



HELITAC CREW

Over the past seven years, we have seen our community each summer get drier and drier creating an increasing risk in our community. The Big Lake Fire Department has spent this time making wildland firefighting a priority in our community. In past years we have sent a good portion of our firefighters through a red card class to certify them to fight wildland fires as well as increase skills and maintain currency in our wildland certifications.

Each year, we have received matching grants from the Department of Natural Resources to increase our equipment and training. This is critical to our community as we have seen huge rising costs and less than adequate funding to respond to rising issues in our community. We are truly thankful for the external help we have received.

In the attached picture, one engine is from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the other from the Forest Service. Both have helped us decrease our response times to brush and wildland fires and has given us assistance in our arsenal to stop fires between homes and getting into state lands. We have increased our training and reduced the risk for our firefighters.

Pictured are the Big Lake Firefighters in their yellow personal protective equipment and the Helitac crew from the DNR that lease space from our Fire District each year. We are proud to work with the DNR crews and honored they have chosen Big Lake as the location to call the Helitac crew home for the fire season. We feel it is a great partnership.

Having this resource in our community and region has helped us tremendously to

control the fires. We appreciate the partnership we have created between the two entities. We have their back and they have ours, for a safer community. We consider us Partners in Prevention and Suppression.

This year, they flew on 43 local missions from June through September.

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF BERG

As many of our community members move towards electric vehicles, bicycles, etc. the Big Lake Fire Department is trying to get ahead of the lithium-ion world. How do we put out these fires that have been known to be difficult and time consuming or in some cases impossible and just have to burn themselves out? The Big Lake Firefighter's Association has just purchased a car fire blanket. The firefighters just received training on how to orchestrate the blanket in a timely fashion. We know the vehicle can not be put out so our training was about covering the vehicle and taking 50% of it's oxygen away while it's burning. I am proud to say that we are one of the first in the county to have a car fire blanket. This blanket has multiple other uses such as covering E-bikes, scooters, or even power equipment that could be found in your garage. Our first act of business may be to try to remove your vehicle away from your garage, your house or other vehicles and then we will try to cover it and try to slow the burn time down. These fires have been uncommon but we want to be ready, just in case.

Chief Berg

EMT CLASS

We currently have three of our volunteers, (Tove Schweizer, Israel Villalon and Michael Bejar), attending EMT class. This entails 200 hours of classroom time as well as over 200 hours of study time.

ACADEMY

These three started the South Skagit Recruit Academy last month! They will spend the next three months at Skagit County Fire District #3 learning all the parts of being a firefighter including using fire hose, ladders, forcible entry, search and rescue, etc. This academy is



200 in person hours not including the study time. After academy they will go through state testing for Firefighter 1, Hazmat Awareness and Hazmat Operations. Pictured left to right: Kraig Ekstein, Jon Nilsen, Adam McIntyre.

COMMISSIONER MCMAHAN

We want to thank Brian McMahan for his many years of service to the Big Lake community as a volunteer firefighter and then as a commissioner. He brought over 30 years of fire experience to our department and community. We wish him well in his new venture as fire chief in Arizona.

COMMISSIONER HUDSON

Due to Brian McMahan's resignation, the Board of Commissioners recently appointed Herold Hudson to the vacant commissioner position. Commissioner Hudson started visiting Big Lake in 1987 and moved here permanently in 1993. He brings with him a diverse business and service background that will serve Fire District 9 well. He has the business experience, education, proven record and passion for which the Fire Commissioner position demands. This position couples with his proven leadership achievements, organizational skills and experience working with Administrators, Councils, government agencies and local, state, and national representatives.

ASSOCIATION UPDATE

The Big Lake Firefighter's Association is sincerely grateful for our community's continued and generous support. Our 59th Annual Fireworks Fundraiser was a tremendous success thanks to all of you and all the businesses who support it. Our Association members do their best to use your donations wisely so we can provide the best service possible. The Skagit County Fire District #9's resources are unfortunately aging. The Association is doing what we can to fill the gap, so the department's life-saving equipment stays in service. From this year's donations, we have ordered new radios for our ambulance and fire engine that will replace the soon

to be obsolete technology. To battle the ever-evolving auto industry, we have also purchased an electric vehicle fire blanket. We have also purchased new scene lighting for our trucks to keep everyone safe. Every volunteer is here to serve you and it is an absolute honor for us all. We thank you again for your amazing support!

* Association Vice President, Joe Fleming

9/11 PARADE

We had an amazing showing of people roadside for our 22nd Annual 9/11 Parade. This year's parade included 40 emergency vehicles from all over the county. We are very thankful that so many people have not forgotten that tragic day in 2001.



GARAGE SALE

Community members Mike and Jody Clemo (of Walkerland Ranch), held a garage sale back in July where they donated all proceeds to the Big Lake Firefighters Association. We cannot thank them enough for the generous donation of both their time and money!

DNR GRANT

This summer we were awarded a grant through the Department of Natural Resources to purchase tablets for our brush trucks. These tablets will help us locate fires as well as rescue patients throughout the Walker Valley ORV Park. Amazingly, this grant will fully fund the computers, meaning the District does not have a minimum match like most grants.

FIRE SAFETY WEEK

Fire Safety Week this year is October 8th through the 14th. If you have kids at Big Lake Elementary, your kids will be coming to the fire station this week to learn about "Cooking Safety Starts with You"! For more information you can visit www.nfpa.org!

BBQ BANQUET

Every year in February, the Fire District holds an award banquet with dinner to recognize the firefighters for the year's accomplishments. This year, we had a house fire at the beginning of the banquet that took over half our crew away for the rest of the evening. So, in August, the Firefighter's Association hosted a BBQ for the firefighter's and their families and the remainder of the awards were given out including:

2022 Most Calls – Mark Redis

2022 Firefighter of the Year – Ryan Berg

2022 Rookie of the Year – Troy Peterson

2022 Most Inspirational Firefighter – Ashlee Berg

2022 Most Improved Firefighter – Tove Schweizer

2022 Chief's Awards – Phill Zimmerman, Dennis Spinnie and Bill Vervaart

TRUCK PUMP TESTING

We have been trying to educate the community about our need for a new fire engine: This is just one reason why we need a new fire engine:

In September, we had a company come test the pumps on our fire engines. This testing is required annually and ensures the pumps are in a ready state to help our citizens.

During testing this year, our oldest engine (A 1984 Ford) failed its pump test. These pumps have water in them 24/7, meaning the pipes are eventually going to degrade and fail. As we pressure the pump up, this is when they fail. Our volunteer firefighters are relying on these fire engines to function properly and keep them safe. This engine has played a critical role in multiple fires this year. Unfortunately, this engine was out of service until it was repaired.





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