

ThePulse

Fall 2015



MOST DEVASTATING WILDLAND FIRE SEASON And next year could be even worse

EARTHQUAKE We can't prevent disasters but we can prepare for them

The recent article in New Yorker magazine has generated lots of concern about earthquake risks in our region. While the piece presents some important points, the information is not new: all of us know that we live in a part of the country that's especially prone to seismic activity. We also know that we should all be doing more to prepare. Here are some reminders about the

most important steps you can take to prepare yourself and your family for earthquake and other disasters.

Designate an out-of-state contact. In the wake of a disaster, it's often easier to reach people in areas unaffected by the event than it is to reach people locally. Select family members or friends outside of the region, and make

Continued on back page

With warm and dry weather still ahead, officials are already calling this wildland fire season the most devastating in memory. The loss of life and property has been unimaginable and the economic impacts to local communities and governments astounding. Just as eastern Washington fire departments would respond to help us in a disaster here, Poulsbo Fire Department and North Kitsap Fire & Rescue have been doing what we can to help without compromising our ability to serve our communities. Though the majority of acres burned in Eastern Washington, the western side of the Cascade Mountains was not immune. The long and dry summer left our region parched

Continued inside

The Pulse, published jointly at least once every year, is one of many cooperative efforts between your two local fire departments.

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Funding Update

Wildland Fire Prevention

Burn Ban Status

"Hear the beep where you sleep!"

Update: One Year After Voter-Approval of Addition

Limited by state law to very few funding sources, fire districts rely heavily on property taxes. So, when local property values dove in 2009 and continued to stay depressed, fire districts were struck by declining revenues while demand for service and costs continued to rise. The economy started to recover in 2012, but not quickly enough to preserve the districts' levels of service without additional funding. Poulsbo Fire chose a capital bond measure which, in addition to freeing up operational funds

The first of Poulsbo Fire Department's rechassis'd ambulances is pictured here at the factory.



that previously would have to have been allocated to capital purchases, has allowed the district to replace aging apparatus and equipment as well as make badly-needed repairs and enhancements to existing facilities. NKF&R selected a maintenance and operations levy which helped restore operating revenue lost during the recession and made funds available for long-deferred investments in apparatus, equipment and facilities. The voters in both districts approved the measures at rates well beyond the required 60% and, almost a year later, the positive results are already evident.

Poulsbo Fire has started the process of refurbishing three ambulances. These

aging rigs were increasingly unreliable and the rechassis will provide the district with "like new" vehicles at 35% less than the cost of brand new ambulances. Two new fire engines, replacing units 23 years old, have been ordered. Poulsbo Fire's three stations will all be fully-functional in power outages due to the generator project funded by the bond. The headquarters station, originally built in 1989, will soon get a new roof and heating/ventilation/air conditioning system.

Three of four responder positions, left vacant during the recession, have been

The additional resources have helped to maintain service levels by stabilizing operational funding and by allowing investments in facilities and apparatus that otherwise wouldn't have been possible

resources available to assist in Eastern Washington. We're grateful that people used care with ignition sources, limited fireworks use and observed outdoor burn bans.

Once imposed, fire danger burn bans generally remain in place until the area receives significant, sustained rainfall and there is little chance of additional extended periods of high temperatures. It takes a long time to remove the moisture from heavier fuels such as trees, and it takes a long time to restore it. To check on the status of burn bans, check our web sites or call the burn ban information line at (360)297-4888.

Next summer, fire danger is projected to be as bad or, even, worse. We may not be as fortunate as we were this summer. Take steps now to prepare your home and property to be safe from wildfire. For detailed recommendations, go to www.firewise.org

This stubborn July 2015 fire in driftwood at Point No Point Park took 20 firefighters more than 12 hours to extinguish

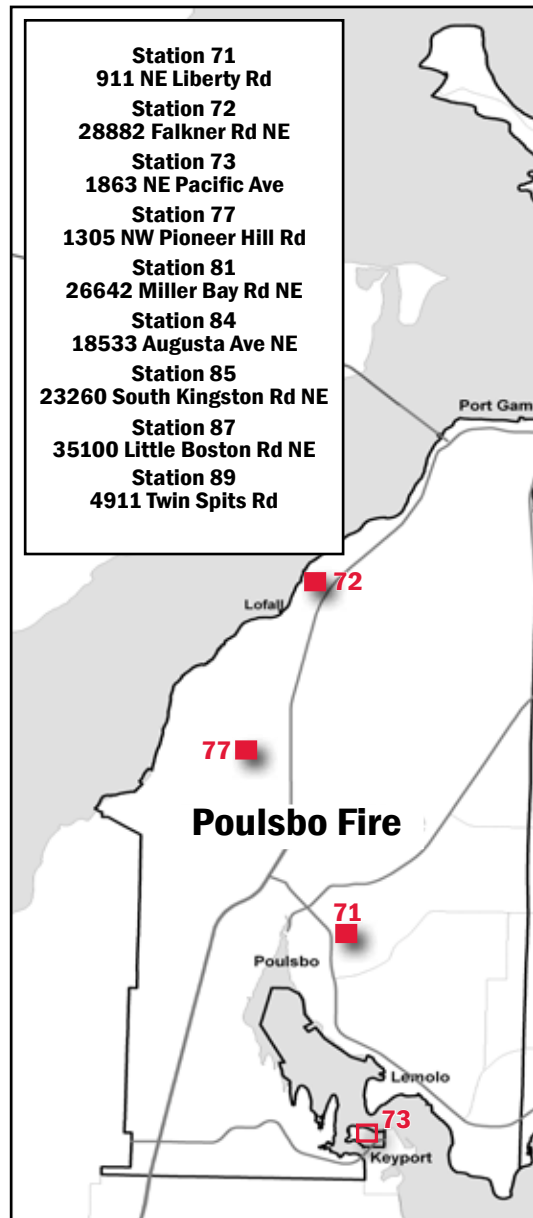


Wildland Continued from front

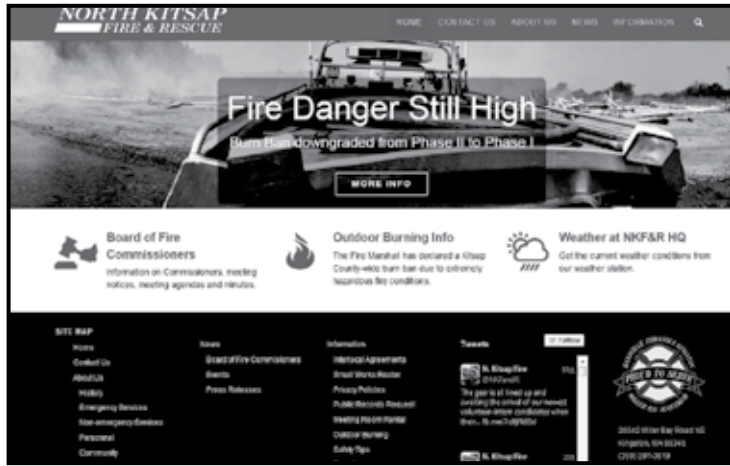
and tinder-dry. Fires broke out across Western Washington, including right here in northern Kitsap County. In fact, if the current pace continues to the end of the year, the two districts will respond to a combined 68 grass, brush and forest fires in 2015. In 2014, Poulsbo Fire and NKF&R only went to 46 wildland fires. Without the cooperation of the public, the season would have been much worse and the districts wouldn't have had the

Quick Facts About Poulsbo Fire

- Service Area:** 54 square miles
- Population Served:** 24,480 (OFM estimate for 2014)
- 2015 Operating Budget:** \$7.25 million
- 2014 Total Calls:** 3,647
- 2014 Medical Calls:** 2,351 (64%)
- Non-Response Employees:** 5
- Response Employees:** 39
- Volunteers:** 25
- Fire Insurance Rating:** 4 within the City of Poulsbo, and 5 in other areas



Annual Funding for the Fire Districts



NKF&R's remodeled web site, launched in early September, is more user-friendly than before.

funding are those that are the least noticeable: the district is now able to maintain staffing and levels of service. Additionally, NKF&R is in the process of determining the most cost-effective way to replace aging fire engines and ambulances. A new command truck, allowing incident managers to safely

filled. Learn more about Poulsbo Fire's newest members in the box at lower right.

At NKF&R, the most important results from approval of additional

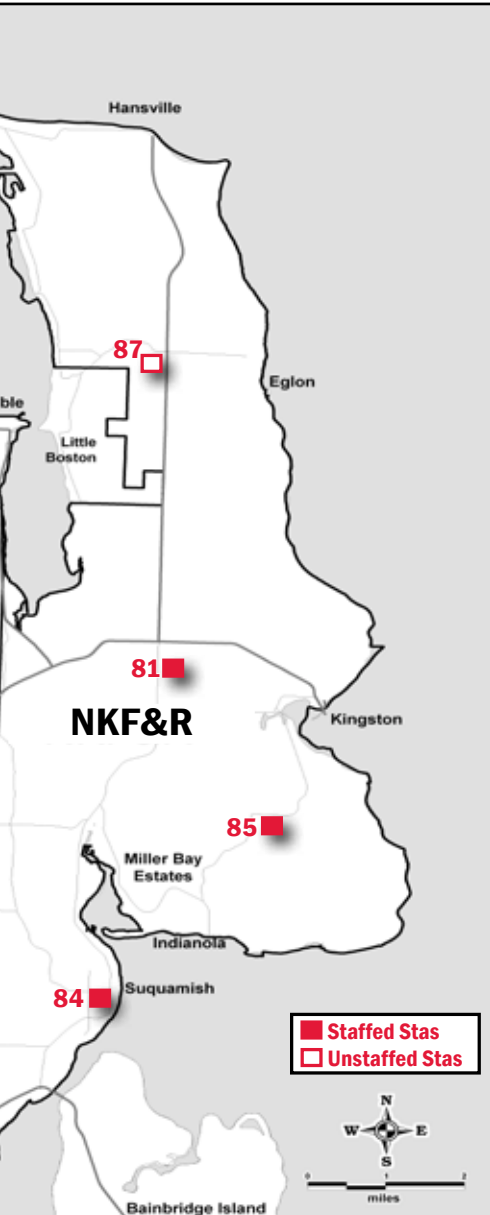
and reliably respond, has arrived to replace the less capable 15 year-old SUV serving now. A remodeled web site, designed and built by a local web developer, is also being launched in September. See it at www.nkfr.org. Furthermore, with some of the pressure on the operating budget relieved, the district is able to invest in training of new candidates for its volunteer-

Quick Facts About NKF&R

- Service Area:** 46 square miles
- Population Served:** 19,387 (OFM estimate for 2014)
- 2015 Operating Budget:** \$6.69 million
- 2014 Total Calls:** 2,982
- 2014 Medical Calls:** 1,838 (62%)
- Non-Response Employees:** 7
- Response Employees:** 37
- Volunteers:** 22
- Fire Insurance Rating:** 5

North Kitsap Burn Ban Information Line (360)297-4888

intern program. Thirteen recruits started a ten-week firefighting academy in early September.



Meet Poulsbo's Newest Medics!

Join us in welcoming Poulsbo Fire's newest members, filling positions that were left vacant for several years during the economic downturn.

Aaron Matson, 35, comes to us from Longview Fire Department where he served as a medic since graduating from Tacoma Community College's program in 2011. He and his family live



in Port Orchard. Aaron began his fire service career there as a volunteer with South Kitsap Fire and Rescue. Whenever possible, he and his family are spending time together camping, hiking or skiing.

Regan Sytsma, 41, has been a fan



of the Pacific Northwest since traveling here on vacation. She has more than twenty years of fire service experience, most recently as a lieutenant/paramedic at the busy North Naples (Florida) Fire Department. She lives in Silverdale with her family, which includes a set of teenaged triplets. They're all thrilled with the abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation here.

Rian Winter, 26, served as a reserve firefighter with Pullman Fire Department while earning a bachelor's degree in social sciences from Washington State University. He's now pursuing a second bachelor's degree in paramedicine. Though looking for a place closer to Poulsbo, Rian currently lives in Eatonville where he worked previously as a firefighter/paramedic.



If you run into these folks around town, be sure to welcome them!

Earthquake Continued from front

agreements with those closest to you to check in with the out-of-state contacts via text, e-mail, social media or telephone.

Develop disaster preparedness kits for home, car and office. Disaster preparedness experts now recommend gathering supplies for at least five days. Kits should include basics such as food, water, flashlights, radio, batteries, warm clothes, sturdy footwear, first aid kit and medications. For a complete list of recommended supplies, go to www.kitsapdem.org.

Make a plan. What if you can't reach your home to care for older family members, children or pets? What's your back-up plan?

Organize your neighborhood. Government resources may not be available to help for several days following a disaster, and neighbors may have to rely on one another. Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management offers training and assistance to neighborhoods that want to organize to take care of one another. Learn more about the "Map Your Neighborhood" program at www.kitsapdem.org.

When an earthquake or other disaster strikes, consider helping ensure that first responders can do their jobs by:

Limit calls to 9-1-1. After the 2001 Nisqually earthquake, the local 9-1-1 system was briefly paralyzed with non-emergency calls. In a disaster, avoid calling 9-1-1 unless life or property is threatened.

Avoid use of telephones. Both landline and cellular telephone lines are often overwhelmed following disasters. Limit your use of the phone to ensure that first responders can communicate with one another.

Stay off the roads (unless directed otherwise). Many disasters – especially windstorm and earthquakes – put pressure on transportation routes as some roads become impassible due to collapse or falling debris. If you can avoid adding to traffic problems, please do.

Leave your children at school. Your kids are most likely safest where they are. Read more about disaster preparedness

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at North Kitsap School District schools below.

Be prepared. Do what you can to be self-sufficient for at least five days. The more self-sufficient you are, the less you'll add to demand for limited services in the wake of a disaster.

Safer at School



Your child's school likely has disaster plans and supplies already in place. In fact, they may be better prepared than many families. For those reasons and more, it could be safest to stay off the roads and leave your child where he or she is during and immediately following a disaster.

In winter storms and earthquakes, falling trees pose a threat to those on the roads. Most local schools have limited vehicle access. If too many vehicles block the approaches to the buildings, first responders will not be able to reach the sites quickly to save lives. Furthermore, school personnel must account for all children in their care and ensure that they aren't taken from the site by someone without permission to do so. By going directly to the school in the wake of a disaster to take students home, parents risk undermining the systems in place to safely and carefully reunite children with their families.

Before the day of the disaster, check with your child's school so you can include that information in your family's disaster preparedness plans.

October is Fire Prevention Month



Location matters when it comes to your smoke alarm. That's the message behind this year's fire prevention campaign, "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!" Along with safety advocates

nationwide, your fire departments are joining forces with the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) during Fire Prevention Week, October 4-10, and throughout the month of October to remind local residents about the importance of

having working smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement.

According to the latest NFPA research, working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire in half. Meanwhile, three out of five fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

A practiced fire escape plan is important. This month, many local students will be bringing home information on the topic through our annual escape planning contest. Information is also available on the fire districts' web sites.

Need help getting or installing smoke alarms? Call us!

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