



FIRE DISTRICT #10

Serving the West Plains

TELEGRAPH

HIGHLIGHTS

- EMS Levy
- Fire Insurance Impacts
- Potential Annexation
- Wildlife Protection Plan
- Commissioners Corner
- Volunteer Banquet Held

Volunteer Firefighters are needed NOW for Fire District #10. Find out what it takes to be a volunteer firefighter/EMT by calling our District headquarters. Better yet, drop in and talk to our dedicated volunteers and staff.



**FIRE DISTRICT #10
HEADQUARTERS
& TRAINING CENTER**

929 S. Garfield Road
Airway Heights, WA 99001
(509) 244-2425
www.scfd10.org

Visitors Welcome!

A Message From The Chief

Fire District #10 provides service to just under 100 square miles in the West Plains area of Spokane County. We are proud of the level of service we provide. In 2009 alone, we responded to over 1,060 calls, most of which were medical in nature. We provide this service to the community as economically as possible. We have refurbished vehicles rather than purchasing new and operate on a small salaried staff of five career firefighters/EMTs, two Chief Officers/EMTs and a district secretary. The remainder of our staff consists of professionally trained volunteers. We are conservative in both our planning and spending. In some areas, however, service and funds go hand-in-hand. The Emergency Medical Service (EMS) we provide is a good example.

From the start, the majority of our response vehicles have included EMS supplies. To date, all eighteen of our vehicles are equipped with EMS supplies and out of those, nine are EMS certified, responding from five stations. All but a few of our 55+ volunteers are EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) trained with certification from the state of Washington, and now, National Certification is required. Yes, we save lives but not without a cost. Each EMS responder requires 120 hours of initial training. Training is ongoing to remain certified with a cost of around \$130 for each volunteer annually. With new requirements we may see an increase of another \$65 per person for the new National Certification requirement. Add to that the cost of maintaining and/or upgrading existing equipment and supplies necessary to respond to an emergency medical call and you can see why saving lives does have a cost.

As of today, approximately 74% of our emergency calls are EMS related. This is a typical percentage compared with other fire agencies in our area. Spokane County operates with what is called a tiered response system for all medical emergencies. Both a private ambulance and the EMS fire station closest to the scene are dispatched to EMS calls. When time is of the essence, one minute can be the difference between life or death. That's why the District has strategically placed our five stations and 18 vehicles throughout its service area so that our response time is as short as possible. Keep in mind there are only six to twelve ambulances available at any given time depending on the time of day or night to cover nearly 850 square miles of Spokane City/County including Fire District #10.

The EMS Levy fund that allows us to provide our current EMS service to our District citizens is up for renewal and expires December 31, 2010. You will be asked in April through Proposition #1 to renew this special EMS Levy at the necessary 50 cents per thousand assessed value of your property to take effect January 1, 2011. For example, a \$100,000 home would pay \$50 for EMS services for the entire year. This fund is different than the funding that every fire district is provided through RCW Title 52 for their share of property taxes. If this special EMS fund (which constitutes nearly 25% of our annual funding) is not renewed, the funding goes away. The initiative requires a 60% voter approval to pass.

The number of EMS calls and growth in the District has steadily increased over the years while our funding has decreased. If this initiative is not passed, we will be forced to make some very difficult decisions and choices about the future EMS service we provide. We do not want to lose ground in providing you with the critical medical emergency response you need and have become accustomed to. **Please be looking for this initiative on your April 2010 voter ballot.**

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Telegraph*. If you have any questions or need clarification on any article, please feel free to contact me at the number listed for Fire District #10 headquarters. We would like to hear from you.

Regards,

Nick Scharff
Fire Chief, Fire District #10



The occupants of this vehicle survived because FD #10 has the ability to render help with the appropriate equipment and supplies on hand to extricate and stabilize patients.

New Fire Insurance Classification Potentially Changes Premiums

Washington Survey and Rating Bureau, which sets the rating schedule for fire departments throughout the state of Washington, has changed the criteria they use to rate fire districts. These changes may impact some of the District's residents by ultimately increasing their homeowners insurance premiums.

In 1998 the Bureau lowered Fire District #10 to a Class 6 rating for the entire District with the exception of residents that were more than five road miles from a fire station. The classification is based on a 1-10 scale, with a 10 being no fire department at all. In the past, the Bureau viewed having a pumper tender operation (multiple firefighting vehicles that carry water to a site) as the equivalent of having a fire hydrant. On January 1, 2010 the Bureau changed that criteria and considers having a tender available as a good option, but not as good as a fire hydrant. For those residences that are not within a 1,000 foot radius of an adequate fire hydrant, your insurance rating may increase to a Class 7, and depending on your insurance carrier may potentially raise your insurance premium. All homeowners' insurance includes portions for fire, theft, flood and so on. If the fire insurance rating or classification increases, generally so does the premium. By area, this may impact about 70% of the District's homeowner policies. We are evaluating all options to maintain the highest level of protection available to all our citizens.

We can provide you with the information you need to determine if your fire classification will increase. The database includes information on exactly how far every residence is from a fire station and/or a fire hydrant. Please feel free to contact us.

Fire District #10 believes strongly that every development should include fire hydrants in its planning process. Everyone benefits from this proactive approach. Thank you to those developers who have done so. Your client base benefits from your actions.

Is your residence within a 1,000 foot radius of a fire hydrant? Call Fire District #10 at (509) 244-2425 to find out.



Two Water Tenders supplying water to Engine during rural fire suppression needs.

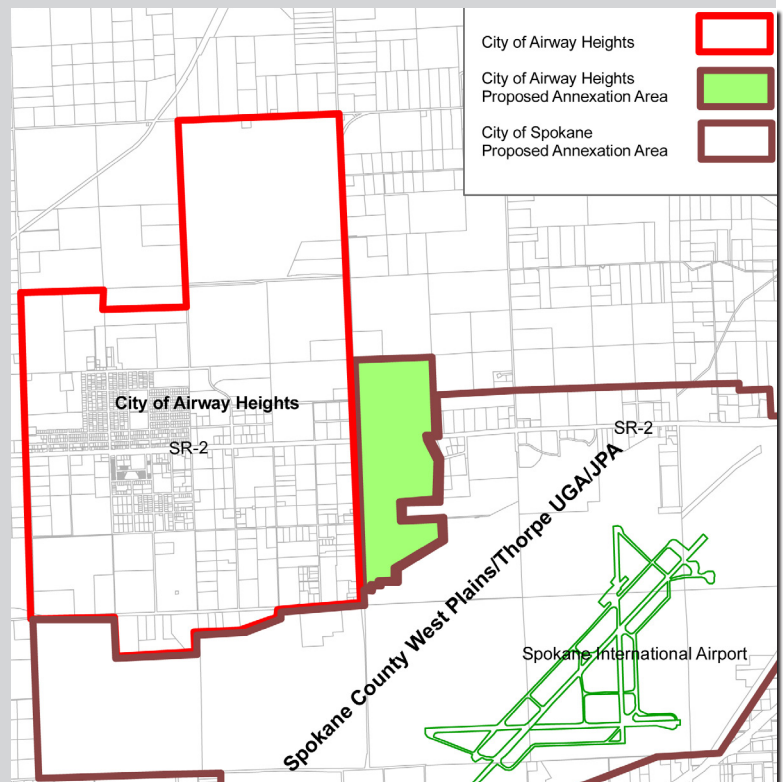
Proposed Annexation Impacts

For some time, Fire District #10 citizens have been hearing through the media about the proposed annexation of what constitutes 10.5 square miles on the West Plains of Spokane County (see map). This area lies within the unincorporated area of Spokane County and is all within an urban growth and joint planning area between Spokane County, the City of Spokane and Airway Heights. It is also the most heavily populated industrial zone in Fire District #10. What you might not know is that if this annexation does occur as currently discussed, there should be little impact to the service delivered within the remaining Fire District #10 area.

Back in 1999, District #10 Board of Commissioners put into place an agreement called the "Fire Department Service" Agreement. This agreement between the District and the City of Spokane allows the District to continue revenue collection for the area in the event of annexation of portions of District #10. We should see little loss of revenue and the greatest impact is the potential loss of fire hydrants

and fewer calls with a slightly increased response time in some areas. We will keep you apprised of this issue as it unfolds. We simply want to assure you that we will indeed continue to operate in the fiscally responsible manner to which you are accustomed even if the annexation occurs. Further, the District also has a mitigation agreement with Airway Heights should they decide to annex. This is all in great part thanks to your elected Fire Commissioners who are always watching out for your best interest as a Fire District #10 citizen.

If you have questions about this issue or any other newsletter topic, please feel free to contact District headquarters for more information.



Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Adopted

Last fall Spokane County Commissioners approved a Community Wildlife Protection Plan (CWPP) that impacts some Fire District #10 residents. The plan is a proactive tool to help reduce the potential for wildfires that threaten people, structures, infrastructure, and unique ecosystems in Spokane County. With the plan in place, it allows grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources if you qualify. The CWPP was developed in conjunction with the Inland Empire Fire Chiefs' Association, the Washington Department of Natural Resources and other local cooperatives.

The goals of the CWPP are:

1. Improve fire prevention and suppression abilities
2. Reduce hazardous fuels
3. Restore fire-adapted ecosystems
4. Promote community assistance programs

If your residence includes acreage with forested land, you may be eligible for fire mitigation funds or resources that will improve the health of the forested area. Examples of mitigation include thinning smaller or diseased trees on your property or creating "defensible areas" around structures and along access routes. These defensible areas are helpful to firefighters when they are trying

to suppress a wildfire. If a fire is raging, these defensible areas may provide just the edge firefighters need to slow it down or stop it in its tracks.

Other mitigation measures include:

- Reducing hazardous fuel loads by pruning and thinning trees
- Removing ladder fuels and tree densities including "limbing up" on trees
- Mowing and removing weeds and other vegetation
- Moving flammable items such as propane tanks and wood piles a safe distance away from structures

For more information on how you can receive funding to help protect against forest fires, please contact Fire District #10 at (509) 244-2425 or drop by our headquarters station on Garfield Road.

Another important issue that Fire District #10 will be promoting as part of the CWPP is to push for improved access routes and to display weight limits on private bridges within the District. This has been an issue for firefighters trying to reach rural residences. Without having posted weight limitations on the bridges and dangerous access routes, it is impossible for firefighters to know with certainty if their fire trucks can safely access or leave a fire area, creating valuable lost time when responding to an emergency. Firefighters must also provide for their own safety.

Good example of "defensible space" in a rural forested area within Fire District #10.



Commissioners Corner

The recent Volunteer Firefighter/EMS banquet is one way to thank our volunteer firefighters for their time and dedication but I wanted to personally commend



these professionals for their efforts. Without them, we could not run this District with the frugal integrity we now exhibit. Fire District #10 is to be commended for its efforts in every aspect of budget and personnel management. With an ever-increasing number of demands on the District, it has managed to continue serving the community with the highest standards and at the lowest impact to voters. They provide a 24-7 (twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week) service to the community with only seven paid employees and a volunteer force of over 55+ professional firefighters and EMTs. Congratulations!

As one of your Fire Commissioners I can promise we will continue to monitor all of the issues facing Fire District #10 and make decisions with your best interests in mind. If you have any concerns or questions, I would be more than happy to answer them.

*Dave Foxworth, Chair,
Fire District #10 Commissioner*

The safest, easiest, and most economical way to mitigate unwanted fires is to stop them before they start.

Quote taken from CWPP



Reflective Signs Available Through Fire District #10

Reflective address signs are available for purchase at Fire District #10. These signs are practical and easy to read, making it easier for firefighters and others to locate your home in time of need. The UPS man may also appreciate the blue reflective material with 4" white reflective numbers. The signs measure 24" x 6" and can be displayed vertically or horizontally with numbers on both sides. These signs are durable aluminum. The cost for each sign is \$15. Contact Fire District #10 headquarters for purchase information.

Volunteer Firefighter Banquet Held

Every year Fire District #10 holds an awards banquet to honor their firefighting and EMT volunteers. These volunteers dedicate their time and talents with very little financial gain. This year the banquet was held on February 13 and gave special recognition to two retiring long-time volunteers. Noncie McKelvey served the District for 22 years and Chuck Chisholm 30 years. We thank them for their time and dedication. Other awards given include EMS of the year Josh Twilligear; Firefighter of the year Rob Sayers; Rookie of the Year Keith Jordan and Resident Firefighter of the Year Andy Streibeck.

Clockwise: Commissioner James McKelvey, Retiree Noncie McKelvey, Commissioner Dave Foxworth and Chief Scharff; Retiree Chuck Chisholm, Commissioner Dave Foxworth and Chief Scharff; Deputy Chief Robert Ladd and Resident Firefighter of the Year Andy Streibeck; Lt Shawn Bro and EMS of the Year Josh Twilligear; Rookie of the Year Keith Jordan and Lt Jon Hanke; Firefighter of the Year Rob Sayers and Lt Jon Hanke



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