



# LACEY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

## Community Dispatch

Volume 22, August 2011

### Lacey Fire District Going **Cleaner** and **Greener**

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Through an innovative partnership with Washington State Department of Ecology, Lacey Fire District is getting cleaner and greener. LFD will be **Cleaner** through application of technology that will reduce the amount of diesel particulate exhausted into the air. LFD will be **Greener** in savings to taxpayers through a reduction in fuel costs.



In October 2010 the District was awarded a Clean Diesel grant from the Department of Ecology. The grant will pay for the costs associated with installing equipment that will trap and reduce diesel emissions and particulates so that the exhaust is cleaner. Installation of the devices began this month. The value of this part of the grant was nearly \$8,500.

The second part of the grant involves “**idle reduction**” technology. Fire engines will be equipped with a generator that will be activated when the engine is idling at an incident scene. Instead of the engine idling using the big fire engine motor, the much smaller generator can be used. The result is both a reduction in the amount of fuel used and less emissions. Smaller vehicles such as aid cars will use a battery system for idling at the scene, thus completely eliminating any fuel usage. When the project is complete, it is estimated LFD could save as much as \$20,000 annually in fuel costs. The idle reduction portion of the grant is anticipated to begin late in 2011 or early 2012.

Don't forget the

**Firefighter Pancake Breakfast August 27, 8 - 11 AM  
at Cabelas**



This activity supports the Lacey Firefighters Charity, which supports the community through Adopt-A-Family at Thanksgiving and Christmas and the all-year-long Make My day programs.

*Community Dispatch* is the public newsletter of Lacey Fire District 3. It contains information on District news, events and happenings, as well as providing safety, emergency preparedness and health information you may find helpful. Let us know what you think – email us at [info@laceyfire.com](mailto:info@laceyfire.com)

If you like it, pass it on!

## Staffing Drops to a Minimum of Twelve

In a move to reduce overtime expenses, Lacey Fire District dropped the daily minimum number of on-duty firefighter/EMTs to 12, effective July 16<sup>th</sup>.

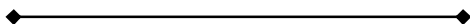
Faced with closing a station or leaving a response vehicle unstaffed at the main station, the District chose to leave a vehicle unstaffed and rotate other vehicles to manage the increased call volume with fewer personnel.

The result is instead of five vehicles immediately staffed with firefighter/EMTs to provide service to the 70 square-mile District, only four will be staffed. As these vehicles move around to cover the requests for emergency assistance, the potential for longer response times exists.

The desired level of staffing would be a minimum of 18 personnel on duty each day.

Paramedics continue to operate Medic 3 out of Station 31 and Medic 2 out of the Yelm station on a 24-hour basis. Medic 6 operates out of Station 34 on a 12-hour basis. All paramedic units are staffed with 2 paramedic/FFs.

It is possible the reduced staffing configuration will result in increased response times; the District is continually monitoring and evaluating the change.



## Special Operations and Rescue Team has been Active

Lacey Fire District members on the Special Operations & Rescue Team (SORT) have been active recently rescuing citizens from cliffsides.

July 1<sup>st</sup> they assisted in the rescue of a boy who got stuck on the cliff at Burfoot State park.



July 28<sup>th</sup> a man working in his backyard in the Beachcrest area slipped and fell halfway down a 200 foot cliff. The SORT assessed him for injuries, bundled him into a Stokes stretcher and lowered him the rest of the way to the bottom of the cliff.

At the beach, he was still inaccessible for medical care, and the boat from Pierce County Fire District 27 (Anderson Island) transported him to the boat launch area to be attended by medical personnel. His injuries, despite his unexpected slip and fall down a cliff, were minor.



## Levy Lid Lift on November Ballot

At the regular July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted unanimously to place a levy lid lift measure before the voters on the November 8<sup>th</sup> general election ballot.

The measure would restore the levy rate to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value that was approved by voters in 2004. Since 2004, effects from the interaction of the statutory 1% limit and property values have caused the levy rate to erode to its present \$1.18 per thousand of assessed valuation.

Restoring the levy rate to \$1.50 is estimated to provide the District with approximately \$1.5 million in additional revenue. Intended uses of this revenue include:

- Hiring additional firefighter/EMTs
- Apparatus repair and maintenance
- Enhancing service delivery to Station 32 area (Lake St Claire)
- Satisfying the Washington State Auditor’s recommendation to improve operational fund balance

For more information on the levy lid lift please come to a Board of Fire Commissioner meeting, call the Interim Fire Chief Gary Pearson at 360-528-2333, send an email to the commissioners at [commissioners@laceyfire.com](mailto:commissioners@laceyfire.com) or visit our website [www.laceyfire.com](http://www.laceyfire.com)

The September 1<sup>st</sup> Board of Fire Commissioners meeting will be held at Station 34 on 8407 Steilacoom Road, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The public is welcome.

## Response Time Data Evaluated

In an effort to reduce operating expenses for the remainder of the year, in mid-July the District reduced the daily minimum number of firefighter/EMTs on duty to from 14 to 12.

On days with only 12 personnel, the response vehicle from Station 35 is moved to Station 31 to help with the higher volume of calls at this station.

The District has been monitoring response information closely, especially from the Station 35 area. Response data from July suggests that response times lengthened between the first and second halves of July.

	90% response time
July 1 <sup>st</sup> half	8 minutes 1 second
July 2 <sup>nd</sup> half	10 minutes 16 seconds
Overall July 2011	9 minutes 14 seconds

With a small set of response information – St 35 has about 40 calls monthly – the data can be easily skewed. For comparison, July 2010 response data for Station 35 indicates a 90%



response time of 10 minutes and 15 seconds, which indicates that overall, the District had better response times in 2011 than in 2010.

An LFD Lieutenant shuts down a hydrant after a fire call

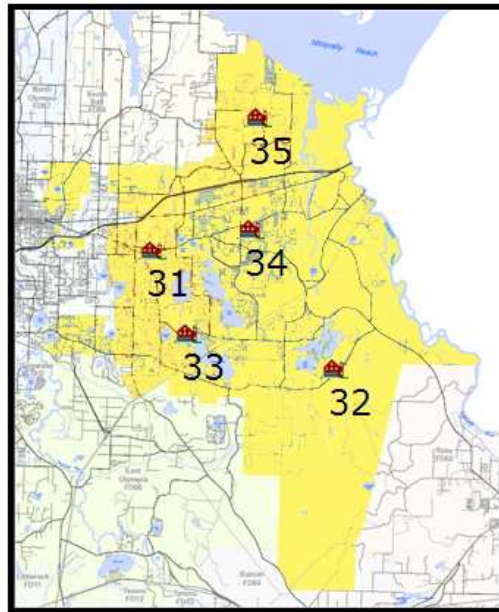
## Taxes - I don't understand my fire district property taxes

Sorry for the confusion, but this *can* be a perplexing topic. We'll try to help sort it out.

Calculating the tax rate, or levy rate, is a mathematical function that takes into consideration:

- the total value of property in the District as set by the County Assessor,
- the tax levy as set by the District Board of Fire Commissioners and
- statutory limits as set by State law and the voters.

The **current assessed value of the District**, established by the County Assessor January 1, 2010 for collection in 2011, is **\$8.3 billion**. To stay within current taxing limitations, in 2011 the District is allowed to collect a **tax levy of \$9.8 million**. This amount **equates to a levy rate of \$1.18**. This means for every \$1,000 of assessed value of your property, you will pay \$1.18, or, for a \$250,000 home, about \$295 for the year. (note – this amount is a generalized calculation – the assessor determines actual values).



There are limits to the increases that can occur. Fire Districts are allowed to collect only up to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value without voter approval. Additionally, statewide, voters have approved a 1% limit increase; the portion of revenue that comes from property taxes may increase only by 1% every year without voter approval.

From a math perspective, when total assessed value of property in the District increases, the levy rate will decrease. When the total assessed value of property in the District decreases, the levy rate will increase. However, despite what the total assessed value of property in the District does – which affects the levy rate – the value of your personal piece of property may increase or decrease, thus possibly shifting your fire district property taxes slightly up or down. The total assessed value of all property in the District determines the levy rate, which is then applied to your personal piece of property. **The actual amount of money you pay every year depends on the levy rate and your assessed property value.** Your property's assessed value could rise or fall in any given year. The levy rate can rise or fall in any given year. The Assessor, the Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners and state law all play a part in determining the amount you pay on your property for fire district services.

If you have questions about your specific property taxes, please contact the Thurston County Assessor's Office at 867-2200 or check out their website at <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/assessor/>