



FIRE 3 Insider

Clark County Fire District 3 NEWSLETTER

Winter 2022-23

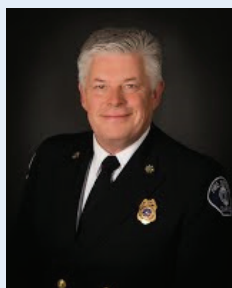
Fire District 3
CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

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Message from the Chief

By Chief Scott Sorenson

Thank you for supporting Clark County Fire District 3. Every year, we identify needed service improve-

ments to save lives and property. This process helps us prioritize spending decisions and allows the public to decide on future funding for needed improvements. In our last assessment, we identified personnel and apparatus that is required to support and improve public and firefighter safety.

Much of this is determined for Fire District 3 by mandates or national safety standards. For example, Fire District 3 has the equivalent of 1.1 firefighters per 1,000 population. The national average is 1.54-1.81 per 1,000. We pride ourselves on being efficient, but this is outside of the margins for being safe for your family or our firefighters.

This low number also does not allow us to comply with the Washington State Law for rest requirements for emergency personnel.

If we were to comply, we would see additional property losses on fires or medical emergencies.

Fire District 3 is considering asking our community to approve a fire levy lid lift sometime in 2023 for additional personnel, training and apparatus. Our last request was in 2017 to return the fire levy to \$1.42 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. We are looking at service level needs funded by a levy capped at \$1.50 per \$1,000. This will be a public process and we ask that you take part.

Our fire levy provides a 24-hour emergency response, which is different than other government services. As your fire chief, I also want you to know that we have always delivered on promised projects and improvements from past fire levy lid lifts. Credibility and accountability is important to us – and I want our taxpayers to know that we have it.

Nakia Fire: What We Learned

The Nakia Fire burned over 1,900 acres in October 2022 as powerful winds and unseasonably hot temperatures led to the fire's escape and the forced evacuation of thousands of residents. Our local, state, and federal agencies worked well together to put out the blaze, but we also learned that Clark County's evacuation communication process needs improvement.

Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency (CRESA) is still first and foremost the best source for emergency information – signing

up for CRESA alerts (cresa911.org) is easy! It's recommended that you register a landline, if you have one, for your home alert.

Some people received multiple or confusing alerts to cell phones that were registered to several locations (school, work, and home). CRESA has identified the problems that led to this confusion and is working on solutions to prevent this from happening again. We're also working with our county and state partners to improve our regional communication process moving forward.

"more than fire..."

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Celebrating 75 Years: A Brief History

A group of farmers, store owners and truck drivers concerned about fire safety in the Hockinson community formed the Hockinson Volunteer Fire Department in 1947. The group built the community's first fire apparatus to provide fire protection for the growing agricultural community. People donated fuel for the fire truck and fire apparatus was kept in barns and garages located strategically throughout the community.

In 1953, the state Legislature passed laws allowing for the

formation of fire districts. Fire District 3 became the third fire district formed in Clark County. The newly formed Fire District 3 provided fire suppression and limited Emergency Medical Service (EMS) across about 80 square miles.

Fire trucks and apparatus were stored in Brush Prairie and in the first fire station located in the Kiive Building. The fire district bought its first new fire engine in 1964 and hired Don Breakey, its first full-time fire chief in 1973. Station 31 in Hockinson becomes the first fire station to be staffed 24 hours a

day. And in 1992 voters approve a \$3.3 million bond to remodel stations, build new ones and purchase fire engines and equipment.

In 2016, Fire District 3 begins serving the city of Battle Ground out of Station 35, which becomes the district's busiest station. In 2020, voters approved the annexation of Battle Ground into the fire district. Today Clark County Fire District 3 has five fire stations, 57 full-time and 10 volunteer emergency personnel and serves 45,000 people across east Clark County.



Clark County Fire District 3 has been providing fire and life safety services to its residents for 75 years. The fire district plans to celebrate this momentous milestone with community members at its Open Houses in 2023.