

By Mark King, Fire Chief

Brush Fire Season

Hot dry weather is upon us, so please be ever watchful of any activities that can lead to grass or brush fires. Call early, often individuals believe that can put it out themselves and wait to call. Dry grass fueled by even a light wind can spread incredibly quickly. We would rather arrive to find the fire out than to find it larger than needed if 911 had been called immediately.

Staffing Improvement

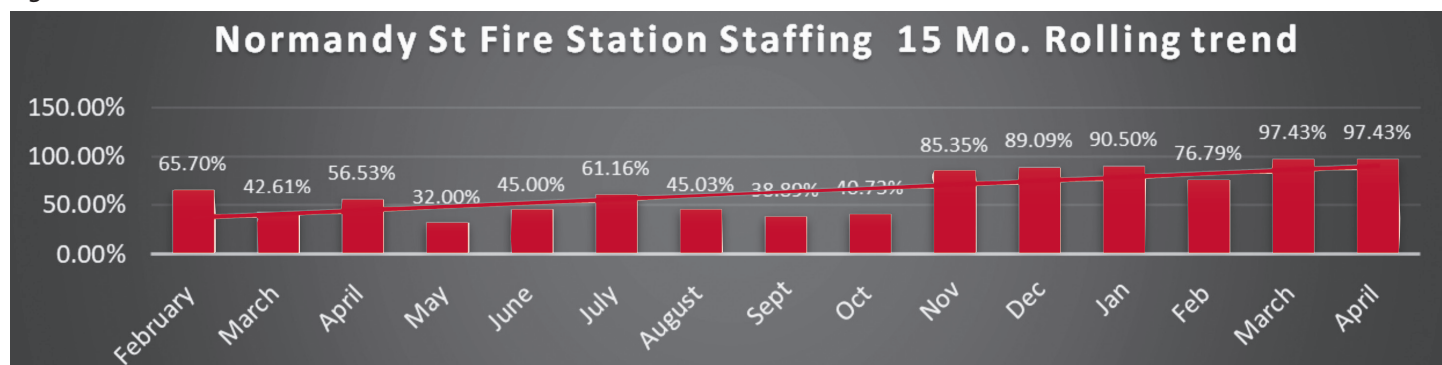
In the last newsletter we introduced our four (4) newest career firefighter/EMT's hired in January 2022. This addition of personnel has allowed us to improve our full-time firefighter/ EMT staffing and sufficiently increase



the amount of time we are able to staff a second station located on Normandy St. (Fig.1) thus, keeping four (4) full-time firefighter / EMT's on duty; two at our Old Hwy 99 station and two and our Normandy St. station.

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Fig. 1



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Summer is on the Way!

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Our newest Firefighter / EMT

Ian Souza completed the full-time fire academy at North Bend in November of 2022 and is now assigned to C- Shift.

Nice Job Ian!



Continued Partnership

East Olympia Fire District 6, like many other fire agencies across Washington, has looked for ways to improve efficiencies through partnerships and consolidation of resources. While District 6 has been a countywide partner in many areas for years, it has been within the past several years that we have seen the most significant changes in partnerships and consolidation. This includes the sharing of various support and administrative positions with SE Thurston Fire Authority. In fact,

between 2016 and 2022, the sharing of positions has saved the agencies over 1 million dollars which is money that may be utilized in other areas.

Annexation

In our last newsletter we provided an update regarding the potential annexation of a portion of Fire District 6 by the City of Olympia. This annexation was placed on hold pending the outcome of the Regional Fire Authority (RFA) between the City of Olympia and the City of Tumwater. This RFA was not approved by the voters. Consequently, any annexation by the City of Olympia would require them to provide Fire and EMS protection into the annexed areas, further increasing the cost of the annexation. Next steps will be for the City of Olympia's finance committee to make a recommendation to staff on whether to proceed to the City Council for approval.

Lastly, I want to say thank you again for your support of East Olympia Fire District 6 over the years, and the support we will need moving forward. Should you have questions or comments do not hesitate to reach out. ■

Do You Own an Electric Gate?

Can the Fire District Open Your Gate?

In the event of a fire or medical emergency, your gate may slow emergency responder access to your property. Firefighters would need to force entry through your gate, which could result in costly damage and a delayed response. The fire district does not track gate pass codes; therefore, we recommend a couple of solutions:

Install a **Knox® Rapid-Entry System**, which allows firefighters to use a high security master key to operate an electric switch that will open your gate.

If you have a personal key that opens a gate, then a **Knox-Box®** may be best. The Knox-Box® is a locking box that stores copies of your key(s), which allows firefighters to use the high security master key to open the Knox-Box®, retrieve your key(s), and unlock your gate.



Please call our headquarters station during office hours on 360-491-5533 if you would like more information on installing the Knox® system. You will need to obtain a Knox® order form signed by the Fire Chief. ■

District 6 Will Request a Levy Restoration in August Primary

On the August 1, 2023, Primary Election ballot, you will see Thurston County Fire Protection District 6 Proposition 1 asking for voter approval to restore the District's regular levy to \$1.50 per thousand assessed valuation. If approved, this levy restoration will help the District keep pace with service demands and increasing operational costs caused by inflation and higher call volumes.

This is not a new tax, excess tax, or benefit assessment; this is a vote to restore our basic fire levy to \$1.50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation previously approved by voters in 2020. The fire district is funded primarily by property taxes which allows it to conduct its daily operations of providing fire and EMS emergency services to the residents of Fire District 6.

Since the last levy restoration in 2020, the Fire District's levy has been reduced from \$1.50 to \$1.22 per \$1,000 assessed valuation because it cannot keep pace with property value inflation due to levy limiting factors which prevent it from keeping pace with inflation.

The District has been stretched to sustain its current level of service, despite near record inflation and a 35% increase in call volume for fire



and emergency medical service since 2019. However, current inflation and increasing call volume has left the District needing a levy renewal. If approved, the restored revenue will be used to respond to the continually increasing call volume and maintaining quality emergency service response. Specifically, the restored levy revenue will fund emergency personnel, equipment, and apparatus and facility repairs.

Without a levy restoration, the District's levy rate will likely continue to drop. The projections indicate that without voter approval, District revenue will be inadequate to maintain current service levels as early as next year. A vote in the Primary Election in 2023 will restore funding in the 2024 tax collection year.

We welcome any questions you might have, so please give us a call at 360-491-5533 or send us an email at inquiries@eofd.org. ■

911
Call if you can,
Text
when you can't.

Text to 9-1-1 is not a replacement to a voice call to 9-1-1, but rather is an enhancement to reach 9-1-1 services in specific situations such as: the caller is hearing/voice impaired; an emergency that renders the person incapable of speech; when speaking out loud would put the caller in danger, such as a home invasion, domestic violence situation or an active shooter scenario. Callers should only use texting when calling 9-1-1 is not an option.

- ✓ Utilizing a phone to call 9-1-1 is still the most efficient way to reach emergency personnel.
- ✓ Text abbreviations, emoticons, or slang should never be used.
- ✓ Texts to 9-1-1 have the same 160-character limit as other text messages.
- ✓ Providing the location information and nature in the first text message is critical so that help can be sent as quickly as possible, otherwise the only location we would have would be the closest cell tower to you.
- ✓ If you are not within range of the towers in Thurston County, your message may not reach 9-1-1. ■

**OPEN
HOUSE**

Join Us!
July 22, 2023
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

District 6 is in need of Support Services Volunteers

This is a great opportunity, especially for those 50 or older with free time, to engage with a very dynamic (emphasis added!) team.

Support Services members fill several important roles in the fire service. This team of volunteers may either respond from home or from the station as part of an on-duty crew. They are dispatched and respond with the Incident Support Unit (ISU6) to fill breathing air bottles, provide hydration and rehabilitation for firefighters, or otherwise support the incident. Tender operators provide mobile water supply for major structure or wildland fires, including state wildland fire mobilizations. ■



Become a volunteer – apply today!

Visit our web site www.eofd.org and click on *Become a Volunteer*.

ADDRESS SIGNS

(Vital Signs) Available On-line!

Obtain your Vital Sign (\$25) order form on-line at www.eofd.org. Once you complete the order form, forward your order along with your check or money order to our **Headquarters Station 61, P.O. Box 578, East Olympia, Washington 98540**. We will complete the order and install it if you live within the boundaries of East Olympia Fire District 6.

Behind the Fireline

is published by East Olympia Fire District 6 and distributed by mail to the residents of District 6

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Thurston County
Fire District #6
Firefighter's Association

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SPRING 2023

Fireline

Behind the

EAST OLYMPIA FIRE DISTRICT #6

