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A PUGET SOUND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY PUBLICATION | **FALL 2023**

BUILDING SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

BRIAN CARSON
Fire Chief

From Fire Chief Brian Carson

The Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (Puget Sound Fire/RFA) is proud to be a trusted partner in the communities we serve. Our vision is effective and sustainable fire and EMS services that maximize the resources entrusted to us. We strive to earn your trust each day – the trust you, as a community, place in our fire department is greatly appreciated and never taken for granted. This community trust was apparent during the August Primary Election when voters supported two key ballot measures pertaining to Fire and EMS services within Puget Sound Fire's service territory.

Residents in the City of Tukwila voted to fully annex Tukwila's fire department into Puget Sound Fire. Since January 1, 2023, Tukwila has been contracting for fire and EMS services with the RFA. This contract expanded on a long-term relationship that had already existed between the city and the Puget Sound Fire, and I have been incredibly honored for Puget Sound Fire to serve the Tukwila community. By approving the annexation, voters have made this relationship permanent, which now allows the city to have a voice in guiding Puget Sound Fire through three voting governance board seats beginning in January of 2024.

Voters in Fire District #43 voted to restore their funding capacity through a levy lid lift. The additional tax revenue will be utilized to enhance fire and EMS services in Fire District #43 as we continuously seek opportunities to gain efficiency through process improvement and cost reduction strategies. In Fire District #43, the contract for service with Puget Sound Fire has been ongoing since 2017. The district's fire personnel have been RFA members since that time, and although the district is still in place, I am grateful to see Puget Sound Fire serve as Fire District #43's fire department.

> ***…Puget Sound Fire will always focus on taking care of people and being a trusted partner in the community.***

We value and appreciate the support and will remain focused on providing exceptional services. Thank you to the voters in Tukwila and Fire District 43 who turned out in support of these two ballot measures. Puget Sound Fire will continue to serve our regional partners with compassion and professionalism. Today, we proudly serve the cities of Covington, Kent, Maple Valley, SeaTac, Tukwila, and Fire Districts #37 and #43. It is my commitment to you that we will always focus on taking care of people and being a trusted partner in the community. We share with each community the desire to enjoy a safe and sustainable place to live, work, and visit. ■

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Change of Command 2
Thank You to Board Members Thomas and Barrie 2
Message from the Governance Board 3
Puget Sound Fire Would Like Your Help 3
Working Smoke Alarm are for Everyone 4
New Trucks Address the Threat of Wildland Fires 4
2023 Retirees 6
2023 New Firefighters 6
Awards & Recognition 7
FD CARES: Regionalization and Expansion of Services 7
Start Your Disaster Preparedness Planning 8

CHANGE OF COMMAND AT PUGET SOUND FIRE

By Janet Upegui, Communications Specialist

On February 16, 2023, we honored retiring Fire Chief Matthew Morris and welcomed Chief Brian Carson as the new Fire Chief. Governance Board Chairperson Les Thomas officially swore in Chief Carson during the time-honored Change of Command ceremony.

The ceremony — attended by members of Puget Sound Fire along with representatives from fire departments throughout King County, elected officials, friends, and family members — signified a change in leadership while celebrating the legacy of retiring Fire Chief Matthew Morris and opportunities awaiting Chief Carson.

Chief Matthew Morris retired with 33 years in the fire service; five of those as Fire Chief for Puget Sound Fire. Under Chief Morris' leadership, Puget Sound Fire increased service delivery capabilities to the community and Chief Morris was integral in strengthening the business practices of the organization. In a heartfelt address, Chief Morris encouraged members of the organization to *"Stay focused on the 'Why' at all times, and to take care of people with compassion and professionalism."*

Incoming Fire Chief Carson was joined by his wife, Megan, who pinned his badge to his uniform after he was sworn in. Chief Carson brings 31 years of fire service experience and will oversee a staff of more than 450 firefighters and non-uniformed support personnel who provide fire suppression, technical and water rescue, FD CARES, fire prevention, public education, hazardous materials response, and emergency medical services to the communities of Covington, Kent, Maple Valley, SeaTac, Tukwila, and King County Fire Districts 37 & 43.

In 2014, Chief Carson joined Puget Sound Fire (formerly the Kent Fire Department Regional Fire Authority) as a Captain upon the City of SeaTac's contract for fire and EMS services. Since then, he has served as a Captain and Battalion Chief for the Operations Division, a Deputy Chief in the South King County Fire Training Consortium, and the Assistant Chief of Operations. On his future vision for Puget Sound Fire, Chief Carson commented: *"I believe we exist to serve. We have an incredible team at Puget Sound Fire that believes the same and provides exceptional service to our communities. I am always guided by our four strategic goals – taking care of our communities, taking care of our staff, building connections in the community, and ensuring we are a resilient, sustainable organization."* ■

THANK YOU, BOARD MEMBERS THOMAS AND BARRIE

By Fire Chief Brian Carson

On December 31, 2023, Kent City Councilmember Les Thomas and King County Fire District #37 Commissioner Allan Barrie will be stepping down as Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority Governance Board Members.

Les and Allan have been Board members since the formation of the RFA in July of 2010, continually representing their communities and ensuring that Puget Sound Fire could provide effective and sustainable services. They always put the needs of the community first and made sure the RFA was funded appropriately so your firefighters would have the needed equipment, apparatus, and training. This allows your firefighters to professionally and compassionately help people and meet the needs of our changing communities.

LES THOMAS
Governance Board Chairperson

During their time as Board members, Les and Allan assisted with the development and creation of the original RFA plan, held the positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, and served as members of regional committees working to enhance not only your fire department, but the fire service across the region.

To RFA Governance Board members Les Thomas and Allan Barrie: Puget Sound Fire thanks you for your assistance in developing and creating the RFA, and your 13 ½ years of dedicated service as RFA Governance Board members. Your willingness to build the foundation of this organization is very much appreciated. Your legacy will be that you always put the needs of the community and firefighters first, and you made the fire service for the communities you represent better. Thank you! ■

ALLAN BARRIE
Governance Board Member

OUR VISION —— *To be a trusted resource for building safe and healthy communities.*

A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNANCE BOARD

By Les Thomas, Governance Board Chairperson

The members of the Puget Sound Fire Governance Board would like to welcome the citizens of the City of Tukwila into the Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority. This is a significant milestone for the City of Tukwila. Prior to the passage of Proposition No. 1, the City of Tukwila had a contract for service with Puget Sound Fire, and this contract was a win for both agencies.

Over the past several years, Puget Sound Fire and the Tukwila Fire Department have partnered extensively, including training together in the South King County Fire Training Consortium, joint entry-level firefighter recruitment and testing, specialty teams, and recruit firefighter academy training. Our firefighters have previously worked seamlessly together on emergency scenes.

This partnership will now continue, and the Governance Board sees this as an excellent opportunity to continue long-term effective fire and EMS services to the Tukwila community. Through our robust systems and stable finances, we will continue to achieve effective, efficient, and sustainable service delivery.

As board members, we value diverse representation for the communities we serve. By annexing into Puget Sound Fire, the City of Tukwila gains three voting seats on the Governance Board and has greater input on service levels and program offerings.

Thank you for passing Proposition No. 1. We look forward to continuing to serve the Tukwila community professionally and compassionately. ■

LES THOMAS
Governance Board Chairperson

PUGET SOUND FIRE WOULD LIKE YOUR HELP!

By Deputy Chief Sean Penwell

Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (Puget Sound Fire) has been accredited by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) since 2004. Internationally, there are 308 accredited agencies. CPSE describes their accreditation as an "all hazard, quality improvement model based on risk analysis and self-assessment that promotes the establishment of community-adopted performance targets for fire and emergency service agencies".

All aspects of our department are assessed and evaluated to ensure we are meeting or exceeding international guidelines and standards for the services we provide. Being an accredited agency creates a powerful and important message of value to the communities we serve and the elected officials that govern us.

Puget Sound Fire participates in this rigorous and collaborative process every five years to identify improvement goals resulting in effective and sustainable services that meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.

One of the re-accreditation tasks Puget Sound Fire must complete is revising our five-year strategic plan. An important step in our strategic planning process is engaging our stakeholders. We are doing this by gathering your feedback in the form of a community engagement survey. You, the public, are our most important stakeholder. We exist to serve you and your feedback is valuable to us.

How You Can Help

We hope that you will take the time to complete a survey. The survey answers you provide will help our strategic planning leaders identify opportunities to improve service in the near-term. Thank you for the trust you place in Puget Sound Fire. Accreditation is a symbol of our commitment and shared values dedicated to taking care of people. We will continue to set the example for the fire service in Washington State and the nation. ■

To take the community engagement survey, please scan this QR code or visit our website at pugetsoundfire.org.

VOTE

Thank you to our communities of Tukwila and Maple Valley/Fire District #43 for supporting two key ballot measures in the August 1 Primary Election:

City of Tukwila Proposition No. 1
Annexation into Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority

With the passing of this proposition, fire and EMS services for the City of Tukwila will fully annex into Puget Sound Fire. Property owners in the city will be subject to the RFA's fire levy and Fire Benefit Charge. In addition, the City of Tukwila will have three (3) voting representatives on Puget Sound Fire's Governance Board.

King County Fire District #43 Proposition No. 1
Fire Levy Lid Lift

Voters approved this key measure that restores the fire district's regular property tax levy to the previous voter-approved rate of $1.50 per $1,000 of assessed value for collection in 2023 and sets the limit factor at 6% for each of the succeeding five years. The additional tax revenue will be utilized on a five-station model to enhance fire and EMS service to the City of Maple Valley and surrounding fire district.

WORKING SMOKE ALARMS ARE FOR EVERYONE

By Melanie Taylor, Public Educator

Working smoke alarms are for everyone. However, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be able to depend on a traditional smoke alarm to alert them of a fire.

Meet the Odom family — mom, dad, sister, and brother. A loving family that wants the very best for one another including a safe and secure home environment. Six weeks after their son was born, doctors informed them that their son was deaf.

This did not stop the couple from providing the tools and opportunities for their children to be the very best in whatever path they choose, including enrolling in a school for the deaf/hard of hearing, installing street signs alerting drivers that a deaf child lives on the street and providing Cochlear hearing implants giving their young son opportunity to hear. With the hearing implants he could hear, but when they were removed at night during sleep, he could not.

While having a conversation with fire department staff at a community event, the family discovered that Puget Sound Fire partners with the Red Cross to obtain and install deaf/hard-of-hearing smoke alarms at no charge. The family submitted their request, and now their home and 4-year-old son's bedroom are equipped with devices that will alert him if there should be a fire.

The safety of everyone in our community is extremely important. Please take time to test your smoke alarms, replace the batteries when you change your clocks, and make and practice your home escape plan. As you develop and practice your escape plan, please think about the needs of everyone in your home and give special consideration for those with limited mobility (wheelchairs/walkers/canes), vision impairment, sound sensitivity, or hearing impairment. ■

Image 1

Image 2

Smoke alarms and alert devices are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Strobe lights flash when the smoke alarm sounds (Image 1). Flashing lights indicate a possible fire. A pillow or bed shaker can wake someone from sleep so they can escape (Image 2). The shaker is activated by the sound of a smoke alarm.

New Trucks Address Threat of Wildland Fires

By Division Chief Pat Pawlak

As housing development continues to push into forested areas, fast-moving wildland fires can threaten homes and lives. These fast-moving fire fronts require a quick response with specialized apparatus, protective equipment, and specially trained firefighters.

On July 4, Puget Sound Fire put a new brush truck in service. Members completed a specialized driver training program and completed outfitting the apparatus with equipment and hose. The brush truck is a 4-wheel drive apparatus that carries 400 gallons of water and has pump & roll capabilities. The brush truck is also equipped with a forward-facing camera as well as a rear facing camera on the back. It also has an infrared camera to assist firefighters with finding smoldering hotspots. This apparatus can get firefighters much closer to the fire and fire extinguishment operations will begin sooner. Eighty percent of the funding for this brush truck came from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.

Also in July, the RFA acquired two Type 3 wildland fire engines. These Type 3 wildland fire engines are four-wheel drive to make driving over rough terrains easier and have pump and roll capabilities. The engines will carry 500 gallons of water and a compliment of firefighting hoses, ladders, and other tools. These engines are more versatile than our standard fire engines when responding to brush fires and wildland urban interface fires. They will be used to assist with structure protection and with the "pump and roll" capabilities can extinguish brush fires while slowly driving down the road.

These new vehicles are crucial in addressing the ever-increasing threat of wildland fires in urban areas and will provide early extinguishment of wildland fires before they reach urban structures. ■

OCTOBER 8-14 IS NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

By Don Maher, Public Educator

Fire Prevention Week is October 8-14. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has identified this year's theme as "Cooking Safety Starts with You! Pay Attention to Fire Prevention."

According to the NFPA:

- Cooking is the leading cause of home fires, with nearly half of all home fires involving cooking equipment.
- Cooking is the leading cause of home fire injuries.
- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires and related deaths.
- Cooking is the only major cause of fire that resulted in more fires and fire deaths in 2014-2018 than in 1980-1984.

"These numbers tell us that more public awareness is needed around when and where cooking hazards exist, along with ways to prevent them," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of the outreach and advocacy at NFPA. *"This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign will work to promote tips, guidelines, and recommendations that can help reduce the risk of having a cooking fire."*

The following are simple but important actions you can take to keep yourself and those around you safe when cooking. The following are simple but important actions you can take to keep ourself and those around you safe when cooking:

- Always keep a close eye on what you are cooking. For foods with longer cooking times, such as those that are simmering or baking, set a timer to help monitor them carefully.
- Clear the cooking area of combustible items and keep anything that can burn, such as dish towels, oven mitts, food packaging, and paper towels.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.
- Create a "kid and pet-free zone" of at least three feet around the cooking area and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

"Staying in the kitchen, using a timer, and avoiding distractions that remove your focus from what's on the stove are among the key messages for this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of the Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA.

For more information about Fire Prevention Week visit firepreventionweek.org. ■

KIDS ACTIVITY: MAKING A RECIPE

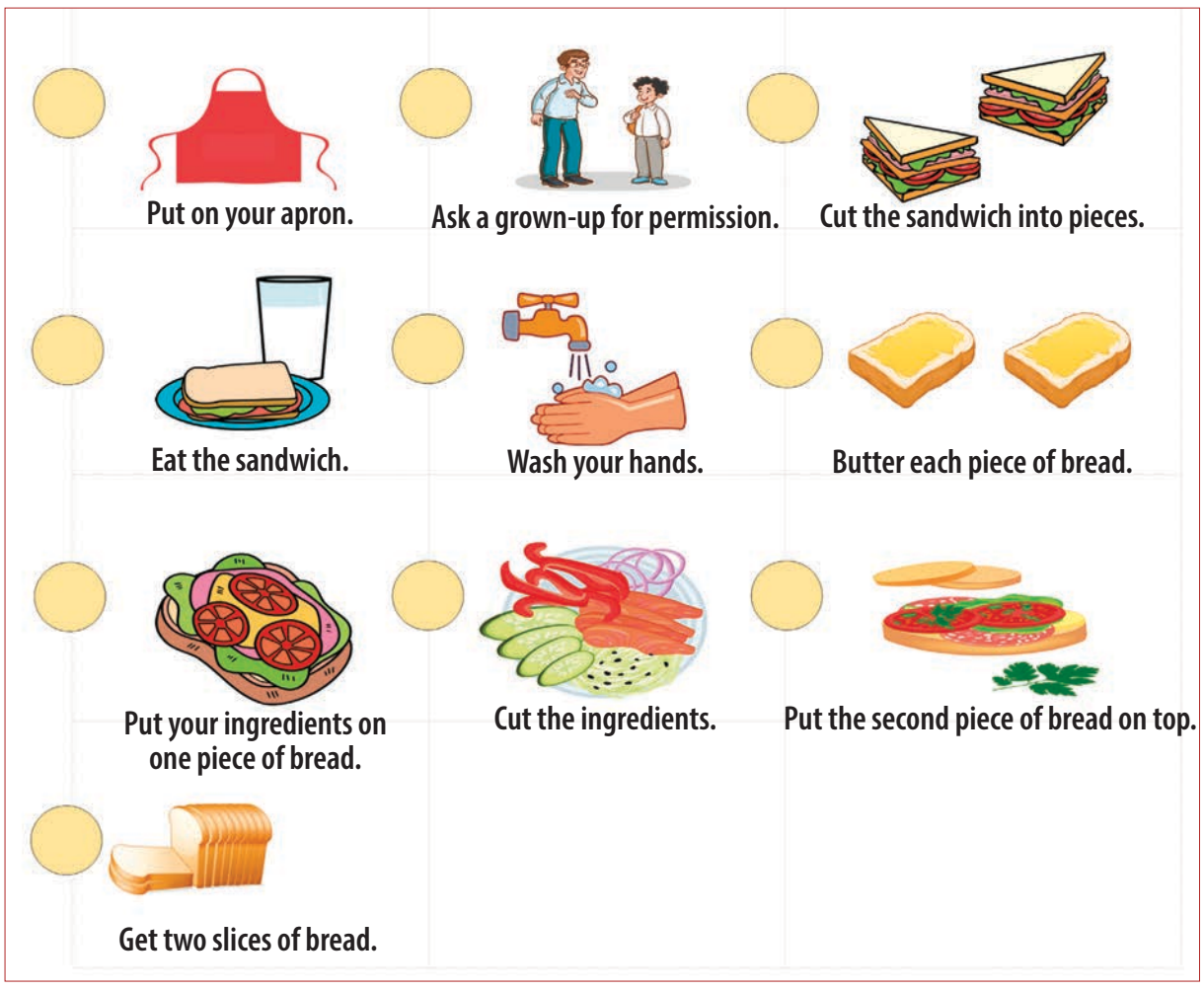
By Melanie Taylor, Public Educator

STEP 1

Determine the sandwich-making process by writing steps 1-10 in the yellow circles from start to finish.

STEP 2

Complete the recipe card by filling in the blanks with your step-by-step instructions.



Recipe: SANDWICH

FROM THE KITCHEN OF:

Ingredients:

DIRECTIONS:

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10

For an answer key, visit pugetsoundfire.org.

Departments > Public Education

PUGET SOUND FIRE **RETIREES**

We extend our sincere gratitude to the following individuals for their ***combined 478 years of service*** to the communities served by Puget Sound Fire.

Matthew Morris
Fire Chief

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

Terry McCartin
Captain

John Lytle
Captain

Eric Pedersen
Captain

Kurt Self
Captain

Steve Parsons
Engineer

Jeff Bingaman
Captain

Travis Butcher
Engineer

James Medema
Engineer

Rick Fetherston
Captain

Brian Schoonhoven
Engineer

Dave Little
Engineer

Jerry Brown
Battalion Chief

Brian Lucero
Captain

Nikki Smith
Engineer

PUGET SOUND FIRE **NEW FIREFIGHTERS**

We are proud to welcome the following members to the Puget Sound Fire family. These individuals proved their dedication throughout their fire academy training, and we are excited about the depth of service and professionalism they will bring to our communities.

RECRUIT CLASS 15

Alexander Bailey
Blake Cantu
Keegan Council
Austin Cox
Mandy Fifield
Frank Sherwin Grepo
Wyatt Guthrie
Shannon Hastings
Musa Jagana
Mason Lucas
Julian Morales
Edward Park
David Tello
Seth Tobey
Zachary Walsh

RECRUIT CLASS 16

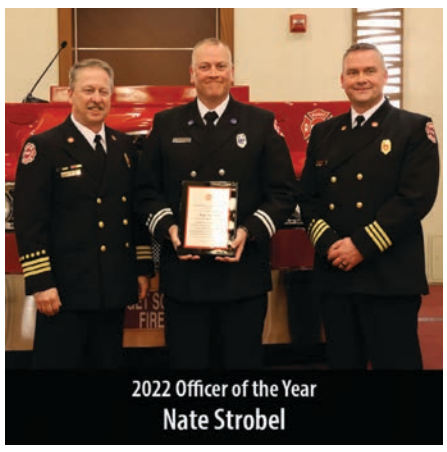
Alan Arneson
Ethan Blechschmidt
Isaiah Brown
Sebastian deBont
Joseph Giron
Aaron Henry
Daniel Jones
Adam Long
Astrid Martinez
Joshua Padilla
Jose Perez Coria
Jordan Peterson-Scotter
Hunter Smith
Tanner Woelber

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

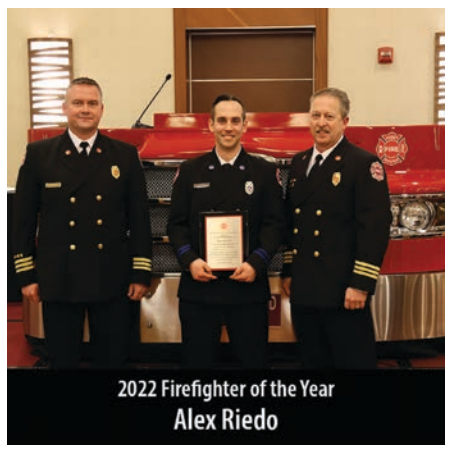
This past spring, Puget Sound Fire recognized several individuals for their excellence in 2022 during our annual awards ceremony. These awards cover several different categories and are voted on by peers as well as input from the executive staff. Congratulations to our award winners!

2022 AWARD RECIPIENTS

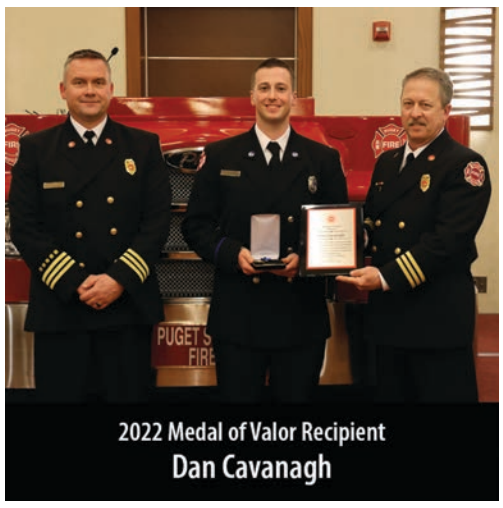
2022 Employee of the Year
Tina Williamson



2022 Officer of the Year
Nate Strobel



2022 Firefighter of the Year
Alex Riedo



2022 Medal of Valor Recipient
Dan Cavanagh

2022 Distinguished Service Award Recipient
Martin Smale

2022 Distinguished Service Award Recipient
Nikki Smith

2022 Distinguished Service Award Recipient
Ryan Dudley

REGIONALIZATION AND EXPANSION OF SERVICES

By Captain Matthew Madlem

Puget Sound Fire continues to provide the Fire Department Community Assistance, Referrals and Education Services (FD CARES) program to multiple jurisdictions, including those of Puget Sound Fire, Renton Regional Fire Authority, King County Fire District 20 (Skyway Fire), and Enumclaw Fire Department.

In November of 2022, the FD CARES program transitioned to a social worker/registered nurse team. The CARES team responds to requests for service from Basic Life Support (BLS) crews in the field. The team also manages referrals and follow-up with patients identified as having un-met healthcare and behavioral health needs in the community.

FD CARES units are staffed by a registered nurse and social worker who provide follow-up care to community members referred by BLS units, and other agencies in our response area.

In March of this year, the FD CARES program began partnering with the Kent Police Department to provide co-response services which address communities' needs in behavioral/mental health, housing insecurity, and other social services that do not meet the criteria for a basic life support response. Law enforcement officers often respond to calls where people are having a mental health crisis, are intoxicated, experiencing homelessness, or are experiencing other health and social service challenges.

Kent Police request a CARES unit to be added when interacting with members of the public that can be assisted by our nurse and social worker. This provides a resource to the police department other than the emergency department, or jail, and frees the police officer up to be available for other calls for law enforcement.

A co-responder team is a police-based intervention that pairs trained police officers with mental health professionals to respond to incidents involving individuals experiencing behavioral health crises. The co-responder model operates within the 911 system in collaboration with the fire department and the police agency.

Through effective training, officers learn to identify signs and symptoms of mental illnesses, and how to utilize a range of stabilization and de-escalation techniques. These innovative partnerships with law enforcement and the FD CARES team can reduce the possibility of using force, improve the patient experience and outcomes, and improve public safety overall.

FDCARES is working to expanding law enforcement co-responder services into Renton in collaboration with Renton Police Department.

If you have questions, or would like to request FD CARES services, please call (253) 856-4398 or email fireFDCARES@pugetsoundfire.org. ■

FD CARES

START YOUR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

By Jennifer Keizer, Emergency Management Coordinator

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. Individuals and families can - and do - cope with disasters by preparing in advance and working together as a team. By planning ahead, you can increase your ability to survive and thrive in the face of disaster: everything from an earthquake to a major winter storm.

Disaster planning does not have to be expensive or complicated. You may already have many of the supplies needed. It's just a matter of planning, putting everything together, and practicing your plan. Here are some things that you can do for you and your family to better prepare for an emergency.

Be Informed and Get Alerts

When disaster strikes, you need to get up to date information and know what to do and where you should go. Do you know where you will receive the most accurate information? Find out what radio stations, television channels, social media platforms, or other news sources you trust for the most up-to-date and accurate information.

Did you know that King County has a reverse 911 system that you can register for to receive important safety information during an emergency?

ALERT KING COUNTY

To sign up for Alert King County, visit kingcounty.gov/alert.

Make a Plan

Plan on how you will communicate and reunite with your family. Do you have an out-of-area contact? Long distance connections work better than local connections in an emergency, so find a family member or friend who lives out of the area and add their numbers to your phone. All family members should know to call that person and check in during a disaster when local lines are disrupted. Do you have a meeting spot for your family if you needed to evacuate? Make sure everyone knows that spot and practice.

Pack Supplies

Not only should you pack food and water for up to seven days, but you should also think about copies of important documents such as bank accounts, identification cards, insurance information and medication lists. Other important items to gather are flashlights and extra batteries, blankets, a battery-operated radio, extra clothing, and cash (small bills and change) as many places may be without power and unable to accept debit/credit cards.

Help Friends and Neighbors

Get to know your neighbors before an emergency or disaster happens. Find out who you may need to check on. Create a community network to share updates on events and emergencies in your area. After a disaster, check on your neighbors to make sure everyone is safe.

Follow a Preparedness Calendar

Following a preparedness calendar takes just a few steps each month, at your own pace, and you will better prepare yourself and your family. There is comfort in knowing you and your loved ones are ready when disaster strikes. ■

For more information about preparing for a disaster, visit makeitthrough.org.

MAKE IT THROUGH

PUGET SOUND FIRE

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED FIRE AGENCY

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24611 116th Ave. SE
Kent, WA 98030
(253) 856-4300

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Emergency Management	(253) 856-4440
Public Information Officer	(253) 856-4405
Community Risk Reduction	(253) 856-4440
FD CARES	(253) 856-4398
Public Education	(253) 856-4480
CPR and First Aid Classes	(253) 856-4300
Disaster Preparedness	(253) 856-4440
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