



Camas-Washougal Fire Department Newsletter

June 1, 2013

Volume 3, Issue 4

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Our Mission:
To provide the highest quality service to our community through the protection and preservation of life and property



Unusual String of Fires Taxes CWFD

Beginning on April 23, CWFD experienced three significant structure fires over the course of 7 days. The April 23rd fire, located in the SE 7th Avenue area of Camas, caused significant damage to a single family home. Fortunately no one was injured. On April 30, a fire on Sierra Street in Camas completely destroyed a large two-story single family dwelling. As in the SE 7th Avenue fire, none of the occupants were injured, although a CWFD firefighter had to be treated for an injury at a local hospital. In between those two incidents was a fire located in a vacant house on the border of Camas and Vancouver that CWFD played a substantial operational role in. That fire caused a CWFD firefighter to be treated at a local hospital for exhaustion. Due to the abundance of new construction, the prevalence of residential fire sprinklers, and the hard work of our staff, major structure fires are a rarity in the CWFD response area. These three unrelated incidents significantly taxed the firefighters of CWFD, but we're glad to report that no citizens were injured and no firefighters suffered significant injuries.



Fire Consolidation Update

On May 1, elected officials from Camas and Washougal met to discuss future steps of the longstanding CWFD merger. Camas City Administrator Nina Regor and Washougal City Administrator David Scott led the discussion on exploring longer term partnership between the agencies in the future. Local consultant Paul Lewis was retained to look at the financial impacts of a continued merger between the cities. Those findings will be reported in the near future when completed.

Since the CWFD merger started, we've received several questions about some of the benefits we've seen. Recently, data was pulled from our report system that highlighted one of the more significant improvements for our community. In 2012, Medic 43 (Washougal) responded to 899 medical calls in their primary response area of Washougal. Medic 41 (downtown Camas) responded to 813 calls within Camas, and Medic 42 (Grass Valley) responded to 268. Further investigation showed that the Washougal medic unit responded to 316 "serious" medical emergencies in the area east of Washougal Station 171. What makes that significant is that prior 2009 there was no ambulance in Washougal. The next nearest ambulance was in downtown Camas or at the Grass Valley station. As an example, the drive time to one of our most frequent response areas in Washougal is around 4 minutes from Station 171. The drive time to that same location from downtown Camas is 9 minutes and from our Grass Valley station nearly 17 minutes. What this shows is that in 2012, on average, nearly one person a day was suffering a serious medical emergency in Washougal and was experiencing significantly reduced ambulance response times than were possible in the past.



L-R: Washougal city staff attend the annual employee staff meeting held at Station 171, CWFD duty staff conduct training at Station 41, CWFD firefighter Tyler McMahon assists with operations at the SE 7th Avenue fire