



Fire District 4

FIRE & RESCUE

Serving North Spokane County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fire District 4 continues work through the winter to prevent, mitigate, plan for and protect our citizens from the devastating effects of wildland fires in the summer.

Chattaroy, Wash. – This winter has offered days of low temperatures and abundance of snow. Even with the challenges of winter, the leadership at Fire District 4 keeps its eye on the upcoming summer and the possibility of wildfires.

Fire Service Legislative Day in Olympia occurs near the end of January, and is attended by many firefighters and fire chiefs from around Washington State. District 4's leadership takes that opportunity to talk to Senators and Representatives about the issues that face firefighters. This year, wildland fires and how they are managed was front and center. Legislation to preserve the safety of the public and firefighters is a top priority. State mobilization and the use of wildland fire suppression contractors and volunteers were included in the Bills that were discussed.

This spring, Fire District 4 will be utilizing the services of an experienced Fire Ecologist and Wildland Firefighter to assess our district in regards to wildfire danger and help make our neighborhoods more defensible should the unthinkable happen... again. We are still learning the lessons of Fire Storm '91 and working to prevent or at least minimize the damage from a similar event. There are many Urban Interface areas north of Spokane, which include homes in forested areas – these areas pose a higher risk of losing more than just trees in a wildfire, and we need to be prepared to save those properties. This process will help us identify and prioritize areas to prepare ahead of time by reducing hazardous fuels and conditions that exist on the landscape.

Fire District 4 is also applying for a grant through the National Fire Protection Agency for a hazard fuels reduction day. May 6th is National Wildland Preparedness Day; we are planning to assist homeowners to make their homes defensible in the event of a wildland fire. The fire district will support this effort through education and a collection site for yard waste that might otherwise pose a fire threat.

In June of 2017, Deer Park will host the Eastern Washington Fire Training Academy (EWFTA), with D4 Chief Randy Johnson as one of the Incident Commanders. This academy trained over 400 firefighters from different agencies such as WA state Department of Natural Resources, the US Forest Service, and local fire districts for the wildfire season last year; the same is expected this year. Chief Johnson said, "This interagency training is invaluable for all levels of firefighters, and leads to a better trained firefighting force throughout the summer."

Wildland fire is one of Washington State's largest natural disasters. Preparation is key, which means that the work goes on all year round.

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Spokane County Fire District 4 provides fire suppression and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to 45,000 people over 330 square miles in north Spokane County, including the city of Deer Park. Volunteer and part-time firefighters respond to more than 3,100 emergency calls per year; 77 percent on average are for EMS. Fire District 4 is proud to operate under a balanced budget and has passed all financial and accountability audits by the state. Find Spokane County Fire District 4 on Facebook and Twitter @SpokaneCoFire4 or visit the web site at www.scf4.org.