



## Clallam County Fire District 3

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### In This Edition.....

Chief's Corner  
Preparing for Mass Casualties  
Call Volumes Update



# Clallam County Fire District 3

## NEWSLETTER

Spring/Summer 2018

## Chief's Corner

By Chief Ben Andrews



Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. This month, we would like to share information about a possible general levy lid lift request.

Clallam County Fire District 3 primarily funds emergency services through two property tax levies, a general levy and an EMS levy with the general levy providing the majority of our revenue to save lives and property.

We are good stewards of your tax dollars and take that responsibility seriously. We operate under a balanced budget and have just passed another financial audit by the state. In fact, this year we saved money on our audit costs because we were so organized and transparent.

The issue now is that revenue is not keeping up with the demand to provide service. Call volumes have increased 33% in seven years. Our operational costs increase an average of 3.4% annually. In contrast, we are allowed a 1% revenue increase, which is less than inflation. We would have to draw down reserves next year just to respond to emergency calls, which is not sustainable.

Our community approved a general levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2004. Since that time, the levy rate has fallen to \$1.26. (This happens as property values rise to limit the fire district to the same amount of revenue per year plus the 1%.) Our fire district likely will ask voters to return the general levy to \$1.50 during the November General Election. If approved, the lid lift would be an additional \$60 per year (\$5 per month) for the owner of a \$250,000 home.

Our fire district is hosting two public meetings to discuss this proposal on June 12 (6:00 p.m.) and June 19 (1:00 p.m.). Both meetings will be held at District Headquarters, 323 North Fifth Avenue in Sequim. We invite you to come and learn more about the proposal.

If you are unable to attend one of the meetings, feel free to contact me with questions at (360) 683-4242 or [bandrews@ccfd3.org](mailto:bandrews@ccfd3.org). All communication is welcome and becomes part of the public record.



# Preparing for Mass Casualties

Our country has experienced multiple mass casualty incidents in schools or other public settings. While we hope that won't happen here at home, it is imperative that we prepare to respond to all emergencies.



Clallam County Fire District 3 has been reviewing its operational policies regarding response procedures and training to prepare for such incidents. The fire district has been meeting with local law enforcement and the school district to ensure our efforts are coordinated and designed to save lives as quickly as possible. Law enforcement is trained to mitigate potential threats. Firefighters and paramedics are prepared to coordinate between all agencies involved. The school district is refining its initial safety procedures, and reunification plans for students and parents.



Volunteers demonstrating injuries for training purposes

The roles of emergency responders have changed, and we are changing with them. Your financial support makes this type of preparedness possible, and we are grateful.

# Call Volumes Update

Last year, Clallam County Fire District 3 responded to 7,224 emergency calls. Eighty-five percent of those calls were for Emergency Medical Service, or "EMS". That number is not surprising considering the average age in the Sequim area is over 50.

Emergency call volumes for the fire district have increased 33% in seven years. While EMS is the service our community relies on most, the fire district is an "all hazards" response agency. It provides an emergency response for fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous material spills, and motor vehicle accidents.

Higher call volumes mean added costs for personnel, apparatus maintenance, equipment and medical supplies. The fire district is now directing all its resources into responding to calls, which leaves nothing to hire additional staff, replace apparatus or improve its facilities. The Board of Fire Commissioners has a plan to respond to higher call volumes and protect the financial solvency of the fire district. We hope you will participate in the conversations about the general levy lid lift at one of our upcoming meetings. (See the Chief's Corner message for details.)

