



Hello, Big Lake Community!

2020 has brought a lot of challenges to our world and our fire department is no exception. Our number one concern is the safety of our community and our firefighters. With that in mind, the firefighters have had to make many changes on how they operate. From medical calls they respond to as well as how to get training completed. Your Board of Commissioners also were dealt some difficult challenges early on in the pandemic due to state mandates about meetings and making decisions. For the last seven months, all board meetings have been completed via Zoom due to proclamations from the governor.

Thankfully, FEMA awarded our department a grant of \$6,000 to help cover some of our COVID expenses. This included a new washer and dryer and personal protective equipment.

We hope for a vaccine soon and hope to get back to a normal life. Please don't forget to check on your neighbors and the elderly in our community.



Community Room Dedication

On August 15, 2020, your Board of Commissioners, along with Chief Brett Berg and Secretary Tracy Berg, had the pleasure of attending a very special celebration. With the efforts of a small committee of community members, made up of Pam Baird, Mike Casey and Wendy Belanger, we dedicated our Training/Community Room to Robert and Becky Gates. The Gates' have been ardent supporters of our community for over twenty years and have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to Big Lake Fire, as well as the Sedro Woolley School District, Big Lake Elementary School, Sedro Woolley Food Bank and numerous others. Their latest donation made it possible for us to acquire and prepare to install a new backup generator.

With the support and endorsement of Chief Berg, Pam and Mike approached the Board during the summer of 2019 with the idea of finding a way to honor the Gates' for their unselfish support over the years. They received enthusiastic approval from Fire District #9 Commissioners to honor the Gates' by naming the Training/Community Center – The Robert and Becky Gates Community Center - and to create a “Wall of Honor” to publicly acknowledge many individuals who over the years, rigorously supported the Big Lake Fire Department and community. What a nice way to recognize those, past and present, that have helped make the Big Lake community a great place to live. In a few months, with the help of Bob Harthorne

from Harthorne Hagen Architects, they presented the Board with a final draft like what you now see outside the door.

After getting approval, the next step was to find a way to make it happen. Mike, Pam and Wendy solicited donations and recruited the necessary help to get the project underway. Brian Johnson at Meyer Sign produced the sign but installation was still needed. The timing coincided with the need of a project for one of our local Boy Scouts. Bodee Belanger is working toward his Eagle Scout and so this was a natural fit. Bodee engaged his grandfather Bill Yarcho as a technical advisor. Bodee took on the planning, materials acquisition and labor for the sign installation and did a terrific job.

The Board wishes to thank all of those involved with the project and of course, the Gates'

Pam Baird, Mike Casey, Wendy Belanger - Committee

Bill Yarcho, Bob Harthorne, Brian Johnson, Bodee Belanger, Brad Bodin (Electrician SWSD) E&E Lumber

Community members are encouraged to stop by the station to check out the Center's sign located at the back of the station at the entrance to the Training Center.

(Article contributed by Bruce Thomson and Pam Baird)



New Generator

Since the new fire station was built in 2014, the Fire District has been looking at ways to obtain a large generator to operate the building in the event we have a major and prolonged power outage in our area.

In the last couple years, after a very generous offer by Robert and Becky Gates to match donations dollar for dollar, we have secured the needed funding to purchase and install the generator and propane fuel tanks.

A big "Thank You" goes out to a number of Big Lake residents as well as the Big Lake Fire Fighters Association and Robert and Becky Gates for their substantial donations toward the cost of the generator and installation.

We are happy to report that NO TAXPAYER DOLLARS were used on this project even though the total expenses exceeded \$60,000.

Be comforted to know, that if needed for a major disaster, the fire station could now be utilized for food and shelter for many of our residents in that time of need.



Firefighter Training

In early March of this year, we had the opportunity to burn a house in Big Lake. It was a great opportunity for our new recruits to learn about fire from our more experienced firefighters.

Fire Safety Day

This year, due to COVID, the elementary school kids were not in school during fire safety week, so two of our firefighters, Dennis Spinnie and Phill Zimmerman, spent an entire afternoon at the school to hand out fire safety information to the kids as they came to school to get their pictures taken. Once school is back in session, we are hoping to have the kids over to the station for our usual fire safety session.



Painting of Lake Cavanaugh Station

Mason Johnson, of Big Lake Boy Scout Troop 4427, chose the Big Lake Fire Department for his Eagle Project where he spent countless hours cleaning, prepping and painting our Lake Cavanaugh Road Station (Station 3) this summer. We would like to thank him for all his time on this!



9/11 Parade

We held our annual 9/11 Parade to honor those that gave their ultimate sacrifice. A Skagit County Sheriff led 44 trucks from all over the county around Big Lake to honor the lives lost on 9/11.



Association Banner Board

If anyone is interested in having their banner on the Association banner board, please contact Mark Redis at 360-630-0546.

New Recruits

We are please to announce three of our newest firefighters have stepped up to attend the Skagit County Recruit Academy. They will spend over 200 hours attending, studying and testing for this academy that they will finish up in December. Good luck Nathan, Michael and Braden! We also have four new community members that have joined recently. Welcome Erin, Chris, Paul and Isaiah!

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