



# Benton County Fire District #1

# Five Year Plan 2021-2025



*Dedicated to Providing the Highest Level of Public Safety Services to our Community*

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**BENTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #1  
FIVE YEAR PLAN**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

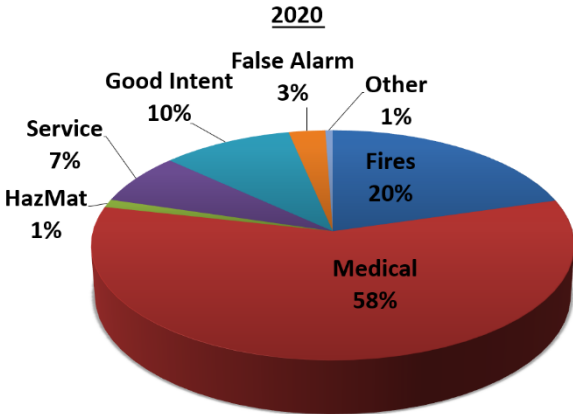
Benton County Fire District #1 is pleased to present its 2021-2025 Five Year Plan. The purpose of this Plan is to clarify the mission and goals of the Fire District as well as develop a strategy to provide excellent service as we prepare for the many challenges and opportunities that will surround emergency services during the next five years. This Plan is not a static document. This means it must be continually updated and changed as conditions change.

Benton County Fire District #1 is a quality Fire District with a highly qualified administrative staff and dedicated paid and volunteer members. The District has established an excellent reputation in the community and continues to develop advanced emergency response activities within the Fire District and mutual aid agencies.

The Fire District has improved service in the past few years and in 2018 an EMS Levy was put to the voters to help fund ambulance transport; however, the levy failed to pass with the super-majority (60%) of votes required. A simple majority (50%) of voters were in favor of the EMS Levy, so the Board of Commissioners opted to move forward without the levy and provide ambulance services on a fee-based basis instead. The Fire District passed a levy lid lift in 2019 that maintained property tax collections of \$1.50. The levy lid lift will expire the end of 2025; the Fire District has relied heavily on the increased revenue. Through the levy lid lift, the Fire District has been able to increase staff, replace personal protective equipment, and replace a limited number of apparatus that was overdue during the past seven years. As the number of emergency service calls continues to increase, it is imperative that revenues remain steady to keep up with the growing demands and to provide additional services.

The Fire District always has been and will continue to be a strong volunteer-oriented agency. Over 80 percent of all emergency services, including fire, medical, rescue and hazardous materials, are provided by our professionally trained and dedicated volunteer members. Recruiting and retaining this force continues to be challenging but will be a priority of the Fire District for many years. However, because of the increased demand for service, it is not possible to rely solely on the volunteer force. For at least the next two years the District will need to maintain a ratio of at least 5:1 volunteer to career emergency responders. As the community becomes more urban, and the demand for service increases, it can be expected that the ratio of career to volunteer providers will increase. However, it is an almost certain fact that the need for a large, trained force of volunteer members will continue for many years.

As the Fire District changes over time, the types of emergencies evolve over time. Many years ago, emergency responses were primarily for grass and brush fires with a few building fires and auto accidents. At present, the average call volume is 58 percent for medical emergencies and auto accidents. We also have a high incidence of building fires at 6 percent of the overall call volume. Fires in grass and brush were decreasing steadily over the years, but recently an increase has been



observed with more residents residing in the urban interface areas and mechanical failures on roadways. The District continues to see a downward trend of fires over 300 acres which is classified as a 'large fire' by the National Wildland Coordinating Group. Having a large amount of industry within our Fire District compared to others in Benton County, adds additional complexity and a weekday service demand that is difficult to accommodate without 24/7 career staffing. Because of the size of the Fire District and the reliance on volunteers, it is difficult to meet the public's expectation that responders will arrive within minutes of their 911 calls.

This document is intended to assist the Board of Fire Commissioners and members, but we also hope that you, the citizens, will benefit from it as well. We encourage you to contact us with any concerns you may have and to offer suggestions to help meet your expectations. Furthermore, if you think we are doing a good job, please let us know that too. Our Board of Fire Commissioners, our volunteer members, and our staff care about this community; that's why they are always here to assist you.

# INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this document, “*Benton County Fire District #1 Five Year Plan*” is to provide the following for this community:

- Defining current emergency response performance and organization.
- Guidance when dealing with personnel, resource procurement and allocation in the District for the next five-year period.
- Communicating to the public the level of service they currently receive and the level of service they will receive in the future.
- Facility upgrades and replacements in the future.

## INTRODUCTION

The risk of fire, medical emergency, or other emergency events cannot be held to zero. Thus, the objective of this standard of coverage is to identify a balance between distribution, concentration, and reliability that will keep fire risk at a reasonable level while yielding the maximum savings of life and property.

This plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis for and/by the Board of Fire Commissioners. The plan is intended as a tool to help guide the Fire District in future decision-making. It is also available to the members of the Fire District and the public to help understand the vision and direction of the Fire District. While an effort is made to follow the guidance offered in the plan, it must be remembered that the plan itself is not an absolute. Because of changing conditions within the Fire District that are impossible to predict exactly, the Board of Commissioners will have opportunities presented that require decisions outside the plan or decisions that are contrary to the plan.

## DEFINITIONS

Advanced Life Support (ALS): Functional provision of advanced medical management, including but not limited to endotracheal intubations, advanced cardiac monitoring (including parking), manual defibrillation, establishment and maintenance of intravenous access, and advanced drug therapy.

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ): The governing body, organization, office, individual, or designee responsible for approving emergency equipment, personnel, policies, and procedures in each community.

Automatic Aid: The pre-determined response of personnel and equipment for an alarm to a neighboring jurisdiction at the first alarm level. This process is accomplished through simultaneous dispatch, is documented in writing, and is included as part of a communication center’s dispatch protocol.

Basic Life Support (BLS): Medical care provided by personnel trained at the First Responder or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level, including basic first aid, esophageal intubation, and automatic external defibrillation (AED) levels of care.

Community Risk Reduction: Those activities involved in keeping events that cause injuries and damage from occurring through education/behavior modification; legislation/enforcement; and engineering and technology. Community risk reduction may be further categorized into Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary prevention activities.

- Primary Prevention. All those activities designed to improve the wellbeing of an already healthy person or group. Seeks to enhance well-being by reinforcing health behaviors and discouraging lifestyles that eventually lead to injury or illness.
- Secondary Prevention. Consists of those activities that allow for early detection and treatment of an injury or a disease. It is aimed at people who may appear healthy, but who, because of age, sex, heredity, or other personal characteristics, might be identified as high-risk candidates for a particular condition.
- Tertiary Prevention. Refers to a minimization of the consequences caused by a disease or injury to prevent further complications or recurrence. The focus shifts from the individual to the medical care delivery team.

Duty Chief: The individual assigned as the on-call Chief Officer of the Fire District. Assumes the acting position of Fire Chief in the absence of a higher-ranking chief officer.

Emergency Medical Care: The provision of treatment to patients, including first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, First Responder, Basic Life Support, Advanced Life Support, and other medical procedures that occur prior to arrival at a hospital or other health care facility.

Emergency Operations: Activities of the Fire District relating to rescue, fire suppression, emergency medical care, and special operations, including response to the scene of the incident and all functions performed at the scene.

Fire Apparatus: A Fire District emergency vehicle used for rescue, fire suppression, or other specialized functions.

Fire District: An organization providing fire suppression, emergency medical services, rescue services, education and prevention activities, emergency planning, and related activities to the public.

First Responder (EMS): Functional provision of initial assessment (airway, breathing, and circulatory systems) and basic first aid intervention, including CPR and may include an automatic external defibrillator (AED) capability. Assists higher-level EMS providers.

Hazardous Materials: A material that may possess a hazard to health or the environment. The hazardous material itself may include, but not be limited to explosives, flammables, combustibles, compressed gases, cryogenics, poisons, toxins, reactive and oxidizing agents, radioactive materials, corrosives, carcinogens, etiological agents, other regulated materials (ORM), hazardous substances, hazardous waste, or any combination thereof.



Hazardous Materials Response Plan: The plan as detailed in the Fire District Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) for response to hazardous materials incidents. May also include by reference the portion of the Benton County Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan that addresses hazardous materials response.

High Hazard Occupancy: Includes buildings having high hazard materials, processes, or contents. Also included would be high-risk residential occupancies, neighborhoods with structures near one another, special medical occupancies, and high-rise occupancies.

Incident Commander: The Fire District member in overall command of an emergency incident.

Incident Management System: An organized system of roles, responsibilities, and standard operating procedures used to manage emergency operations; such systems are also referred to as Incident Command Systems (ICS).

Mutual Aid: A written policy or contract to allow for the deployment of personnel and equipment to respond to an alarm in another jurisdiction. This is part of the written deployment criteria, for response to alarms, as dispatched by a communication center. This response is discretionary on the part of the agency being requested. (See also automatic aid.)

Policy and Procedure: The specific directives issued by the Board of Commissioners that are the strict manner in which business is to be conducted by the Fire District.

Remote Response Area: Any area of the District that is more than 5 miles of a District facility.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW): The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) is the compilation of all permanent laws now in force. It is a collection of Session Laws (enacted by the Legislature, and signed by the Governor, or enacted via the initiative process), arranged by topic, with amendments added and repealed laws removed. It does not include temporary laws such as appropriations acts. The RCW is published by the Statute Law Committee and is the official version of the code.

Rural Response Area: Any area of the District that is outside of the Urban Growth Area (UGA) of the City of Kennewick or the City of Richland and is within five road miles of a District facility.

Southeast Communications Center (Se-Comm): Dispatch center utilized by Benton County Fire District #1 for 9-1-1 services and notification of emergency situations.

Special Operations: Those emergency incidents to which the Fire District responds that require specific and advanced training and specialized tools and equipment. Special operations include water rescue, hazardous materials, confined space entry, high-angle rescue, trench and collapse rescue, and other operations requiring specialized training. Special operations are performed by dedicated units or by members assigned to other units.

Standard Operating Guideline: An organizational directive that establishes a standard and/or guideline for a course of action.

Suburban Response Area: Any area of the District that is within and Urban Growth Area (UGA) of the City of Kennewick or the City of Richland.

Urban Response Area: Any portion of the District that is an “island” that is totally surrounded either by the City of Kennewick or the City of Richland.

Wildland/Urban Interface: An area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. (See National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 295 Wildfire Control, NFPA 299 Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire, National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Wildland Fire Qualification Subsystem Guide 310-1.)

## LEGAL DESCRIPTION AND ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

### INCORPORATION DATE AND LOCATION

Benton County Fire Protection District #1 (also referred to as BCFD#1) was formed September 23, 1946. The fire district will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2021! The first fire engine was housed in a City of Kennewick fire station. The city firefighters operated the fire engine on fire calls in the Fire District area around the City. In July 1958, the first Fire District station was opened at 27th Avenue and Olympia Street. That fire station, after being remodeled and added onto three times, is still in operation. The second fire station was opened in a rented garage on Finley Road in 1959. The current fire station in Finley, which has also had three remodels and additions with the most recent in 2012, is located across the street from the original station. The third station was built at its current location at Grant and Canal Streets in 1960 and has been remodeled three times and added onto once. This station continues to operate and serves areas throughout the District. The fourth station opened at the Richland Y in the late 1950's. This station operated until annexations by the City of Richland reduced the need and the station was closed. The Fire District opened a station, again in a rented garage, on Bermuda Road in Rancho Reata in 1981. This station was replaced with a permanent facility across the street in 1984. As the District grew and due to Washington Survey and Rating Bureau requirements, a fifth station was built in Badger Canyon in 1992 near the western edge of the District. Station 150 is still operational but is currently very short on volunteer members. Station 160, the sixth fire station was constructed from 1999-2002 and consisted of three structures. The location had the administrative office, maintenance shop and apparatus bay with three bays. The three-bay apparatus facility is owned by the Columbia Basin Dive Rescue Association and is still occupied by fire apparatus. The station is currently comprised of living quarters from a remodel of the previous administrative office and the rented space from the Dive Rescue building at 144610 E. Law Lane. The Fire District's aerial ladder truck, type 3 engine, ambulance, bulldozer, and Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) are located at this facility. The administrative office has moved and is currently located at 101108 E. Badger Road, Kennewick, the site of the soon to be Station 170.

Although Fire Districts in Washington State were originally chartered in 1939 to provide fire protection, that mission has evolved to meet the expectations of the public. Benton County Fire District #1, like all Fire Districts serving urban populations, now provides fire suppression, emergency medical services and transport, hazardous materials control and containment, technical rescue and public information, prevention, education to its citizenry and those who may be passing through the Fire District on the Interstate, on the rail system or on the Columbia River.

### GOVERNANCE

Benton County Fire District #1 is a special purpose service district established to provide services under RCW 52. The Fire District serves an area of approximately 320 square miles neighboring the Cities of Kennewick, Richland, and West Richland, and covers the Southeastern portion of Benton County. The Fire District is bounded by the Columbia and Yakima River on the North, the Columbia River on the East and South, and a line between Benton City and Plymouth on the West. The Fire District boundary is shown on the attached maps (Appendix A and B). The Cities of Kennewick, Richland, and West Richland deduct some land from the

northern portions of the Fire District. Approximately 70 percent of the Fire District land area is farming or range lands. The remaining 30 percent surrounds the cities and is now or will become urban in nature. There is a small portion of the District that is heavy industry, with large chemical facilities, cold storage warehouses, construction businesses, wineries and some developing industrial uses.

The current population of the Fire District is approximately 19,142 people, with approximately 90 percent of those people living in the areas surrounding the cities. The Fire District, as a special purpose district, is governed by an elected Board of three Fire Commissioners. The Board of Fire Commissioners is responsible for establishing the policy for the District and ensuring an adequate financial base to meet the needs of the public and meet their legal requirements.

### BUDGET PROCESS

Benton County Fire District #1 is a special purpose service district, and its primary source of revenue is property taxes. The District is allowed by RCW to levy a maximum of \$1.50 per thousand dollars of assessed value. Also, by RCW, the District may only assess a maximum of 101 percent of the highest assessment of the previous three years of revenue for fire response. RCW does allow for an additional \$.50 per thousand dollars for emergency medical services which the District does not assess. These limits are in effect regardless of the growth in the District's expenses related to inflation, and/or increased service demands from state or federal mandates. The District may issue non-voter approved bonds for capital expenses; however, these bonds must be redeemed from regular operating revenues. Voter approved bond levies for capital purchases can be assessed above this limit.

### EXPENSE BUDGETS FOR THE PREVIOUS 4 YEARS

*Budgets include bond payments, which reduce the available operating revenue and grant funds that increase the budget.*

<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
\$3,578,020	\$3,431,460	\$3,534,186	\$4,295,814

### PERSONNEL

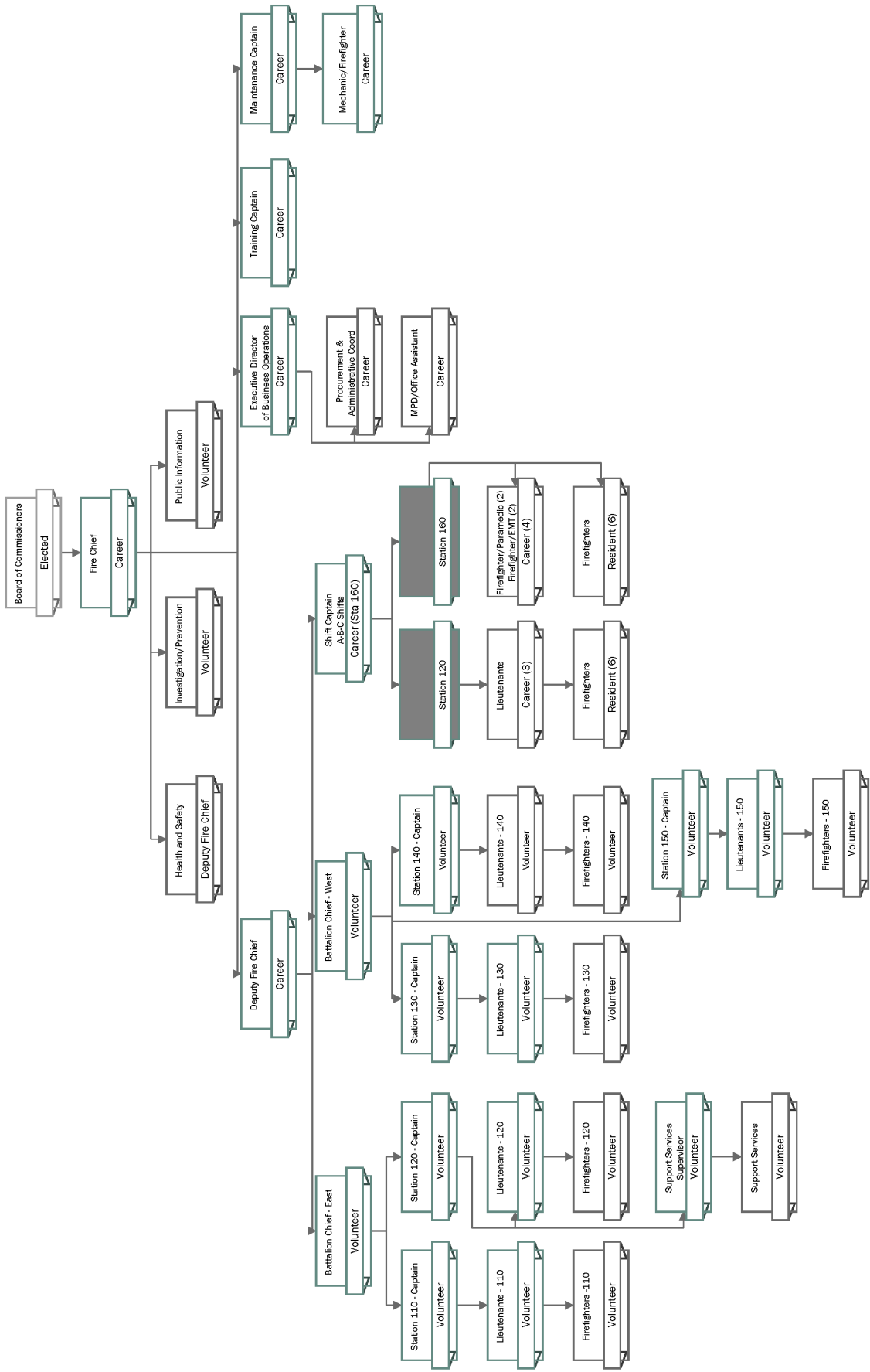
In previous years, the Board of Commissioners had approved a staffing goal to be in place by 2005. This goal would have always provided an average of approximately 30 personnel available throughout the Fire District. The daytime personnel would include a combination of career, seasonal and volunteer firefighters. The night staffing would include a combination of resident and volunteer firefighters. In addition to supplementing the volunteers, daytime career and nighttime resident firefighters would contribute to keeping the response times within acceptable limits. Due to tax revenue limitations this goal was never met.

The Board of Commissioners approved the expansion of service to include medical transport which began in July 2020. Four personnel were added with the assistance of a FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant. Two firefighter/paramedics and two firefighter/EMT's were hired. Two additional firefighter/paramedics will need to be hired to

complete 24/7 service. The current plan is to hire one firefighter/paramedic in 2021, and another in 2022.

The Fire District currently employs eighteen full-time staff members and has a volunteer force of approximately 80 individuals. In 2021, the Fire District currently employs two seasonal firefighters for a four-month period to assist in wildland firefighting and fire prevention. The Fire Districts aggressive recruitment program averages 35 volunteers per year but continues to face retention problems.

# ORGANIZATION CHART



## FACILITIES

### FIRE STATIONS

The District currently operates out of six fire stations and a seventh fire station is currently under construction. Three of the fire stations have been in service for more than 50 years and are still operation. The locations of the fire stations are shown on the map Appendix A.

#### Station 110 – 2700 S. Olympia St., Kennewick Highlands

This fire station was originally constructed in 1960. In 1968 an additional bay was added. In 1974 an office and meeting room were added. In 1994 resident quarters and the SCBA maintenance room was added. This station is comprised of three apparatus bays. The station has limited office, classroom, and storage areas. The station has minimal grounds available for any further expansion and with the widening of 27th Avenue more ground was lost. This station is located for response into the county areas to the south and east of the facility.

#### Station 120 – 30004 S. Finley Rd., East Finley

This fire station was originally constructed in 1961. In 1967, two additional apparatus bays were added. In 1989, a classroom, kitchen, additional bathrooms and living quarters for two resident firefighters were added. In 2012, a significant addition was added to this station. Six bedrooms, a squad room/kitchen, restrooms, and showers were added to the back for the occupancy of resident firefighters. The station currently has five apparatus bays, a large training room, but limited storage space. This station is almost ideally located for response coverage of the eastern Finley area. The only problem, and one that is increasing yearly, are potential delays to the west area of Finley due to trains blocking the rail crossings.

#### Station 130 – 1321 N. Grant, Tri-City Heights

The station covering the north area of the District is in the poorest overall condition. This station was originally constructed in 1960. The station has three bays, a restroom, classroom, and office. The building occupies all the property owned at this site. As a result, volunteer firefighters must park their personal vehicles in neighboring agencies/businesses parking lots. It is in the City of Kennewick and has a very small area of primary coverage in the subdivision of Tri-City Heights. This primary coverage area has been and will continue to be pursued for annexation by the City of Kennewick.

#### Station 140 – 7704 S. Bermuda Rd., Rancho Reata

This station was constructed in 1984 to serve existing and planned development in the northwest end of the District. The station has two double length bays that currently holds three fire apparatus. The classroom, kitchen, restrooms, and offices are adequate for the current use and appears to be adequate for future needs.

#### Station 150 – 56205 E. Badger Rd., Badger Canyon

This station was constructed in 1991. It is sized appropriately for the current area's deployment models. There are two vehicle bays, a classroom, office, kitchen, bathroom, and decontamination facilities. The drawback for this facility has been lack of community support and volunteer members. The station is currently severely understaffed. Despite recruiting efforts in the area, we have never exceeded 10 volunteers since the station opened. The

location of the station is good, especially with the completion of Dallas Road and Rancho Reata extension. This station was considered for remodel with a bond request in 2019, but the location fell under the new Benton County Lower Yakima River Basin Water Project, which will considerably slow construction and development in that area of the Fire District. A new fire station location was purchased at 101108 E. Badger Road. The 2019 Bond revenue will remodel and construct existing structure for an occupancy of full-time personnel. Full-time staff will be relocated from Station 160 to Station 170 upon completion of construction.

#### Station 160 – 144610 E. Law Lane, South Kennewick

This station is comprised of living quarters from a remodel of the previous administrative office and the rented space from the Dive Rescue building at 144610 E. Law Lane. The Fire District aerial, type 2 engine, light rescue truck, bulldozer and UTV are located at this facility.

#### Station 170 – 101108 E. Badger Road, Badger Canyon

This station is under construction and will be complete late 2021 or early 2022. An outbuilding on the property is currently occupied by the Fire Chief and Administrative Staff.

### SUPPORT FACILITIES

#### Administrative Facility – 101108 E. Badger Rd, Kennewick

The former administrative facility located at 7511 W. Arrowhead, Kennewick is currently for sale and is no longer occupied by the Fire District. In 2020, property was purchased at 101108 E. Badger Rd for future construction of Station 170. A 1,400 square foot metal outbuilding on the property was remodeled to become the new administrative facility. While the remodel took place, the administrative staff was temporarily relocated to Station 140 to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The current administrative staff occupying the new administrative facility includes the Fire Chief, Executive Director of Business Operations, Procurement and Administrative Coordinator and Office Assistant.

#### Maintenance Facility – 144610 E. Law Lane, South Kennewick

Repair and maintenance of Fire District apparatus and equipment is done from a second facility located at the same site as Fire Station 160. The building is a 4,800 square foot metal building with three large bays for repair, approximately 2,000 square feet of overhead storage, secure storage for personal protective equipment and medical supplies and offices for the two Mechanic/Firefighters.

#### Training Facilities – 1811A S. Ely St, Kennewick

The Fire District shares a central training facility with the City of Kennewick Fire Department. This facility, located at 19th and Ely Street in Kennewick, was constructed using a combination of agency personnel and contractors. The facility hosts a large classroom, training captain offices, KFD EMS Officer office, KFD training administrative assistant, training building with multiple simulations, including live fire, a drill ground, and special simulations such as confined space and rope rescue. There is currently a two-story multipurpose building in the final stages of completion that will be used for additional training space, workstations, SCBA compressor and a “dirty” inside training area where PPE can be worn. The Fire District has purchased an additional .75 acres of land to the north and are in the process of procuring an additional .77 acres from the County of Benton for future expansion of the training facility. When the facility



is not being used by the Fire District or Kennewick Fire Department, it is available for rental by other agencies.

The Fire District also uses the HAMMER training facility at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation for some specific training. However, the travel distance precludes using the facility for weekly training. The cost for this training has increased dramatically and the logistics to move personnel and equipment to either the HAMMER site or the state training facility in North Bend makes it hard to accomplish.

## APPARATUS

Benton County Fire District #1 is a geographically large Fire District, covering approximately 320 square miles. Many of the approximate 400 Fire Districts in the state cover less than 50 square miles. This large coverage area requires duplication of apparatus, and contributes to the extreme diversity of emergency responses, which in turn requires many varied types of apparatus. The Fire District must operate and maintain a fleet larger than would typically be found in a municipality or city serving the same population.

## MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Benton County Fire District #1 mission is to provide the citizens of Benton County Fire District #1 with fire suppression of and fire protection from hostile fires, emergency medical, rescue services including transport, and response to and management of hazardous materials incidents. Benton County Fire District #1 also responds and participates in multi-agency fire, emergency medical and hazardous materials incidents in accordance with contractual and mutually agreed commitments.

### GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ALTERNATIVES

The following gives a brief description of the different elements of the Fire District and where the District currently stands with each of those specific elements. Also listed are options on how the District can, and/or will make changes over the coming years depending on financial impacts.

### PERSONNEL

The Fire District currently employs 18 full-time staff members and has a volunteer force of approximately 80 individuals. The Fire District continues to have problems recruiting and retaining quality volunteers. This problem is not exclusive to Fire District #1. The National Volunteer Fire Council statistics show that Volunteer Firefighters nationwide have been on the increase since its low in 2011, but the rate of increase is not keeping up with demand. The reduction in night shift employment businesses has drastically reduced the availability of daytime volunteer members. The increased emphasis on production, long working hours, work/life balance and an unstable working environment has decreased the number of blue-collar workers that are able to volunteer. These factors and an ever-increasing number of mandated training hours have and will continue to significantly impact the Fire District's volunteer force.

The full-time staff includes a Fire Chief who follows the policy direction of the Board of Commissioners and is responsible for providing administrative direction and leadership for all Fire District functions, operations, and personnel through the supervision of staff and a review of their activities. The Deputy Fire Chief is responsible for managing work that is public safety oriented in the protection of life and property and for managing and coordinating all operational needs, staffing needs, and resource management for the Fire District.

The Executive Director of Business Operations is responsible for planning, organizing, and directing general administrative and financial services for the District and assists in policy development and implementation for the District and acts as the principal assistant to the Fire Chief in all aspects of government, business, administration, and financial matters.

The Procurement and Administrative Coordinator provides administrative support at all organizational levels and is responsible for procurement activities for goods and services involving public works following the regulatory requirements for local governments in Washington State and is responsible for processing accounts payable and receivable.

The Office Assistant supports the administrative staff with daily routine functions and is responsible for ambulance billing, processing volunteer member training records, certifications, and emergency response records and reimbursement. The Training Captain is responsible for a

training program for all members and responds to emergency incidents. Two Mechanic/Firefighters are responsible for maintenance and repair on all district-owned and operated vehicles, facility maintenance outside of public works laws, along with the logistical items associated with the Fire District and response to emergency incidents. The Fire District also employs ten additional suppression/emergency medical personnel who work 12-hour and 24-hour shifts, Monday through Sunday, to supplement the shortage of daytime volunteer firefighters. All career fire suppression/EMS personnel, other than the executive and administrative staff, are members of the International Association of Firefighters Local #1296.

The Fire District volunteer staff positions consist of two Battalion Chiefs and a Public Information Officer. The Battalion Chiefs are assigned to operations and directly supervise the daily operations of their assigned volunteer-based fire stations. The Fire District has individuals assigned to specific program areas who assist the Chiefs in assuring that legal mandates relating to the operations of the Fire District are carried out. All these positions supervise and support ongoing projects that involve other members of the Fire District, as well as, continued response to emergencies. A very important point is that all Fire District personnel have a role at some level in providing emergency services. Everyone, including support and administrative staff, are trained to provide incident mitigation or incident support roles.

One Captain is assigned to each of the volunteer-based fire stations within the Fire District. They are specifically responsible to a Battalion Chief for the administration and operations within their assigned fire station and for the overall operational readiness of their people and equipment. Lieutenants are the company, or crew supervisors, and direct the activities of the firefighters at training sessions or emergency responses. They are expected to command the apparatus on which they respond and are responsible for the vehicle and crew. Under the lieutenant level is the firefighter corps of the Fire District. Online firefighters and other positions at this level make up the majority of personnel within Fire District #1.

Volunteer fire districts are continually challenged to recruit, train and retain members. The Fire District has worked to balance the number of available personnel between weekday and weeknight/weekend. Providing an adequate number of personnel to a working fire within a reasonable response time is the greatest challenge. The first arriving units should be on the scene in time to limit the damage to the structure or to provide effective medical care. To comply with state safety requirements, four firefighters and one Incident Commander/Safety Officer must be on the scene of an emergency prior to entry in to an IDLH atmosphere. To be reasonably effective in fire suppression, four of the five personnel should be ready to enter the structure in less than eleven minutes from initial dispatch. In most cases this should be effective in preventing major property loss. In the case of a fire in an occupied residential structure, this elapsed time may be ineffective in rescuing victims. Fires involving older model mobile homes will probably result in a complete loss. The total firefighting force should arrive in less than 15 minutes from dispatch.

The Fire District must maintain relationships with neighboring agencies to facilitate agreements for first response assistance to supplement Fire District staffing. To increase the nighttime/weekend staffing, the Fire District has significantly increased the use of resident firefighters. The Columbia Basin College (CBC) Fire Science Program and Tri-Tech Skills Center are a good source of individuals with a strong interest in a fire service career. Duty time for

residents would be weekends (both day and night) and weeknight shifts. It is likely that some students would be available in the morning or afternoons.

The Fire District experiences at least a 10 percent turnover in the volunteer force annually. To compensate for this turnover, we will need to continue to recruit volunteer personnel even as the total force is being reduced. As the population of the Fire District continues to expand, particularly on the east and west sides of the District, the need for volunteer personnel will continue. Failure to recruit and train enough volunteers to maintain the reduced force will lead to fewer personnel and even longer response times than currently proposed.

*STAFFING EXPLANATION*

Providing adequate career and volunteer staffing at incidents, particularly during the day, continues to be a problem. Daytime volunteers in 2005 accounted for 20 personnel with an average of five per incident, a 50 percent reduction in five years. During this time, the total number of suppression volunteers (firefighter through captain) substantially dropped throughout the country and locally.

<b>POSITION DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Future</b>
Fire Chief, Career	1	1
Deputy Chief, Career	1	1
Assistant Chief/Fire Investigator, Volunteer	0	1
Battalion Chiefs/Operations/Volunteer	2	2
Administrative, Career	3	3
Training Captain, Career	1	1
Safety Captain, Volunteer	0	0
Public Information Captain, Volunteer	1	1
Administrative Support Volunteers	0	N/A
Incident Support Supervisor, Volunteer	1	1
Incident Support, Volunteer	7	N/A
Station Captains, Volunteer	3	5
Lieutenants, Volunteer	10	15
Firefighters, Volunteer	55	60
Captains, Career	3	3
Lieutenants, Career	3	3
Mechanic Supervisor, Career	1	1
Mechanic, Career	1	0
Resident Firefighters	14	18
Career Firefighters	4	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>122</b>

### *APPARATUS MAINTENANCE/LOGISTICS STAFF*

The District employs two personnel who work as Mechanic/Firefighters with responsibility to repair and maintain approximately 35 vehicles and 20 other types of mechanical equipment. These two personnel also provide a significant amount of logistical support to the organization, including, facility maintenance, minor repair, and modification when public works criteria are not met. However, because their time is split somewhat equally between duties as a mechanic and duties as a fire captain, this is roughly equivalent to one full-time mechanic. The suppression apparatus requires approximately ten days of maintenance annually and support vehicles require approximately five days. This maintenance time is exclusive of breakdowns. Fleet maintenance information suggests one mechanic for each 20 vehicles to be maintained. With the continued move to more computer diagnostics in vehicle maintenance, and the outsourcing of such work, the Fire District believes that we could reduce to one mechanic in the future and take the second position for a firefighter paramedic.

#### ***Future Staffing***

- Maintaining one person assigned to apparatus maintenance and repairs is needed to provide the level of service required of emergency response apparatus. The previously identified second staff person could be employed as a firefighter/paramedic and assist with logistics.

### *ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF*

The current career administrative staff consists of the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Executive Director of Business Operations, Procurement and Administrative Coordinator and an Office Assistant. Because Fire Districts are independent government agencies, we do not have separate departments for human resources, public works, and other functions, therefore these duties must be dispersed and provided by internal administrative staff. This includes functions such as: all financial matters relating to the Fire District, personnel management normally assigned to a human resources department, interactions with other governmental units and private industry, management of contracts and agreements, public works and prevailing wage requirements, planning, support of elected officials and public information and relations.

#### ***Future Staffing***

- Evaluate the need for Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief positions when growth and expansion has stabilized.
- Maintain current volunteer Chief Officer staffing.
- Evaluate the need for a volunteer Assistant Fire Chief.
- Maintain three administrative support positions

### *CAREER STAFFING*

Career staffing within the Fire District is composed of individuals that respond to incidents as their primary duty and those that respond as a collateral duty. The three shift Captains and three shift Lieutenants are assigned to three 24-hour rotating shifts with their primary function being emergency response. The three shift captains and lieutenants also have projects they are assigned to manage. The two firefighter/paramedics and two firefighter/ EMT's are assigned to a rotating 12-hour shift over 7 days/week and respond to all emergencies with the Captains and Lieutenants while they are on duty. The firefighter/paramedics are responsible for the

ambulance readiness for response and patient care when on duty. The Fire Chief, Administrative Staff, Training Captain, and Mechanic/Firefighters have a response obligation based on the type and kind of incident.

As our call volume is increasing, the pool of daytime available volunteers is decreasing. During the day, we are critically short of personnel. The District has attempted to address this problem by adding career daytime personnel in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2007, 2011 and 2020. As a result, Station 120 is staffed during the day with one career person, and Station 160 is staffed 24 hours a day by three personnel, on an inconsistent basis. Our robust resident program which is outlined below has assisted with staffing at both stations. At a minimum during the weekday, there is one engine or ambulance staffed at station 160 with two personnel.

### ***Future Staffing***

- Hire two additional firefighter/paramedics to provide 24-hour ambulance coverage.
- Recruit daytime available volunteer members and resident firefighters.

### ***SEASONAL PERSONNEL***

To offset the daytime impacts during the summer, the Fire District began hiring summer seasonal employees in 1999. As a result, the emergency response during high-risk periods is boosted and more personnel are available for wildfire prevention.

### ***Future Staffing***

- Keep current seasonal staffing plan; these positions were eliminated in 2006 and returned in 2018.

### ***RESIDENT FIREFIGHTERS***

The Fire District Resident Program is a fully acceptable response force with identified time. These residents reside at the fire station and respond as a member of the company. The resident program is established for 12 to 18 participants. In exchange for service, residents receive tuition reimbursement and lodging through the resident program. The program has been very successful for the Fire District and surrounding fire agencies in search of new employees.

### ***FIRE STATIONS***

The District currently has six fire stations, and soon to be seven, that personnel are responding to emergencies from. See the Facilities Section for more information.

### ***Future Considerations***

- Station #110: This station should remain open until the point in time at which a facility in the area of Oak Street and Bowles Road or State Route 397 and South Olympia Street can be constructed.
- Station #120: This station is currently well-situated and suited for its response into the Finley area. This station should have additional resident space added to accommodate CBC students as resident firefighters.
- Station #130: This station would be closed after annexation of Tri-City Heights with the volunteer staff being relocated to Station 160.

- Station #140: This station needs to be enlarged to add at least one additional apparatus bay.
- Station #150: It is crucial that increased recruitment efforts take place so that more volunteer members are assigned to this station. Station 150 was scheduled to be remodeled to accommodate additional apparatus and full-time staffing, however the project changed because of the Benton County Lower Yakima River Basin Water plan.
- Station #160: This station currently provides 24/7 coverage to the entire Fire District from a central location. With the completion of Station 170, the personnel at Station 160 will be moved to the west end of the Fire District. The volunteer personnel currently serving Stations 110 and 130 can be selectively reassigned to Station 160 based on location.
- Station #170: This station is currently under construction with occupancy identified at the end of 2021, or early 2022. When this Station is complete and operational, the response to the Badger Canyon, Cottonwood and Rancho Reata areas will be enhanced. Full time staff will be split between Station 170 and Station 120.
- Station #110 New: In the southeast Kennewick area, it is necessary to construct a fire station near Oak and Bowles, on State Route 397 and on South Olympia Street to provide firefighter response to those County areas. This station can be used as a primary support to the Finley area when trains might block the tracks disrupting response patterns. The completion of 45th Avenue will also need to be encouraged as a part of this location. This station has been identified as a need since the 2000 Five Year Plan was developed.

## ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITY

### ***Future Considerations***

The consideration of a joint public safety facility with the Washington State Patrol located at Bofer Canyon Road and East Law Lane needs a feasibility study completed. The two agencies currently occupy facilities in the general location and have entertained discussions of a joint facility. The sale of the current facility at 7511 W. Arrowhead Avenue will assist in funding of a new facility on Law Lane.

## TRAINING FACILITIES

In 2001, Benton County Fire District #1 and Kennewick Fire Department began jointly operating the Fire Training Center located at 19th Street and Ely Street. With the completion of the “C-Building” in 2018, the current facility nearly meets all training needs of both agencies.

### ***Future Considerations***

The remaining large needs are as follows:

- Upgrades and facility modifications as identified in the Architect and Engineering study.
- Emergency Vehicle Incident Prevention (EVIP) course
- Off-road driving course
- Collapse rescue training props
- Additional Live Fire props to accommodate the increased training requirements

## MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

The Fire District must have the ability to perform repair and maintenance of its apparatus:

- Fire apparatus should be maintained by Emergency Vehicle Technicians particularly in the areas of pumps, aerial ladders, and emergency vehicle electrical systems
- The need for emergency repair outside normal business hours
- The Fire District shop operates for approximately \$90.00 an hour. Private industry heavy vehicle shop rates range from \$130.00 to \$180.00 an hour.
- Availability of parts and tools specifically related to the kinds and types of apparatus maintained by the Fire District.
- Fire District mechanics can provide specific operating and maintenance training to firefighters, increasing safety and reducing operating costs.
- The mechanics can pick up and deliver apparatus which reduces the workload on the volunteer members and the career staff.
- New apparatus can be specified and delivered by individuals knowledgeable in the fire service.
- Fire District mechanics can respond and provide maintenance and fueling support at major incidents.
- The Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB) require access to 24-hour vehicle repair and stock of normal maintenance items

Because of the size of the fleet, there are generally at least two vehicles being maintained 40 hours of the week. Maintaining emergency vehicles and the very specialized types of equipment used by the Fire District cannot be done by a regular truck repair facility. The training, certification, record keeping, and general fire equipment knowledge is not readily available in this area. The Fire District must have a shop facility adequate to perform the type of work that is required to maintain the apparatus. Completion of the Fire District maintenance shop in 1998 covered many of the requirements.

### ***Future Considerations***

An additional maintenance bay should be added to the existing facility within the next couple of years.

### **APPARATUS**

Apparatus replacement is governed by the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB) and as identified in National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. Because of the geographic size of the Fire District, the District is forced to have duplicate apparatus. This assures the correct 'type' (see descriptions below) of apparatus can respond to an incident within the critical response time. Because the District responds to a range of different types of emergency calls, it also has a number of specialty apparatus not normally available in a municipal fire district. Reductions in the number and type of apparatus would not have a significant impact on many of our smaller or normal emergency incidents, however it will have a negative effect on the major incidents that have the highest impact on the Fire District. For simplification we will discuss the apparatus by their type or intended use. Although it is important to remember that during critical or major emergencies, many of the apparatus fill multiple use roles.



### *STRUCTURAL ENGINES (TYPE 1 and TYPE 2)*

The primary all-around use vehicles are structural engines. These units respond to practically all types of fires, as well as hazardous materials and medical calls. The District replaced all four front-line engines in 2005/2006. A minimum of 20 years front-line service from these engines should be expected. The District will need to begin replacing its fleet of engines in 2025. It was determined in 2006 that a dedicated reserve engine would not be maintained due to financial constraints.

It is anticipated that it will cost an average of approximately \$475,200 to replace each engine, assuming a 3 percent cost escalator. The Fire District has no engine replacement fund at this time and will most likely fund future engine replacements with bonds, leases, or special financing.

#### **Future**

- Plan for a Type 1 engine replacement in 2025, or before if possible.
- Purchase of Type 2 pumper for Station 120 in 2022/2023.
- If revenue allows, put funds in an apparatus replacement fund.
- Maintain one Type 3 engine as a reserve.

### *AERIAL DEVICES*

As a result of a voter-approved bond issue, a new aerial ladder truck was purchased in 2021.

### *WILDLAND ENGINES*

#### *TYPE 3 ENGINES (HEAVY)*

These trucks are heavy-duty all-wheel-drive apparatus used for combating vegetation fires and protecting structures from wildland fire. The District currently has a fleet of five front-line Type 3 engines. The District replaced four of these units in 2005. The fifth unit purchased in 2012, was a demo manufactured in 2008. The District can expect to receive a minimum of 15 years of front-line service from these engines. Two of these units were replaced with the purchase of two Type 5 wildland engines in 2017 and 2018.

A replacement of the other two engines is expected to cost approximately \$384,000, assuming a 3 percent cost escalator. To replace these two engines the Fire District would have to budget \$384,000 per year for the next two years into an apparatus replacement fund. The Fire District plans to replace these engines in a phased manner and not have to rely on a bond for the purchase.

#### **Future**

- The sale of one of the 2005 Type 3 engines will assist in replacement costs.
- Identify specifications and purchase a new Type 3 engine in 2022 and 2024.

#### *TYPE 5/6 ENGINES (LIGHT)*

These trucks are light duty vehicles comparable in design to the heavier trucks but are much quicker in their response. They are used to access more restricted areas such as tight fields, irrigation ditches, or where Type 3 engines would have difficulty accessing.

It is anticipated that it will cost an average of \$240,000 to replace this engine. To date we have purchased, with regular operating budget funds, two Type 5 engines that have more water and firefighter capacity than the Type 6 engines. Both Type 5 units will take the place of current Type 3 apparatus.

**Future**

- Phase out the use of Type 6 engines with the addition of the Type 5 engines.
- Purchase an additional Type 5 in 2023.

**WATER TENDERS**

The Fire District has three front line water tenders. These trucks are all heavy-duty tandem axle trucks, and each carry 3,000 gallons of water and have a 500-gpm pump. Because of the rural nature of most of the Fire District, there are limited water supply points. Water tenders are used at almost all fires. Due to funding constraints, the reserve unit was eliminated in 2006.

It is anticipated that it will cost an average of \$262,700 to replace each water tender, assuming a 3 percent cost escalator. The Fire District should consider refurbishing the water tenders in the next couple of years. The chassis has very low miles, so it should be possible to refurbish it with limited expenses.

**Future**

- Purchase a Type 2 combination Pumper/Tender for Station 120.
- Refurbish water tenders that the Fire District currently has in service.

**AMBULANCE**

The Fire District began transporting medical patients in July 2020, due to the purchase of two new ambulance units in 2019. The expected life of these units should be between 10 and 12 years, with the plan of replacement at that time.

**STAFF VEHICLES**

The Fire District relies very heavily on its pool of volunteer members. To enable chief officers to respond quickly and with the appropriate support equipment throughout the District, all chief officers, paid and volunteer, as well as the training captain, maintenance supervisor, and incident information officer should be issued District staff vehicles. Depending on the frequency of use, these vehicles should expect 10 to 15 years of service.

The Fire District has replaced four command vehicles in the past four years with regular operating revenues. Two additional command vehicles will need to be replaced in 2021, and 2022 with the remaining command vehicles replaced prior to 2025. A fully equipped staff vehicle cost range is between \$60,000 and \$80,000 depending on specific use.

The Fire District continues to research the benefits of Community Paramedicine which allows paramedics and EMT's to care for patients at home or in other non-urgent settings outside of the hospital. Some organizations have started sending single paramedic or EMT's in non-transport vehicles or Single Paramedic Response Intervention Vehicles (Sprint) to some non-life-threatening calls to keep ambulances available for more serious emergencies.

### **Future**

- Possible Sprint vehicle for EMS depending on response model.
- Maintain current fleet of staff vehicles.
- Replace remaining staff vehicles as budget allows.

### **MISCELLANEOUS VEHICLES**

#### **BULLDOZER**

The Fire District utilizes two medium size Dozers with 10' disks for wildfire suppression. The dozer/disk combination has proven very effective in reducing the overall size of many fires. Fires can be controlled with less risk to personnel and damage to vehicles. By using a disk line as a control line, the number of "rekindles" or call-backs to fires has been reduced, and the dozer/disks have contributed to the protection of many homes and improvements that would have otherwise been overrun by wildfire. One of the Fire District's dozers is a 1978 Caterpillar D5C and the second dozer is a 2014 John Deere 700. The service life of these units is based on the condition and parts availability. The older dozer currently fills a reserve capacity with the newer unit being used on most wildland fires.

### **Future**

- Maintain 2014 dozer.
- Look at options for a different piece of heavy equipment for fire suppression and replace 1978 dozer.

#### **TRANSPORT TRUCK**

The transport trucks are a combination tractor/lowboy trailer that hauls the Bulldozers. The lowboy trailers have an indefinite service life, and usually only need to be replaced if damaged beyond repair. The Fire District currently owns one trailer, and the other is Federal excess property. The District needs to replace the Federal trailer with a newer and owned model. The trucks that pull the trailers are currently in very good shape and need not be replaced any time soon.

#### **REHAB UNIT**

The District operates a rehabilitation unit for the support of personnel at incidents. A used 2006 Freightliner Bus was purchased and refurbished to meet the needs of a Rehab Unit in 2015. The unit provides firefighter monitoring, power generation, hydration, nutrition, sanitation, and decontamination services. All these functions are important and, in some cases, legally mandated.

### **Future**

- Maintain current rehabilitation services.

#### **MOBILE COMMAND POST**

The Fire District currently shares a mobile command post with the other fire agencies within the Columbia Basin. The towable model command post was purchased in 2019 and is stored at Franklin County Fire District #3. The command post is maintained by the Tri-County Chiefs Association.

### RESCUE/CASCADE UNIT

The Fire District has a responsibility to provide rescue capabilities to the citizens of the Fire District and travelers through the area. In 2021, the Fire District purchased a new combination vehicle that supports both rescue and breathing support to be able to refill breathing air cylinders at incident scenes. This vehicle should be in service for a minimum of 15 years.

### CHEMICAL WEAPONS STOCKPILE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAILERS

The Fire District was issued three trailer units by the Department of Defense for response to emergencies relating to the Chemical Weapons Depot at Umatilla. These trailers were equipped with supplies to provide decontamination and medical treatment to civilians that may be exposed to a chemical weapons release. The Fire District maintained these trailers and equipment once the Depot cleanup was completed and continues to use them for incident support logistics. Because the Fire District was provided these trailers by an outside agency, and there is little to no cost to maintain them, there is no impact on these units from a financial standpoint.

### Future

- Continue to use trailers for incident support.

PROPOSED APPARATUS REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE

APPARATUS DESCRIPTION	ASSIGNED	ID#	YEAR OF MANUFACTURE	REPLACEMENT	HOW	COST
ANTIQUE ALF FIRE TRUCK	STATION 170	111				
LAWN MOWER	STATION 170	112				
FORKLIFT	STATION 160	113		2035	GENERAL FUND	\$250,000
SERVICE TRUCK	MAINT 111	115	2003 FORD	2021	GENERAL FUND	\$70,000
BREATHING AIR COMPRESSOR	STATION 120	116	2003 SCOTT, 6000 PSI	TO BE SCHEDULED-NEAR FUTURE		
TRAILER- LIGHT DUTY	STATION 160	118	2001			
STAFF PICKUP	STATION 160	119	2008 FORD F250 4X4	2020	GENERAL FUND	\$60,000
TRANSPORT	STATION 160	120	1999 FREIGHTLINER, M915A4,			
STAFF PICKUP	DUTY OFFICER	121	2008 FORD F250 4X4	2019	GENERAL FUND	\$60,000
STAFF PICKUP	TO111	122	2012 FORD F150 4X4	2022		
STAFF PICKUP	BC 114	124	2017 RAM 2500 4X4			
STAFF PICKUP	BC 115	125	2017 RAM 2500 4X4			
GENERATOR	STATION 120	126				
TRANSPORT	STATION 160	127	2005 INTERNATIONAL 860/DS			
LOWBOY TRAILER	STATION 160	128	1970 SHWTZ LOWBOY TRAILER			
TRAILER MOUNT GENERATOR	SUPP SERV	130	ONAN			
WATER TENDER	STATION 110	131	2000/2001 INTERNATIONAL/CENTRAL ST.	REFURBISH 2020/2021		
WATER TENDER	STATION 140	132	2000/2001 INTERNATIONAL/CENTRAL ST.	REFURBISH 2020/2021		
WATER TENDER	STATION 120	133	2000/2001 INTERNATIONAL/CENTRAL ST.	REFURBISH 2020/2021		
LOWBOY TRAILER/FED EXCESS	STATION 160	134	1953-PRESSED STEEL-25 T	2019/2020	GENERAL FUND	\$35,000
STAFF PICKUP	CHIEF 112	136	2017 RAM 2500 4X4			
WUI ENGINE, TYPE 3	STATION 150	138	2005 INTERNATIONAL/WESTMARK	2023/2025		
WUI ENGINE, TYPE 3	STATION 110	139	2005 INTERNATIONAL/WESTMARK	2023/2025		
WUI ENGINE, TYPE 3	STATION 130	140	2005 INTERNATIONAL/WESTMARK	2023/2025		
WUI ENGINE, TYPE 3	STATION 160	141	2008 INTERNATIONAL/WESTMARK	2026/2028		
WILDLAND ENGINE, TYPE 5	STATION 140	142	2018 RAM 5500 4X4/SKEETER	2030/2033		
WILDLAND ENGINE, TYPE 5	STATION 120	143	2016 RAM 5500 4X4/SKEETER	2032/2035		
DOZER	STATION 160	145	2015 JOHN DEERE 700K XLT			
FORKLIFT	STATION 160	148	1973 BAKER 6000 LB			
RESCUE/BREATHING SUPPORT	STATION 130	149	2020 FORD F550			
CASC-BREATHING AIR	STATION 120	150	1979 GMC			
ATV	STATION 160	151	1993 YAMAHA			
ATV	STATION 160	152	2016 POLARIS ACE 900			
ENGINE, TYPE 1	STATION 120	153	2005 AMERICAN LA FRANCE	2025	BOND	\$500,000
ENGINE, TYPE 1	STATION 140	154	2005 AMERICAN LA FRANCE	2025	BOND	\$500,000
TRAILER, LIGHT DUTY	MAINTENANCE	156				
AERIAL 75'	STATION 160	157	2021 PIERCE	2036		
STATION GENERATOR/EXCESS	STATION 150	160	P&E			
AMBULANCE	STATION 160	161	2019 BRAUN NW	2029		\$300,000
AMBULANCE	STATION 120	162	2020 BRAUN NW	2030		\$300,000
DISK	STATION 160	164	1979-JOHN DEERE 425			
ENGINE, TYPE 1	STATION 110	165	2005 AMERICAN LA FRANCE	2025	BOND	\$500,000
ENGINE, TYPE 1	STATION 130	166	2005 AMERICAN LA FRANCE	2025	BOND	\$500,000
STAFF PICKUP	PIO 111	167	2004 FORD F-150	2020	GENERAL FUND	\$40,000
UTILITY TRAILER	STATION 160	168	12' UTILITY TRAILER			
UTILITY TRAILER/STRIKE TEAM	STATION 160	170	1984 ROUNDUP 18'			
GENERATOR/EXCESS	STATION 160	171	CUMMINS			
EQUIPMENT TRAILER/ EXCESS	MAINTENANCE	173	1980/1995 WISCONSIN			
WUI ENGINE, TYPE 3	STATION 140	174	2005 INTERNATIONAL/WESTMARK	2023/2025		
STAFF PICKUP	CHIEF 111	175	2020 CHEVROLET 2500 4X4	2030		
BACKHOE/EXCESS	MAINTENANCE	178	1977/1997CASE	REPLACE WITH NEWER MODEL	FEDERAL EXCESS	
DOZER	STATION 160	179	1978/1996 CATERPILLAR	CHANGE TOOL		
GRASS ENGINE, TYPE 6	STATION 130	180	1999FORD	2022	GENERAL FUND	\$240,000
REHAB	STATION 120	181	2006 FREIGHTLINER/THOMAS BUS FS6			
UTILITY TRAILER	STATION 160	182	2006 WELLS CARGO			
UTILITY TRAILER	STATION 160	184	1994 ATV TRAILER			
UTV	STATION 160	186	2016 CANAM			
UTILITY TRAILER	STATION 160	187	1997/1998 ROSEBURG			
ATV	STATION 160	188	1998/1998 ARCTIC CAT			
UTILITY TRAILER	STATION 160	191	1998 WELLS CARGO 16'			
UTILITY TRAILER	STATION120	192	1998 WELLS CARGO 12'			
UTILITY TRAILER	STATION 110	193	1998 WELLS CARGO 16'			
LAWN MOWER	STATION 140	198	2013 HUSQVARNA			

## PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

### *STRUCTURAL*

The service life expected from structural turnouts is approximately 10 years. Currently, the District budgets for structural turnout replacement on an annual basis to ensure compliance. At present, the District maintains approximately 130 sets of structural turnouts, of which 88 are compliant, and 40 sets are available for recruit firefighters to use when in recruit school and as replacement gear while gear is being laundered. In early 2007, the Fire District received a Federal grant for 90 sets of bunker gear. This has allowed for the District to begin a systematic replacement process which is in place today.

#### **Future**

- Continue to replace gear on identified schedule to maintain compliance, as budget allows.
- Increase procurement in an effort to have compliant replacement gear.

### *WILDLAND*

Protective clothing worn for wildland firefighting is much lighter than structural firefighting clothing. The life of the clothing is dependent on the amount of use and the care; however, we anticipate a life of approximately two years for career staff and five years for volunteer members. The pant of the wildland clothing doubles as duty uniform. We have also found that wildland boots, which are usually a leather work boot, last approximately three years. The standards for helmet design and construction typically change before helmets are worn out.

#### **Future**

- Maintain the current number of wildland sets and have a stock on hand.
- Develop a systematic replacement process.

### *SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS*

In 2017, the District took delivery of 65 new high-pressure Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). These SCBA's were the result of a successful Federal grant. The life expectancy of these SCBA's is scheduled for 15 years. Along with this limitation, the quality of maintenance and repairs is a secondary factor. The District currently has two fully trained repair technicians. This allows for maintenance to be performed as needed for SCBA's. The technicians perform yearly flow tests along with any periodic maintenance on an as-needed basis. These SCBA's should provide high quality airway protection through the year 2032.

The Southeast Washington Air Group (SeWAG) was established in 2006 as part of a regional effort to consolidate SCBA and cascade equipment testing and maintenance. Participating agencies are; Benton County Fire District 1, 2 and 4, Franklin County Fire District 3, Kennewick Fire Department, Richland Fire Department, Pasco Fire Department and the Tri-County Hazardous Materials Response Group. The work group is made up of a single representative from each agency. The group exists to coordinate repair and maintenance of SCBA's and cascade air systems, including annual testing, periodic maintenance inventory and hydro-testing. Representatives from the eight agencies are tasked with ensuring readiness of

equipment for emergency response, compliance with all applicable laws pertaining to maintenance and testing, record keeping, maintenance and inventory of the equipment.

By tasking the regional group with responsibility for the SCBA program, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in duplication of efforts, as well as, increasing the service provided to this program within the participating agencies. Another goal of the program is to minimize financial impacts to the SCBA programs through cost sharing as well as equipment sharing. Long term benefits of the program might include larger purchases resulting in lower pricing as well as interoperability between participating agencies.

#### **Future**

- The Fire District needs to continue being members of SeWAG.
- Identify replacement avenue for current SCBA's in 2027.

#### **FINANCIAL**

For the Fire District, maintaining a sufficient fund base for full-time staff and volunteer members, and for upgrading equipment and replacement of apparatus is a challenge. Due to Initiative 747's one percent tax limitation and with operating costs exceeding that limit, the District's financial stability was no longer assured. The amount available in the reserve fund was not enough to meet even the reduced apparatus replacement schedule. With the passage of a Levy Lid Lift in 2013 and 2019, the Fire District was able to regain its financial stability as it exists today. However, the current financial situation does not allow for large capital projects or growth within the District to keep up with response demands.

#### **POTENTIAL REVENUE SOURCES TO MEET OPERATING AND CAPITAL NEEDS**

As a result of an annexation, the Fire District might need to raise operating or capital funds to sustain fire and EMS operations. The following revenue sources could be considered to support operating and capital costs.

#### **USE OF DISTRICT CASH RESERVES**

The Fire District attempts to maintain a cash reserve that is set aside annually for emergency needs. Fund balances should not be seen as a significant source to finance major capital investments such as station replacement, but cash reserves can be tapped on a one-time basis to help with operating shortfalls or to establish a revolving fund for apparatus or equipment replacement.

#### **INITIATIVE 747**

In 2001, I-747 was approved limiting annual property tax levy increases to the lesser of one percent or inflation (as defined by the implicit price deflator); and levies can only increase up to one percent upon a finding of substantial need by a supermajority of the legislative authority. The Initiative does not limit voter-approved levies, and it does not limit the growth in the assessed value of property. New construction continues to be included after calculating the new levy rate. The impact of the Initiative is to reduce local taxing districts' property tax collections, since levies will increase at one percent or less, rather than the inflation-or-up-to-six-percent levels they would have been authorized previously.

All these limits on regular levies set a dynamic relationship in place. When an area's assessed values rise more quickly than the property tax growth limit, the effect of the limit is to lower the overall tax rate of the District, or from year to year, the levy rate "erodes", and revenue usually is flat or decreases. This is because as property values rise, a lower levy rate will generate the same amount of taxes. There are constant additional pressures faced by local governments regarding the property tax, as voter initiatives create constant uncertainty about property taxes as a stable source of revenue.

#### PROPERTY TAX LEVY LID LIFT FOR OPERATIONS

With the passage of Initiative 747, there are now two ways for a jurisdiction to increase property taxes by more than one percent. One approach available to some jurisdictions, that have taken less than the maximum increase over time, would be to use "banked" levy capacity not taken in prior years. The other way to increase property taxes by more than the limit is to ask voters to "lift the levy lid" so that the levy can be increased by more than one percent. In order to be able to do a levy lid lift, the jurisdiction's current property tax rate must be below its maximum allowed amount. A simple majority is needed.

It is imperative that fire districts continue to emphasize to the legislators the importance of increasing the 1% tax levy limitation. The Fire District currently operates with a levy lid lift that was approved by voters in 2019. It will expire at the end of 2025, and the District will have to continue placing a Levy Lid Lift on the ballot in order to maintain the current tax levy rate.

#### EMS LEVY

Fire Districts are allowed to ask the voters for authority to levy an additional property tax of up to 50 cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation to support emergency medical services. The levy presented to the voters can be imposed for six years, ten years, or permanently. For a new tax the election requires a super majority to pass. In 2018, the Fire District failed to pass an EMS levy to cover increased EMS calls and transport services for Fire District residents.

#### DEBT ISSUANCE

General obligation bonds have been the traditional form of financing for capital projects for special purpose districts. There are two basic kinds of general obligation bonds:

Limited tax general obligation (LTGO) bonds (also called "councilmanic" bonds or non-voted debt), may be issued by a vote of the legislative body. Because the voters have not been asked to approve a tax increase to pay for the principal and interest, general fund revenues must be pledged to pay the debt service on LTGO. It is important to note that LTGO debt does not provide any additional revenue to fund debt service payments but must be paid from existing revenue sources.

Unlimited tax general obligation (UTGO) bonds (also called voted debt) must be approved by 60% (super-majority) of the voters, with a voter turnout equal to at least 40% of those who voted in the most recent general election. When the voters are being asked to approve the issuance of these bonds, they are simultaneously asked to approve an excess levy which raises their property taxes to cover the debt service payments. UTGO bonds can be used only for capital purposes.



## CONCLUSION

Benton County Fire District #1 is committed to conducting their operation with industry best practices at the forefront of our actions. We will continue our pursuit to be the emergency service agency others look to when they are striving to improve and implement best practices in their own organization. We will use this document to continue to provide the best service to the citizens and visitors of the Fire District that we possibly can and do so in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

APPENDICES