

House Calls



NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 9

FALL 2025

MORE ARTICLES

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

From Vision to Action: **Planning District 9's Next Chapter**

At Fire District 9, our mission has always been to provide the highest level of emergency response and care for you, the people we serve. As our service area grows, so must we—to meet the evolving needs of our community. I'm writing to share an exciting update about our ongoing work to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan—one that is grounded in data, shaped by expert insights, and designed to enhance both public safety and firefighter well-being for years to come.

We've partnered with a nationally recognized architectural and public safety planning firm to guide us in this important process. Their expertise, combined with the operational experience of our District 9 team, is helping us develop a forward-looking plan that evaluates our current facilities,



MATTHEW T. VINCI, FIRE CHIEF

call volume trends, staffing needs, response times, and community risk profiles. This process is about building a smarter, stronger emergency response system to serve you.

Every operational change will be informed by comprehensive data analysis. We're leveraging real-time dispatch metrics, GIS mapping, and historical response trends to identify service gaps, optimize station and apparatus placement, and forecast emergency call demand based on projected community growth. This data allows us to model response scenarios and fine-tune our deployment strategies—ensuring the appropriate number of personnel and apparatus are dispatched to each incident, and that response times are minimized to improve outcomes in time-critical emergencies.

A vital component of our process includes a plan to replace our aging



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A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

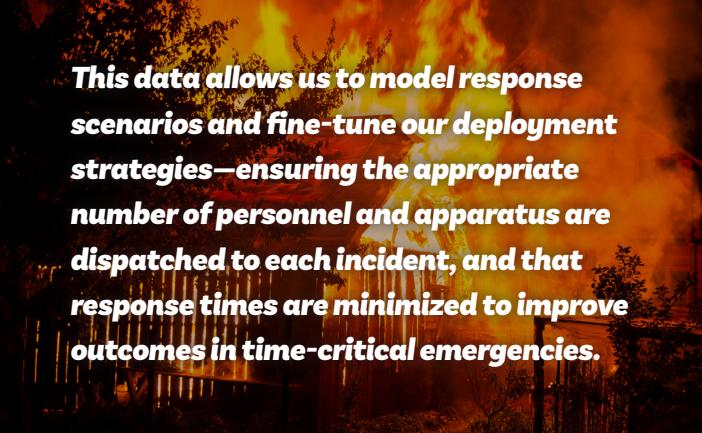
fleet. As emergency vehicles and fire apparatus age, they become more costly to maintain and less reliable in critical moments. We are taking a hard look at our fleet inventory and lifecycle, identifying priority replacements, and planning responsibly to ensure our frontline units are modern, safe, and fully equipped to respond when you need us most.

Just as important, we are conducting a thorough evaluation of all aspects of our training programs. Our goal is to ensure every firefighter has access to the highest level of training resources and professional development opportunities available. From technical

skills to leadership development and mental wellness, we're investing in our people so they can continue to be the best in the business—and deliver the exceptional service you deserve.

A core priority of our strategic plan is protecting the health, wellness, and safety of our team at Fire District 9. We're taking a close look at how our facilities and operations can better support the physical and mental well-being of our team. This includes modernizing our station living spaces to bring them up to national standards, upgrading our station alarm alerting systems to improve effectiveness and the health of our team as they deploy, and enhancing our wellness and fitness areas to promote long-term health and injury prevention. When our firefighters are healthy, supported, and safe, they're able to respond at their best—delivering the high level of service our community depends on.

This strategic planning effort is about more than the next few years; it's about ensuring District 9 is ready for the challenges and opportunities of the next decade and beyond. We are committed to transparency and community engagement throughout this process, and we look forward to sharing the details as our plan takes shape. Thank you for your continued support and trust in our team at Fire District 9. Together, we're building a safer future.



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It's Almost That Time Once Again!

We realize Christmas is still a few months away. But it will be here before you know it. Watch for future updates and announcements for our upcoming Santa Float schedules.



**SANTA FLOATS
&
OPEN HOUSES**

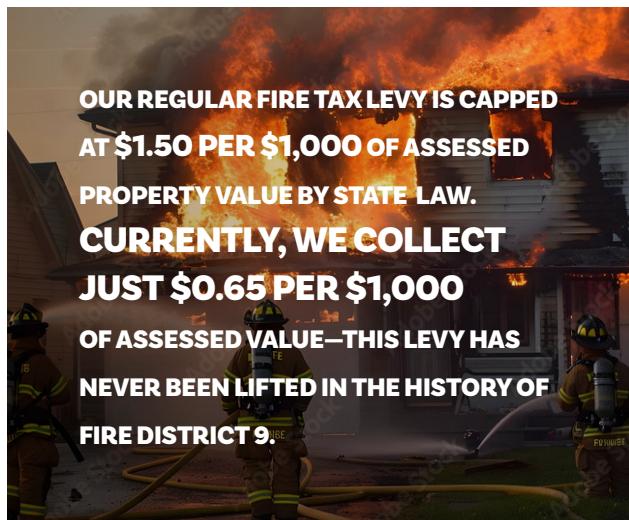
Watch for the schedule on our Facebook page!

FROM THE COMMISSIONER'S DESK

Understanding Fire District 9 Funding: Revenue and Budget Impacts

As we continue to explore how Spokane County Fire District 9 funds its operations, it's important to discuss a key limitation that impacts our primary source of revenue and service delivery—property taxes.

In 2001, Washington State passed Initiative 747, which restricts most property tax levy increases to just 1% per year unless a higher percentage is approved by voters. This means that even as inflation rises, averaging around 5% annually over the past five years, we are only able to increase our property tax revenue by 1% without voter approval. Understandably, this creates financial challenges to maintaining and delivering emergency services.



To bridge this growing gap, many fire districts utilize what's known and allowed for in Washington as a Levy Lid Lift. This tool allows local governments to ask voters for approval to raise the levy rate above the 1% cap in order to meet operational needs.

Our regular fire tax levy is capped at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value by state law. Currently, we collect just \$0.65 per \$1,000 of assessed value—this levy has never been lifted in the history of Fire District 9. If voter approved, a lid lift would allow us to restore much needed capacity

to better align our budget and capital improvements with rising costs. Again, it's important to note: a lid lift must be approved by voters through a ballot measure, ensuring the community retains control over any proposed tax increase. Lid lifts can be structured as temporary or permanent, depending on our needs and community input.

Where Your Tax Dollars Go

Now that we've reviewed how we're funded, let's take a look at how we use those funds.

- The largest portion of our approximately \$19 million annual budget, about \$16 million, goes directly to fund our much-needed personnel. This includes the dedicated firefighter/paramedics and firefighter/EMTs, and support staff who respond to nearly 8,000 calls for service each year. Investing in our people is critical; they are the backbone of our emergency services.
- Fire District 9 currently employs 82 full-time staff and supports 36 volunteers. Our team includes the Fire Chief, five officers, four staff Captains, six vital support staff, and 66 full-time uniform firefighters and paramedics who work 24/7/365 to serve and protect our community.
- The remaining \$3 million funds our operating expenses. This includes operating and maintaining our fire stations, vehicles (apparatus), and equipment, as well as paying for essential operational services like emergency dispatch through Spokane Regional Emergency Communications (SREC 911), and major costly equipment repairs, due to the age of our fleet.

Looking Ahead

In our next House Calls article, we'll take a closer look at the types of emergencies we respond to, and how our strategic planning process will address the rapid growth in housing, commercial development, and increasing call volume and service demands in the district. Thank you for your continued support as we work to keep Fire District 9 responsive for the challenges ahead.



BRIAN MATHER
FIRE COMMISSIONER



House Calls

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HOUSE CALLS is a publication of
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Heartsaver First Aid/CPR Classes

Our monthly
First Aid / CPR
class follows
American Heart
Association
guidelines and

will provide you with a Heartsaver
First Aid card that also serves as a
Heartsaver CPR/AED card. It is valid
for two years.

This class is **FREE** to citizens within
Fire District 9.

For more information, please call
Administration at (509) 466-4602
or visit www.scfd9.org.

**FREE
Classes**

JOIN THE TEAM

**SCFD 9 Might Just be the Right
Place for You**

If you're a professional firefighter looking for a
new home, or someone who simply feels drawn to
service and helping others, this may be the perfect
career path for you. To learn more, go to
www.scfd9.org— or scan the QR Code to visit
our careers page.

The application process closes on
November 1st, 2025.

*Finding the hero in you can come
with some really great benefits.
Let us help you explore the options.*

