



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF BERG

Happy New Year from all of us at Big Lake Fire. 2022 was a challenging year. There were more structure fires than we have seen in previous years, more sick individuals than we've ever seen, we still had to navigate Covid protocols, and as a department we did more CPR calls in 2022 than I can remember in my 30+ years on the department.

In 2022, we again tried to tell the community what our needs are. We hosted multiple community meetings where we discussed how bonds & levies work, our current apparatus replacement schedule, and how fixing our need would affect your taxes. The attendance was extremely poor. For 76 years, Big Lake Volunteer Firefighters have worked diligently to always have the communities back, no matter what situation they are in. And a few times in my career, it has definitely shown that you've had ours. The new station one, that is at the north end of the lake, was one of those times. This facility was built for 60 years of service and was built when construction was rather inexpensive, compared to today's prices. It replaced our old station one, that served us well, but we outgrew many, many years ago. After losing this third levy

request, after all the great service our volunteer firefighters have given, we feel we've been failed. The fire service is a very expensive business to be in and I feel we are being as fiscally responsible as possible for as busy as this department is. It is unfortunate for those 800 people that voted yes for the levy, because they understand the need for us to be able to continue to provide outstanding service. New trucks and equipment save lives, whether it's your life, your family, community members or just people passing through. Fire trucks are a very mechanical device. Water can sit and rust out every part of its internal mechanisms. You never know when they are going to give up. This is obviously a safety issue, especially with our aging fleet. I also wonder what the volunteer firefighter, who puts everything on the line for their community for little to no pay, thinks when they see that no vote come out. In the near future, we will have to find some type of funding to maintain our fire truck fleet. I hope in the future, when we ask again, you will really consider the impact of your vote. I wouldn't be asking if we didn't need your help.

On another note, Big Lake Fire Department has a rating of 5, which is one of the lowest in Skagit County, even as low as some of the career departments. As Chief, I have worked very hard to secure this rating and keep this rating. This rating gives us (as a community) a lower home insurance fire rating. This is a cost savings directly to you. By not having updated equipment, we will lose this rating and you will pay more for your property fire insurance. I don't understand why we wouldn't want to put that money towards new equipment that saves lives and property but instead, we are going to forfeit it to the insurance industry.

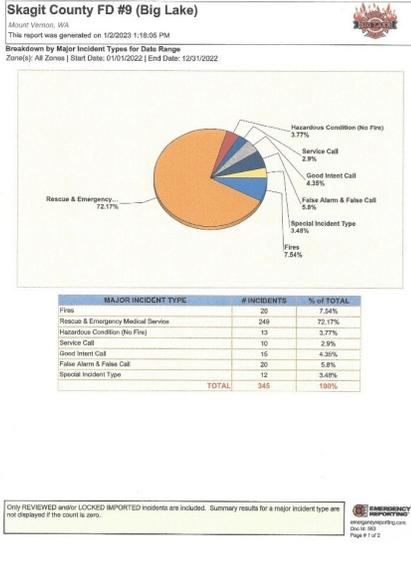
For the 800 that voted yes, we really appreciate your support and so do your volunteers.

"We still make house calls"

Chief Berg

2022 CALL VOLUME

Big Lake Fire saw its highest call volume in its history in 2022. They responded to a total of 345 calls. This included responding to 19 structure fires, 5 wildland fires, 2 other fires, 249 medical/rescue calls, 13 hazardous conditions, 10 service calls, 15 good intent calls, 20 false alarms and 12 special incidents. The total sum of all individual firefighter responses was 2,280. We even had 8 firefighters that responded to over 100 calls each, just this year.



Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type

INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
100 - Fire, other	1	0.29%
111 - Building fire	19	5.51%
131 - Passenger vehicle fire	1	0.29%
141 - Forest, wood or wildland fire	5	1.45%
300 - Rescue, EMS incident, other	3	0.87%
311 - Medical assist, non-EMS crew	12	3.48%
320 - Emergency medical service, other	4	1.16%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	190	55.07%
322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries	19	5.51%
323 - Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV/Ped)	1	0.29%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries	19	5.51%
360 - Water & ice-related rescue, other	1	0.29%
400 - Hazardous condition, other	1	0.29%
412 - Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	1	0.29%
444 - Power line down	8	2.32%
485 - Attempted burglary, illegal action, other	3	0.87%
520 - Water problem, other	2	0.58%
531 - Smoke or odor removal	1	0.29%
550 - Public service assistance, other	1	0.29%
551 - Assisted police or other governmental agency	1	0.29%
554 - Animal incident	3	0.87%
561 - Unsanitized building	1	0.29%
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup	1	0.29%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled enroute	14	4.06%
651 - Smoke alarm, siren of alarm	1	0.29%
755 - Smoke detector activation due to malfunction	1	0.29%
756 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	18	5.22%
788 - CO detector activation due to malfunction	1	0.29%
800 - Special type of incident, other	1	0.29%
911 - Citizen complaint	11	3.19%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	345	100%

Only REVIEWED and/or LOCKED IMPORTED incidents are included. Summary results for a major incident type are not displayed if the count is zero.

EMERGENCY REPORTING
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FIREFIGHTER SPOTLIGHT

Doug Richter joined the Big Lake Fire Department in 1978. He has worn many hats in all of his years at Big Lake Fire including safety officer, lieutenant, captain, assistant chief and chief. He is an army veteran and fought in the Vietnam war. Doug brings a wealth of mechanical knowledge to the department. He can wire or repair almost anything. He can rebuild your transmission and hack your computer in the same day. Having a mechanical firefighter has served Big Lake Fire well, as he's been a pump operator on some of the biggest fires our community has ever had. It's pretty amazing that he has served our community for over 45 years.



PANCAKE FEED

It's back! After taking 3 years off due to Covid, we are once again going to have our pancake feed. Mark your calendar's for Saturday, March 11th.

FOOD DRIVE / CHRISTMAS PARADE

This year's Christmas Parade we collected 1,100 pounds of food that was donated to the Clear Lake Food Bank. Thanks to all that donated!



LEVY FAILED - WHAT'S NEXT?

The commissioners formed an advisory committee last summer to help figure out a way for our fire district to raise funds to update our fleet. After several meetings, the advisory committee voted unanimously to put a levy increase on the ballot (instead of a bond). The amount they decided was a little more than what the commissioners ultimately decided to ask for, which was .28 cents per thousand. This would've cost a homeowner with a \$900,000 home approximately \$252 more year; a \$700,000 home would've been \$196 more a year and a \$300,000 home would've been \$84 more a year.

The commissioners held three separate meetings to try and inform our residents of our urgent need to pass this levy. Why the urgent need? Two reasons: 1) Our oldest engine that REALLY needs replacing is a 1984. It's 38 years old. And 2) the cost of fire engines increase dramatically every year. Example: in 2006, our newest engine cost us \$320,000.00. Now that same fire engine new will cost about \$750,000.00. The longer we wait, the more it will cost our taxpayers.

We know the assessor's office decision to mail out their assessed value increases right before the vote most likely had an impact on people's decision to vote no. We were deeply saddened by this but definitely out of our control. We still need to update our fleet.

Without the levy increase, the fire district is only allowed a 1% increase over the previous year. For 2023, that means we will receive \$3,338 more over last year. I encourage you all to take a look at your tax statements. The fire district is only one of two taxes that actually decreased last year. Please help us to be able to help you.

The commissioners will be forming a new finance advisory committee to discuss options going forward. If you'd like to be a part of that committee, please email secretary@biglakefire.org.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

We know there are many new people in our community, so we just want to send out a reminder that our firefighters are VOLUNTEERS. This means they receive little to no monetary compensation. They miss birthday dinners, holiday dinners, other family functions and some nights they get little to no sleep, and yes still have to go to their paying jobs. They also spend countless evenings and weekends training so they can be prepared to help you in your time of need.

COMMUNITY ROOM COORDINATOR

We are looking for a volunteer to coordinate various events, training sessions and various community meetings. Due to our recent budget cuts, we are looking for someone to volunteer. If interested, please email secretary@biglakefire.org. We will be taking letters of interest until February 1st.

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