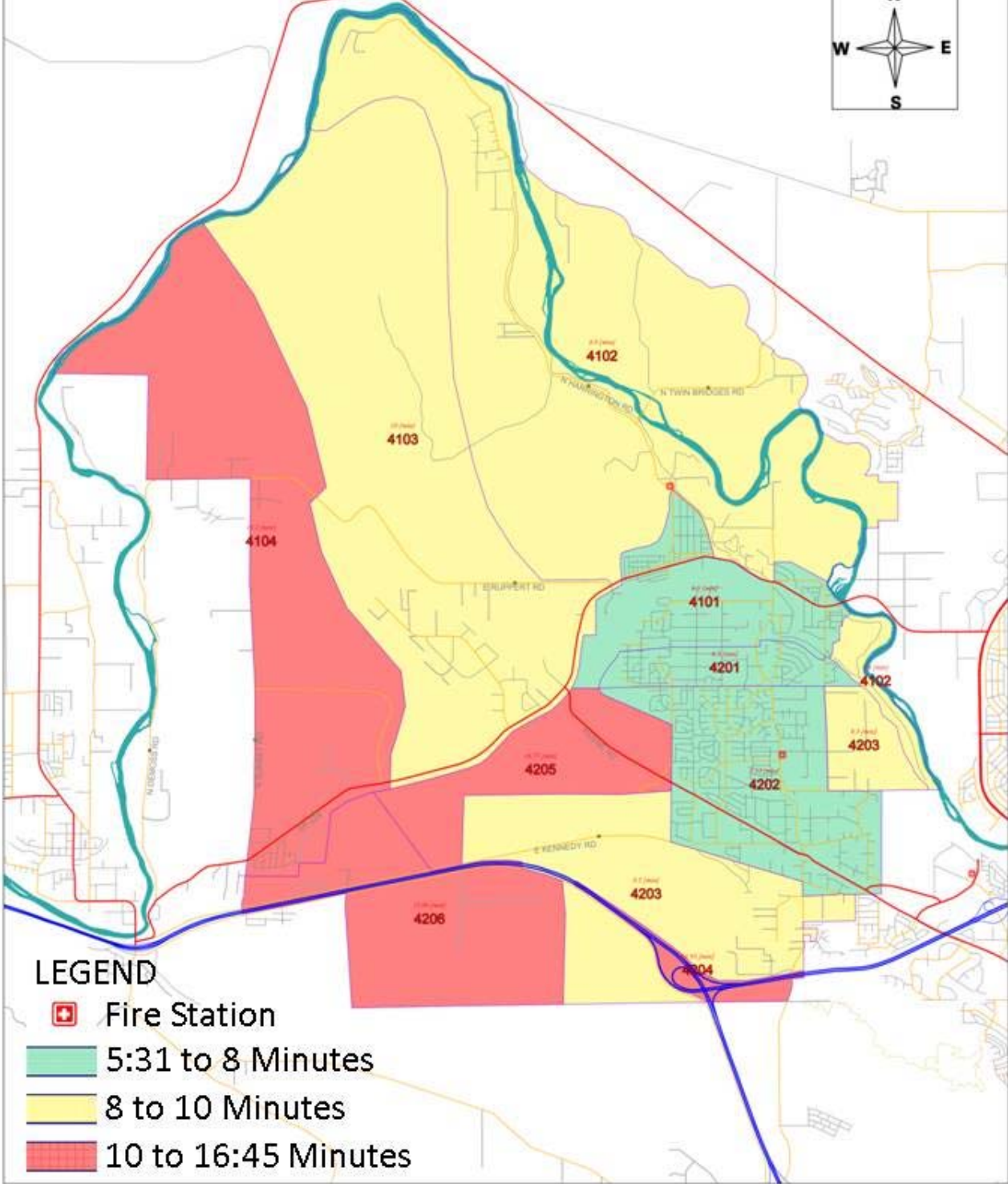
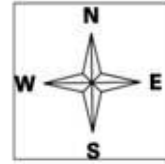
Benton County Fire District 4 has been planning for some time to build a new station on the west side to reduce response times. Staffing and equipping a third station also will improve emergency response capabilities district-wide and the agency’s ability to respond to multiple emergencies that come in at the same time.

Growth is coming from the City of West Richland, the school district and economic development efforts around the wine industry. The fire district purchased property in the Red Mountain area and is considering a bond sometime in 2018 to fund the construction and replace aging apparatus. There will be a lengthy public process before a final decision is made by the Board of Fire Commissioners.





Like most fire agencies, daily emergency operations at Benton County Fire District 4 are funded through two property tax levies – one for fire and another for EMS. Capital items, such as apparatus and facilities, are usually funded through voter-approved bonds that sunset. In 2016, Benton County Fire District 4 paid off a bond that purchased ambulances and renovated a station to improve its EMS program.

Here’s how response times look on a map of the district:

Benton County Fire District 4 Response Times



LEGEND

-  Fire Station
-  5:31 to 8 Minutes
-  8 to 10 Minutes
-  10 to 16:45 Minutes

###

Benton County Fire District 4 provides 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 respond to an average of 1,400 calls per year. Learn more about Fire District 4 at www.bcf4.org, "Like" us on Facebook at /BCFD4 or follow us on Twitter @BCFD4Info.