

HOUSECALLS

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF



SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 9

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU: EXCEPTIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES

VOLUME 5

SUMMER 2010

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- *M&O levy information*
- *Safety tips for your home*
- *All about District 9*



▲ *Last July we opened Station 99 at 9105 North Whitehouse Street in the Linwood neighborhood. The addition of this station significantly improves our response time to your requests for service, as well as increases our depth of coverage district-wide. Station 99 is a converted single-family residence with a large RV-sized garage – a solution which saved substantial taxpayer dollars and which also allowed us to have a presence in the heart of our busiest neighborhood.*

Spokane County Fire District 9 has been proudly serving our north Spokane communities since 1948.

You, the citizens created the District to provide fire and emergency services and to ensure you obtain reasonable fire insurance rates. Today, Fire District 9 serves a population of about 45,000 across 122 diverse square miles in north Spokane County.

You elect a three-member Board of Fire Commissioners at-large to govern the District. Currently, that board consists of Commissioners Mike Atwood, Donald E. Foster, and Bob Strasburg. Chief Bob Anderson, a 36-year fire service veteran, who serves at the board's direction, manages the District's day-to-day operations.

We understand how much you value the peace of mind it brings to know trained help is just minutes away. With more than 160 career and volunteer personnel operating from nine neighborhood fire stations, the District provides protection for your home and property as well as advanced emergency medical services.

In addition, Fire District 9 has earned an excellent fire insurance class rating, saving you hundreds of dollars in homeowner's insurance every year. We take our responsibility to you seriously, and we consider it an honor to serve you.

Every two years, we bring our Maintenance and Operations (M&O) levy before you to request renewal. That gives you the chance to make sure we're held accountable for how we manage our operation. And for 22 years, you've expressed your approval for the job we do and passed the continuation of the levy. We appreciate your continued support.

YOU'LL FIND A M&O LEVY RENEWAL FOR 2011 AND 2012 ON YOUR AUGUST BALLOT. LOOK INSIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Please remember to vote.

WHAT PROP. 1, THE REPLACEMENT M&O LEVY BALLOT MEASURE, MEANS TO YOU

Funding for Spokane County Fire District 9 comes solely from property taxes. The regular property tax levy generates about 40% of our revenue, and an annual M&O levy – approved by the voters – generates the other approximately 60%. Revenue from the regular levy supports the District's basic fire services with our volunteer personnel, while the M&O levy supports 24/7 career staffing, and advanced life support (paramedic) and emergency medical services. Together, these funding sources provide the revenue to maintain our current level of service district-wide.

The current M&O levy expires on December 31, 2010, and the proposed M&O levies will replace the expiring levy and provide funding for 2011 and 2012. The annual levies are for a specified dollar amount so they will not increase if assessed property values increase. Instead, any further increase in assessed value will result in a reduction of your tax rate for the M&O levy.

You'll find the 2011 and 2012 M&O levy renewals on the back side of your August 17 ballot.

We appreciate your support of our M&O levies over the last 22 years and we don't take that support for granted, especially in these tough economic times. We therefore find it important to communicate the potential significant impact a levy failure would have on your current level of emergency service:

- 60% revenue loss to the Fire District in 2011 and 2012
- Increased risk to public safety
- Increased property insurance costs
- Reduction in 24/7 career staffing
- Elimination of half of our 24/7 staffed stations
- Elimination of paramedic (advanced life) services
- Longer response times
- Fewer responders
- Increased risk to responders

THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Didn't Fire District 9 just have an EMS levy on the April ballot?

No. The EMS levy signs which were prevalent throughout the area were for the City of Spokane Fire Department's EMS levy. Our M&O levy is used to support our fire and emergency medical services within Fire District 9.

Why are the M&O levy renewals on the August ballot?

We chose to present the 2011 and 2012 M&O levy renewals on the August 17 primary ballot to help achieve the necessary 40 percent election validation requirement. In addition, by sharing the ballot we offset our portion of the cost of the election.

How much will the proposed M&O levies cost me?

Homeowners will pay an estimated \$1.60 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation (\$160 on a \$100,000 home) in 2011 and the same in 2012.*

**Because the levies are for an exact dollar amount, the tax rate (cost per \$1,000 of assessed valuation) may vary depending on the total assessed valuation of the District.*

Is this a new tax?

No. The M&O levies are for one year each (2011 and 2012), and they would replace expiring levies for maintenance and operation costs of your fire and emergency medical protection services.

Does it really matter if I vote?

Yes. In order for the District to continue serving you with our existing fire and medical services, the M&O levies must pass with a 60 percent supermajority. In addition, to validate the election voter participation must equal at least 40 percent of the number of voters who participated in the general election last November.

Who do I call if I have questions?

We'd be pleased to talk to you about the proposed M&O levies. You can reach the District administration office at 466-4602 or e-mail us at admin@scfd9.org.

DISTRICT 9 FIRE FIGHTERS BRING DECADES OF EXPERIENCE AND COMMITMENT TO THE JOB

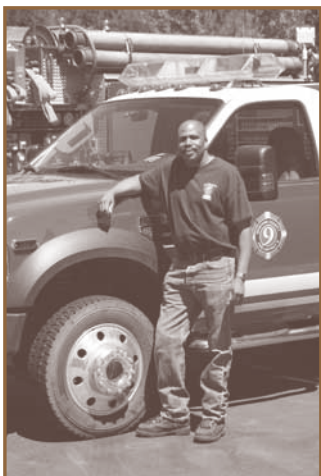
The men and women who serve District 9 as volunteers and career fire fighters bring, talent, dedication, energy — and a passion to protect the lives and property of their friends and neighbors to work with them every day — some of them, for decades. Here's a brief look at just a few of them.

An Opportunity to Serve

When Mt. St. Helens erupted in 1980, Greg Anderson found more than just a mess to clean up. Born and raised in District 9, Greg had always been interested in fire fighting — his dad had been a volunteer since the mid-1960's. So when the mountain erupted he discovered that stepping up to help in an emergency wasn't a chore — it was a calling. Anderson joined Fire District 9 as a volunteer in 1980 and in '88, was hired on full-time as a dispatcher, moving on to fire suppression duties in 1990.

“No two days are ever the same in this job,” says Capt. Anderson. “You see some of the worst things in life, and some of the best. Being there to help people when they need it most is what makes this work so great.”

For volunteer Captain Don Shearer, it's all about community. His father was a District 9 volunteer fire fighter, and at the age of 16, Don joined his dad, serving at Station 96 in the Foothills area. According to Shearer, “What attracted me to the job was the thrill of being able to serve friends and neighbors. We're still a pretty tight-knit community out here. It's the sort of place where just about everybody knows everybody else. And after over 30 years, I still just love the opportunity to serve.”



◀ *Capt. Dan Eschenbacher at a recent open house at District 9's Station 97 near Nine Mile Falls.*

Friends and Neighbors

Like many of his contemporaries, Dan Walsh followed his father's footsteps into volunteer fire fighting. Dan joined District 9 after graduating in 1973, and in 1994 after years of running a successful construction business, Walsh tested for a career position and was hired as a full-time fire fighter. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1999, and today serves as a Captain in the Prevention Division where he teaches fire safety, reviews construction plans, conducts building inspections and investigates suspicious fires.

“I wear a lot of hats in this job — from talking to kids about fire safety to investigating fires. The most satisfying thing about the work we do here is helping to prevent bad things from happening and getting help to people as quickly and effectively as possible when they do.”

Volunteer Captain Dan Eschenbacher grew up just two miles down the road from Station 97 near Nine Mile Falls. As a young man in his twenties, Eschenbacher was encouraged to get involved by his older brother, a long time volunteer. Dan initially saw the opportunity as a way to meet new people and stay in touch with old friends. But, he quickly came to understand the important role the volunteers played in protecting the lives and property of his neighbors when he was called upon to help during a countywide disaster the local media dubbed “Fire Storm '91”. “After an experience like that,” says Eschenbacher, “a lot of the other stuff doesn't seem quite so big.”

Today, Dan spends the majority of his time as a First Responder working with the District's emergency medical teams. “The important thing is being here to help folks. I grew up here. It's a great place to have a family and raise kids — so I get a lot of satisfaction being here to help when somebody's in need.”

Lieutenant Dan Stussi has been close to fire fighting his entire life. “My dad was a charter member of District 9's old Station 4 when it first came online in 1964,” says Dan. He joined as a volunteer in '76 and became a full-time fire fighter ten years later. Today, he serves as a fire suppression officer at Station 92 in Mead.

Though he's been on some dramatic calls during his career, Stussi says, “Being there when people need us is why we're here. We take care of the citizens and they support us.”

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DISTRICT 9

Insurance class rating: 4

Firefighters/Personnel

- Career (full-time): 59
- Volunteer (on call): 93
- Volunteer (resident): 16
- Among these personnel are:
 - 22 Paramedics (EMT-P)
 - 123 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT-B)
 - 12 Medical First Responders

Protection area

Population: 45,000
Size: 122 square miles
Total assessed value protected: \$3.75 billion

Communities served

- Fairwood, Gleneden, Midway: Station 91 @ 616 W. Hastings Road (staffed 24/7, augmented by volunteers on call)
- Camelot, Mead, Peone Prairie, Shady Slope: Station 92 @ 3801 E. Farwell Road (staffed 24/7, augmented by volunteers on call)
- Little Spokane Natural Area, Nine Mile, Seven Mile: Station 93 @ 9915 W. Charles Road (staffed 7 days a week from 7 to 7, augmented by volunteers on call)
- Northwood, Orchard Prairie, Pleasant Prairie, Upriver: Station 94 @ 7017 N. Jensen Road (staffed 24/7, augmented by volunteers on call)
- Five Mile: Station 95 @ 3028 W. Strong Road (staffed by volunteers on call)
- Foothills: Station 96 @ 11019 N. Forker Road (staffed by volunteers on call)
- Nine Mile, Southbank: Station 97 @ 15222 W. Charles Road (staffed by volunteers on call)
- Morgan Acres: Station 98 @ 6606 N. Regal Street (staffed by volunteers on call)
- Country Homes, Linwood: Station 99 @ 9105 N. Whitehouse Street (staffed 24/7)

Commercial properties served

Assembly	100
Business	979
Educational	50
High hazard	97
Industrial/Fabrication	15
Institutional	1
Multi-family (apartments, motels)/Residential	117
Storage	47
Other	48

Total 1,454

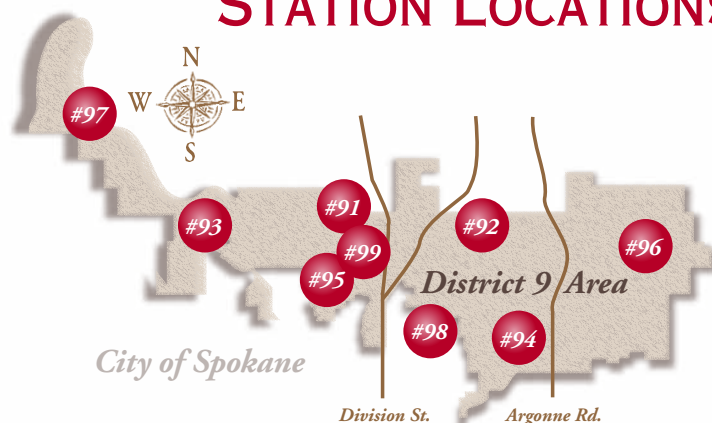
2009 Statistics

Responses:

Building collapse	4
Structure fires	32
Vehicle fires	14
Vehicle collisions	196
Brush/grass/wildland fires	59
Other non-structure fires	47
Medical and rescue incidents	1,726
Hazardous situations (e.g., gas leak, power line down)	98
Service calls (e.g., smoke removal, water leak, invalid assist, police assist)	172
Good intent/no problem found/canceled en route	350
False alarms - all types (malicious, malfunction, unintentional)	140
Other	10

Total responses 2,845

FIRE DISTRICT 9 STATION LOCATIONS



Volunteer Opportunities RESPOND TO THE CALL

The best part of a firefighter's job is knowing we make a difference to the communities we serve.

If that appeals to you too, we'd welcome you as a volunteer—and we'll train you to work alongside the other members of our team.

Are you at least 18 years old, living close to one of our fire stations, and willing to help others at a moment's notice? Call 466-4602 for an introductory packet and more information.

READY SET GO!

WILDFIRE ACTION PLAN

SAVINGS LIVES AND PROPERTY THROUGH ADVANCE PLANNING

Your fire department is ready and set to go on wildland fires. Our trucks are fueled and tuned; our equipment is cleaned, sharpened and in position and we've trained and rehearsed what we're going to do. Those things ensure we're ready to respond to the annual wildland fire threat. We want to help you get that prepared for the annual wildland fire threat to your home and family. With some prior planning you can get your home and your family ready long before fire season, get set as the fire approaches, and go quickly when necessary.

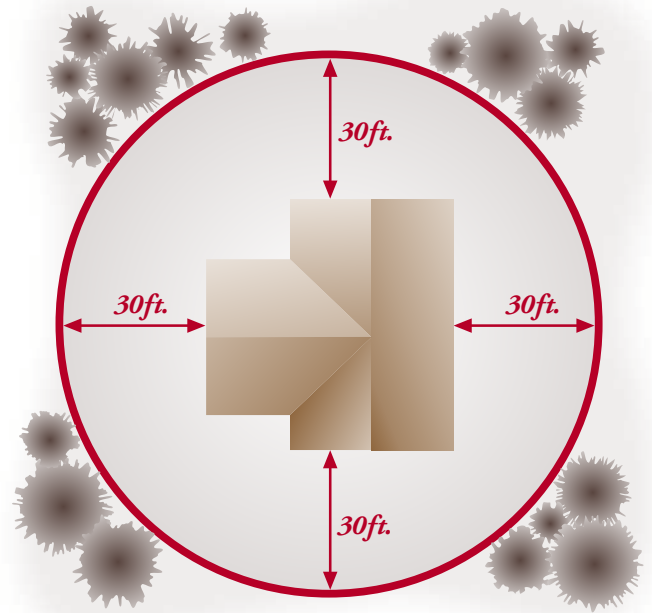
Get Ready Before The Fire

Getting your home ready involves fire safe construction features like non-combustible roofs and siding as well as fire resistant landscaping, maintaining a clean and green survivable space and keeping the firewood pile away from the house.

Getting your family ready involves building a disaster plan that includes how to shut off utilities, identifying multiple evacuation routes out of the area ahead of time, pre-determining emergency meeting locations out of the area so family can meet up, developing communication other than just the telephone or cell phone system that may be overloaded, appointing an out-of-area friend or family member as a point of contact so you can communicate with relocated family members and building your three-day emergency supply kit (check out www.redcross.org).

Get Set

Once a wildfire event is underway, you need to get set should the fire arrive at your home. This includes shutting windows and doors, removing flammable window shades and lightweight curtains, turning off gas and pilot lights, moving flammable outdoor items at least 50' away from the home, turning off propane tanks, and loading the car for evacuation if necessary. Remember to dress appropriately; shorts and flip-flops don't work during a wildfire. Leave a light on outside so emergency responders can tell if power is still on in your area.



GO!

If advised to leave, do so quickly. The earlier you leave the sooner you'll get your family out to the safe location of your choice. If you wait until the last minute, you'll be bogged down in congested traffic with a mass of people all doing the same thing. Then you'll be contributing to the community's problem rather than helping your family and you may all spend the night in a crowded community shelter. It's true you'll spend more time at your home trying to protect it, but your family will also spend more time in harm's way.

Don't wait to be told personally by authorities to leave. There are far fewer emergency workers than there are residents. They will be extremely busy and may not be able to knock on every door. Stay alert to the situation; listen to the radio and TV to know what is going on. Monitor your home phone in case of emergency call notification from Dept. of Emergency Management (cell phone networks sometimes get overloaded in emergencies and may not work.)

It's not a question of 'if', it's a question of 'when' the next wildfire will strike. That's why the most important person in protecting your home and family is not the firefighter, but you. Through advanced planning and preparation, we can all be ready for the next fire season.



Remember to vote August 17

M A I N T E N A N C E & O P E R A T I O N S
L E V Y

The 2011 and 2012 Spokane County Fire District 9 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) levies are each one-year levies which will replace the expiring 2009 and 2010 levies. They are not new taxes; they are used to maintain existing fire and emergency medical services.

SPokane County Fire District 9
3801 East Farwell Road • Mead, WA 99021-9605
Web site: www.scsfd9.org

If you are a resident of the District
and would like a free address post,
please contact: District
Administration, 466-4602

Michael R. Atwood, Commissioner
Donald E. Foster, Commissioner
Robert F. Strasburg, Commissioner

HouseCalls is a publication of
Spokane County Fire District 9,
Bob Anderson, Chief

FIRE & RESCUE



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