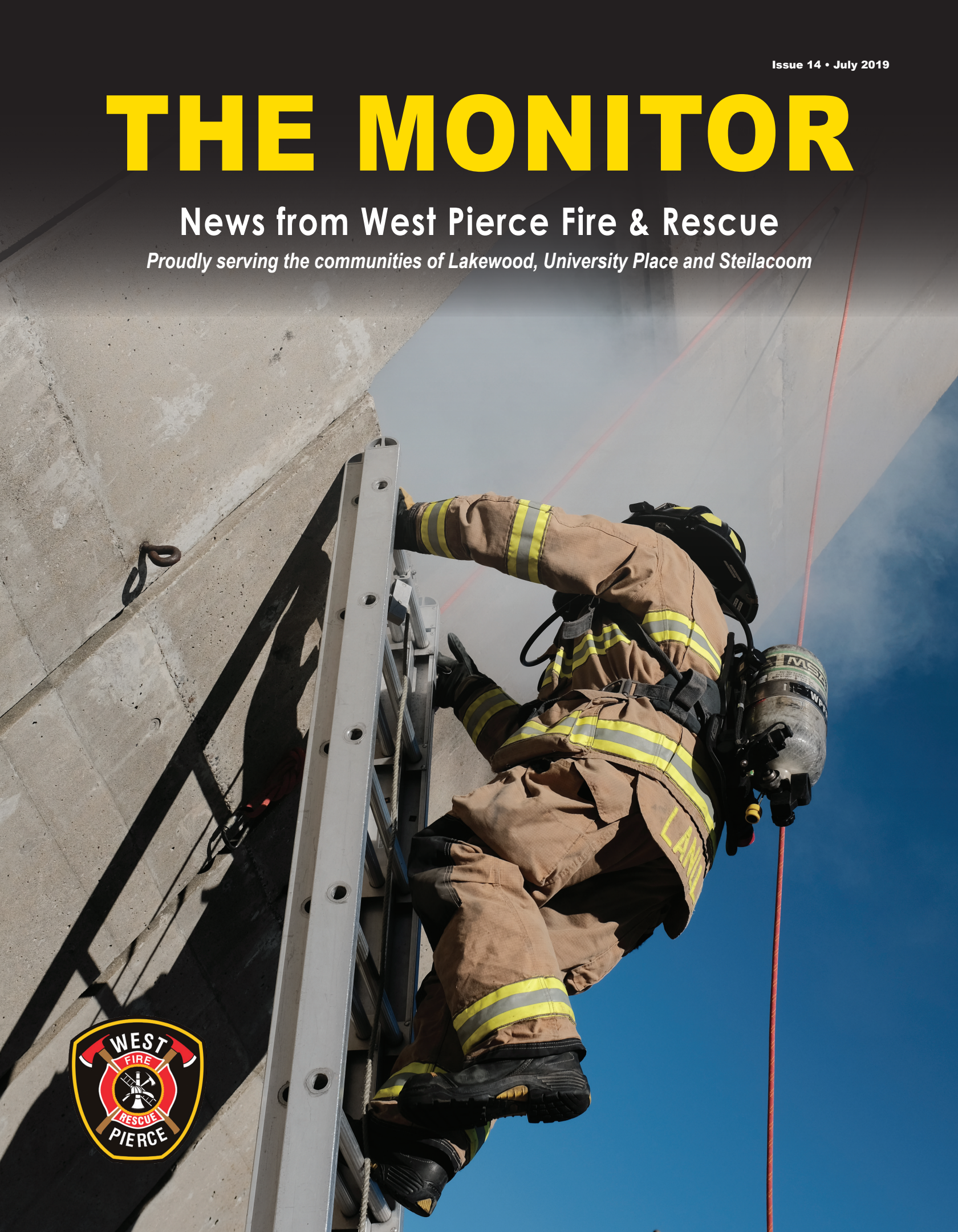


THE MONITOR

News from West Pierce Fire & Rescue

Proudly serving the communities of Lakewood, University Place and Steilacoom





Letter from the Chief

After responding to 16,320 calls for service, 2018 was the busiest year on record for West Pierce Fire & Rescue. One of the biggest challenges we currently face is managing our ever-increasing call volume, which continues to trend up year after year. Since 2011, call volume has increased by nearly 28 percent. On average, our crews respond to 45 emergencies in the community every day.

We saw an increase in medical aid calls again last year. Calls for minor medical needs and chronic health problems have increased faster than all other types of incidents. With the rapid rise in medical aid calls showing no sign of slowing down, we are continually exploring new approaches to providing effective service throughout the community.

Concepts such as deploying basic life support ambulances, responding with smaller emergency vehicles in place of fire engines, and developing programs to divert high utilizer patients away from emergency rooms are just a few of the innovative approaches we are currently evaluating. Managing the rapid rise in low acuity calls while keeping advanced life support paramedic units available for critical emergencies is a top priority for the District.

We have been very successful in maintaining service levels with our current resources; however, due to the continual increase in call volume, we are anticipating a need to increase our staffing for the first time since 2008. We realize this will not be achieved without the support of the community.

On August 6th, we will be seeking renewals of our current levies in the form of three ballot measures. Proposition 1 is a replacement of the Maintenance and Operations Levy, which has been supported by the community for more than 40 years. Propositions 2 and 3 return the Regular and EMS Levies to their statutorily authorized rates. The total taxes assessed in 2020 will be less than they were in 2016, based on an equally valued home.

These are not new levies; they are a renewal of our current levies, last approved by voters in 2015. By aggressively seeking grant funding, continuing to use responsible budget practices, and working to develop innovative service delivery models, we can effectively apply these levy dollars and continue delivering the high-caliber service you have come to expect from West Pierce Fire & Rescue.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is very proud of the services we provide to the communities of Lakewood, University Place and Steilacoom. We appreciate your continued support and ask you to please vote on August 6th.

Jim Sharp
Fire Chief

Improving Health and Wellness by Reducing Injuries and Time Loss

West Pierce Fire & Rescue has recently partnered with Tactical Athlete Health and Performance Institute (TAHPI) in an effort to reduce the amount of time firefighters are off work due to musculoskeletal injuries.

Due to the physical demands of the job, firefighters must maintain optimal physical conditioning. It is evident that firefighters have a dangerous and physically demanding job, where they can face considerable personal injury in the line of duty. Firefighters require quick, specific medical care following an injury, along with a fast return to good health and work. In the past, an initial evaluation could take days, while further evaluation may take weeks. Delaying the initial evaluation and treatment caused delays in getting firefighters back to work, which resulted in time loss for the employee and the need to backfill their position.

TAHPI's mission is based on the premise that firefighters should be treated like professional athletes, as their health and fitness is critical to meeting the demands of the job. Their goal of creating a self-sustaining injury prevention and recovery program around the country has proven highly effective. TAHPI seeks out orthopedic surgeons, physical therapists and occupational therapists in the area who fit specific criteria and are able to expedite an initial evaluation and treatment.

To become certified within the TAHPI program, orthopedic surgeons are required to spend a full day training as "Firefighter for a Day." The training is intended to help doctors fully comprehend the intense physicality that is demanded of firefighters. Likewise, physical and occupational therapists and other medical providers also attended the event and worked side-by-side learning to use essential firefighting tools, such as the jaws of life.

Once the training was concluded, the medical professionals better understand what firefighters have to go through when they return to work. They can value how critical it is to not only provide immediate care for injured firefighters, but to properly and physically prepare them for the rigors of the job once they return to work.

The relationship between West Pierce Fire & Rescue and TAHPI is relatively new, yet on average can save a single firefighter (and therefore the fire district and taxpayers) a six-week reduction in time off due to a single injury.

Thank you, Retirees!

Over the past year, seven (six of which are pictured below) members of West Pierce Fire & Rescue with 238 years of combined service and valuable experience have moved on to their next chapter - retirement. Congratulations and thank you, West Pierce employees, on a job well done!



Pat MacNealy
Battalion Chief
1979 - 2019



Greg Cooper
Battalion Chief
1981 - 2019



Karl Roth
Deputy Chief
1982 - 2019



Michael DeCarlo
Firefighter/Engineer
1983 - 2019



Patrick Lillie
Captain
1984 - 2019



Eric Norton
Assistant Chief
1985 - 2019

Respond Efficiently • Execute Flawlessly • BE NICE!



Upcoming Events

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

National Night Out is an annual event that promotes strong community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to ultimately make our neighborhoods safer. National Night Out provides a great opportunity to bring neighbors, fire, police and city officials together under positive circumstances. Please contact the Lakewood or University Place Police Departments to register your neighborhood for the event.

August 6 from 4 pm - 9 pm

CERT TRAINING

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes prepare the community to mobilize and respond during a disaster. Students learn how to assist their neighbors immediately following a disaster, before emergency responders are able to render professional help. Students gain hands-on skills such as how to put out small fires, provide first aid in a disaster situation, and perform light search and rescue. These six evening classes are held over the course of three weeks.

September 10 - 28

SEPTEMBER 11 REMEMBRANCE CEREMONIES

Please join us to honor those lost on September 11, 2001 and pay tribute to our first responders and military service members. These short ceremonies will include speeches by local leaders and held in both Lakewood and University Place.

September 11 at 11:45 am

Lakewood City Hall; 6000 Main Street

September 11 at 5:30 pm

9/11 Reflection Park at Station 31; 3631 Drexler Drive W

FIRST AID & CPR CLASSES

This basic first aid and CPR course meets Labor & Industries and Department of Social & Health Services standards and cards are recognized for two years. This course does NOT meet the requirements for the Healthcare Provider course. Cost is \$60 per student and pre-registration and payment are required.

September 14 or November 9 from 9 am - 5 pm

TRUCK & TRACTOR DAY

Join us at the City of Lakewood's Truck & Tractor Day for free hayrides, hard hats, and pumpkins. Children can climb on dozens of giant trucks (including our fire engine!), sit in the driver's seat and honk the horn. Make this favorite fall festival a family tradition!

October 12 from 11 am - 3 pm

Fort Steilacoom Park, Lakewood

FALL SAFETY DAY

Join us for Fall Safety Day where there will be great information and activities for families and of course, free pumpkins for each child! Bring the family out for a day of fun!

October 19 from 10 am - 1 pm

Station 21; 5000 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood

Guide to Services



PRESCHOOL & DAYCARE EDUCATION

Two fire safety curricula are available for preschools and daycares to use in the classroom at no cost.

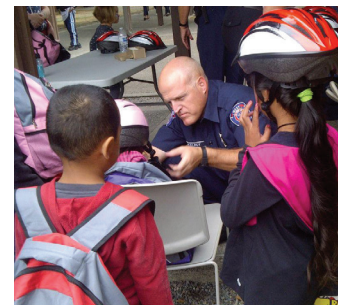
Teachers conduct several of the lessons and West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel will come in to teach the final lesson so small children learn firefighters are their friends.



BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS

Stop by any fire station to have your blood pressure checked!

Please be advised when firefighters are out of the station on 9-1-1 calls and training, there may not be anyone available to assist. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.



CUSTOM-FIT HELMETS & LIFE JACKETS

Fittings are scheduled by appointment and the wearer must be present in order to purchase. Please call to schedule an appointment.

Bicycle helmets - \$7
Multi-sport helmets - \$10
Life jackets - \$14



CAR SEAT INSTALLATIONS & CHECKS

Did you know that 80 percent of children are improperly restrained in vehicles?

Residents within the West Pierce service area may call to schedule an appointment with a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician to have their car seat installed or checked for proper installation.



FIRE STATION TOURS

Station tours are available for community groups to see where firefighters spend their day. Safety lessons and tours of the station and apparatus are held, all while learning what it's like to be a firefighter.

If you would like to bring a group to the fire station for a visit, please call to schedule.

Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives

West Pierce Fire & Rescue has dedicated countless hours to educating the community about the importance of smoke alarms and fire safety.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue's free smoke alarm program is available to residents within Lakewood and University Place. Appointments take approximately 15 minutes and West Pierce personnel will install or replace any alarms your home may need to ensure your alarms are working properly.

Do you have smoke alarms in and outside every sleeping area?

Are your smoke alarms working properly?

Have you replaced your smoke alarms within the last ten years?

If you answered 'no' to any of the above questions, please call 253.564.1623 today to schedule an appointment!

Connect with Us!

Looking for more information, upcoming events or recent news from West Pierce Fire & Rescue? Connect with us!

Station 31 (Headquarters)

***3631 Drexler Drive West
University Place, WA 98466***

Non-emergency (business) line

253.564.1623

www.westpierce.org

Follow Us on Social Media



Local Experience Gained During Global Disaster Responses

In addition to 9-1-1 response within the community, six West Pierce Fire & Rescue employees are also members of the Pierce County All Hazards Incident Management Team.

This group responds to large-scale incidents and disasters, both locally and nationally, when requested. The team is comprised of personnel from various Pierce County public safety agencies who fill critical roles in times of crisis.

In October 2018, one WPFR firefighter had the opportunity to travel to Florida in response to Hurricane Michael. During his two week deployment, the team operated out of a conference room in a small hospital.

One of their tasks was to survey distribution points for emergency supplies over five counties, which ensured enough supplies were reaching these sites. During disaster situations, communication becomes cumbersome, so defining the needs of each of these sites was critical in delivering supplies to the community.

The team worked with local city staff to locate, allocate and develop plans for critical infrastructure. During this incident, that included finding and assessing what services were operating, as well as locating portable restrooms, generators, shower facilities, food trucks and working sewer pumps. It had been so hectic that there was not a list of locations and resources already prepared.

Other incidents and disasters the Pierce County All Hazards Incident Management Team has responded to have included, but are not limited to, Hurricanes Michael and Florence, law enforcement memorial service planning and passenger train derailments.

These experiences are unique and thankfully infrequent. WPFR finds it extremely valuable to send personnel to these types of incidents, as they gain more experience and perspective that can be brought back to the local West Pierce community, should our area ever suffer a large-scale incident.



The Evolution of WPFR's Emergency Medical Services

Over the past several decades, there has been a shift in the utilization of emergency medical services (EMS) across the country. Initially implemented in the late 1960s to transport patients of motor vehicle accidents to area hospitals, EMS has now become a routine source of primary healthcare for a growing number of people. EMS providers are now responsible for a myriad of medical calls, ranging from cardiac arrests to routine healthcare needs.

Many people now utilize 9-1-1 for health conditions that do not require *emergency* care. Within West Pierce's borders, these low acuity calls represent the largest increase in calls for service. Since 2011, WPFR has seen a 28 percent increase in annual call volume. The overwhelming majority of the increase has been from low acuity EMS calls. With few exceptions, Washington State law requires EMS agencies to transport patients to emergency rooms, further overwhelming these vital healthcare resources.

Over the past several years, WPFR has been working with local healthcare partners, as well as county and state government, to address this issue. As a result, WPFR has partnered with Northwest Physicians Network and other local fire districts to form a community healthcare collaboration. This partnership has allowed WPFR to identify

patients who need non-traditional medical assistance and connect them to an appropriate resource. These can include, but are not limited to, transportation resources, intensive medical case management or in-home healthcare. The goal was to reduce 9-1-1 utilization and the volume of patients using the emergency room as a primary healthcare resource. The program was overwhelmingly successful, as 9-1-1 calls, ambulance transports and hospital admissions were each reduced by at least 40 percent among patients enrolled in the program.

Through this project, WPFR has developed professional relationships with area hospital systems, mental health organizations and managed care organizations, among others. Many of these relationships have begun to enhance service delivery and improve community health. One example is a collaboration where Pacific Lutheran University nursing students and WPFR personnel work together to identify Lakewood Senior House Assistance Group (SHAG) residents who need additional medical resources. The nursing students then connect residents with appropriate healthcare resources to improve their health.

Not only is WPFR adapting how we respond to low acuity calls, but we are also modifying how we respond to critical care incidents. One example of this is cardiac arrest calls. Over the years, there has been tremendous research surrounding CPR, its effectiveness, and how many people it takes to adequately treat a patient in cardiac arrest. WPFR has adapted our response by changing the way firefighters train and perform CPR, and

by increasing the number of firefighters and paramedics who respond to the call.

Research shows that early, high-quality CPR greatly increases survivability. To achieve this, WPFR dispatches a minimum of eight personnel (two fire engines and one medic unit) to a cardiac arrest. This allows crew members to regularly rotate into different roles, ensuring fatigue and task overload do not reduce the quality of CPR being performed. Cardiac arrest calls are extremely labor intensive and in order to meet these new high standards to improve patient outcomes, it is imperative to utilize a greater number of firefighters to perform these lifesaving skills.

Ensuring paramedic units are available to respond to critical 9-1-1 calls, such as CPR, is of the utmost importance. The partnerships WPFR has fostered to improve healthcare needs of the community are imperative in securing the availability of paramedic units for truly emergent patients.

Fire-based medical services must continually adapt to the ever-changing needs of the community. The EMS services provided by WPFR are no different. Whether a traditional fire service role or not, WPFR is taking steps to ensure collaborative partnerships, enhanced training and response models focused on improving patient outcomes. Healthcare has become infinitely more complex and working to ensure every patient's healthcare needs are met is a top priority for West Pierce Fire & Rescue.

PLEASE VOTE AUGUST 6

WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE
3631 Drexler Drive West
University Place, WA 98466

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 1
ECRWSS

The West Pierce Fire & Rescue Board of Fire Commissioners voted to place three ballot measures on the August 6th ballot.

PROPOSITION 1 is a **replacement** of the current **MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS LEVY**. The request is for \$13.9 million dollars annually. This is not a new levy, but a continuation of the maintenance and operations levy the community has supported for over 40 years.

PROPOSITION 2 returns the **REGULAR LEVY** to the statutorily authorized rate.

PROPOSITION 3 returns the **EMS LEVY** to the statutorily authorized rate.

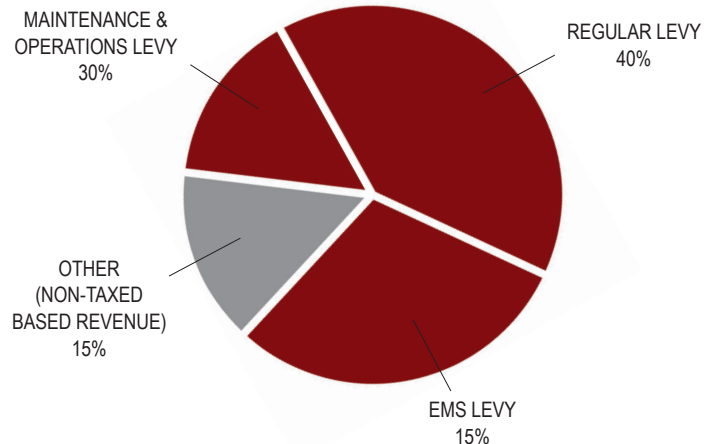
This funding supports 85% of the district's operations

West Pierce Fire & Rescue has six fully staffed fire stations, providing fire suppression, emergency medical treatment and transport, emergency rescue services, fire prevention programs, public education, and CERT training throughout Lakewood and University Place.

Calls for service have increased drastically

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is the most urbanized fire district in Pierce County with a very high demand for service. Since 2011, call volume has increased nearly 28% and the trend is not slowing. Call volume is already up an additional 9% in 2019.

ANNUAL OPERATING REVENUE



These are not new levies

Proposition 1 is a **replacement** of the Maintenance and Operations Levy that has been supported by the community for more than 40 years, and Propositions 2 and 3 **return** the Regular and EMS Levies to their statutorily authorized rate. The total taxes assessed in 2020 will be **less** than they were in 2016, based on an equally valued home.

This funding is critical for continuing effective service delivery

This funding supports a strategic four-year hiring plan to address increasing call volume. The hiring plan will provide for five additional Firefighter/EMTs per day to support emergency medical response programs.

