

Benton County Fire District **4** NEWS



SPRING 2020

MESSAGE FROM FIRE CHIEF BILL WHEALAN

We have great news to share! Your support is building a new fire station to serve our community on the west side of the Fire District. Call volumes have increased 78.3% since 2010 and to say this facility was needed is an understatement.

We don't control growth, but we certainly plan for it. And we do so in a way that minimizes the amount we need from taxpayers. For example, building and equipping a new station can take two or three years. Voters approved those projects first – thank you! – and they are well underway.

By the time they are completed, we want to be prepared to staff the station with full-time personnel. Finding the right people – interviewing, testing and background checks – can take almost a year in some cases. Paying for these positions will require a Fire Levy lid lift.

This is not a new tax. Voters last approved a Fire Levy of \$1.50/\$1,000 in 2014. That levy rate has fallen to \$1.35/\$1,000 in 2020. The Fire District is considering asking voters to return the Fire Levy to \$1.50 during the August 4, 2020 Primary Election to fund these positions. The additional cost would be approximately \$3.75 per month for the owner of a \$300,000 home.



Our Board of Fire Commissioners invites you to a meeting to learn more about the service level improvements we are planning with these new positions. Join us on March 19 at 6:00 p.m. at 2604 Bombing Range Road in West Richland. We hope to see you there.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESSES ON KEENE ROAD FIRE STATION 430

In 2018, voters approved a bond to purchase apparatus and build a new station in the western part of the fire district's service territory. This investment will improve response times and provide additional capacity for back-to-back emergencies. Station 430 is the first new station built in the district in over 20 years. The ground-breaking for the site was held in November 2019. You can follow along on the progress (foundation and structure pictured here) in a photo album on our Facebook page (@bcfd4) or sign-up at www.bcf4.org to receive e-mail updates.



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Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

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Disponible en Español

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!

CALL VOLUME RECAP

Call volumes dipped slightly in 2019, but show a steady increase overall which is reflective of the growth for our area. Like most fire districts, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) accounts for a majority of our calls – over 60 percent in 2019.

Daily operations at Benton County Fire District 4 are funded through two levies paid through property taxes. The amounts are capped at the voter-approved rate of \$1.50 for Fire and 50 cents for EMS (per \$1,000 of assessed property value).

Benton County Fire District 4 provides fire and emergency medical service to 19,000 people over 52 square miles. Our service area includes the

City of West Richland and its immediate unincorporated areas, but we are not part of – nor do we receive funding from – any city or county government.

