



# Chelan County Fire District 1 & Douglas County Fire District 2

## *Spring 2022 Newsletter*



### **A Word from Fire Chief Brian Brett**

**Greetings Residents of Douglas County Fire District 2 and Chelan County Fire District 1,**

As you may have heard, the Fire Commissioners for both Fire Districts have approved a Regional Fire Authority Plan and ballot measure for the August 2 election. We have this opportunity because of the amazing vision and planning of our past Fire Commissioners, Fire Chiefs, Volunteers and personnel.

The ballot measure requests to establish our levy rate at \$1.50 (which is the cap). Please allow me to explain the reason for our request.

Both Fire Districts have grown in assessed values (AV) by 45% from 2017-2021. However, our share of this increased revenue is limited to 1% of the prior year's budget. We do not receive the increase; hence, our levy rate drops each year.

The demand for services 2017-2021 (incident response) has grown by 37% with an increase in technical rescue responses (e.g., water rescues and rope rescues).

As the growth and demand have increased, our Volunteer Firefighter ranks have decreased approximately 68% over the last 10 years. This is not a local anomaly; this is a National, State and local trend in the Volunteer fire service.

As mentioned, Fire Districts are limited to a 1% annual revenue increase. Yet the cost to provide services is not capped. Therefore, every 7-10 years the Fire Districts need to ask voters to increase the levy rate to keep up with inflation and maintain operations. It has been 7 years since Douglas County Fire District 2 passed a ballot measure and 6 years for Chelan County Fire District 1; both fire districts are due.

We are planning a complementary ballot measure for the November election to provide an opportunity to ask for a rate lower than \$1.50 in 2024, and up to 6% increases the following five years. This will keep the cost to the public consistent while keeping our levied rate from dropping substantially.

**If you are combining Fire Districts, shouldn't there be a cost savings associated with that?**

- Yes. The savings comes from a reduction in Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs, eliminating redundancy in support facilities and increased purchasing power for fire apparatus, equipment and supplies.
- However, the reduction in Volunteers creates the need to hire additional Firefighters to maintain a base-level response throughout the combined Fire Districts. The increase in fulltime Firefighters is a large cost driver for our request. Yet, we are also investing in our fleet, facilities and aviation program to support our service delivery system.
- The increase in firefighters will allow us to expand our ability to directly deliver services on incidents.

*(continued on Page 2)*

*(Fire Chief Brian Brett, continued from Page 1)*

## Will combining be an advantage or detrimental to the Volunteer Firefighters?

- Volunteer Firefighters are selflessly dedicated to community service and appreciate the opportunity to attend training and provide emergency response.
- Our ability to recruit Volunteer Firefighters will increase because the opportunity for training and participation will double as a combined organization. Often, we live and work on different sides of the bridge, but Volunteers will be able to report to any station regardless of geography.
- Additionally, the added opportunities for Volunteer Firefighters will help with retention. Volunteers want abundant opportunities to serve and respond. The combined Fire Districts training, and incident call volume is conducive to this desire.

Your Fire Districts continue to be busy throughout the year. Our Districts are far from the “small” communities many of us remember while growing up here. Our community expects an urban service delivery level, and because of this, we not only provide fire response but also auto extrication, rope rescue, confined space rescue, water rescue, and hazardous materials response. Our success relies on available, trained, and experienced personnel.

## Thank you for supporting your Fire Districts!

Brian Brett, Fire Chief

### May is Wildfire Preparedness Month

Hello from the Wildfire Liaison office. May is Wildfire Preparedness Month and we are here to help! There are many steps you can take this spring to make your home more resilient to wildfire.

- Move your firewood pile 30 feet away from your house
- Clean your gutters and rake up any leaves
- Mow grass to less than 6 inches and keep it well irrigated
- Trim back any trees touching your house and remove any dead wood

For more information call Hillary Heard at 509-662-4734 or visit, <https://www.chelanountyfire.com/resources>

Did you know that In 2021, human-caused fires were up 5.5% compared to 2020 in Washington State. Join the effort this year to get our community prepared against wildfires.

We have partnered with Washington State Department of Natural Resources on their Wildfire Ready Neighbors Campaign. District staff or one of our partner agencies will contact you to provide a free Home Assessment.

Sign up for a FREE Wildfire Ready Plan at <https://wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov/>



## HOME IGNITION ZONE CHECKLIST

**SIMPLE STEPS FROM ROOF TO FOUNDATION TO MAKE A HOME SAFER FROM EMBERS AND RADIANT HEAT**

- Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris and pine needles that could catch embers
- Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to prevent ember penetration
- Reduce embers that could pass through vents in the eaves by installing 1/8 inch metal mesh screening
- Clean debris from exterior attic vents and install 1/8 inch metal mesh screening to reduce embers
- Repair or replace damaged or loose window screens and any broken windows
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating
- Move any flammable material away from wall exteriors - mulch, flammable plants, leaves and needles, firewood piles - anything that can burn
- Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches

**VISIT FIREWISE.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS**

Image by NFPA, with funding from USDA Forest Service

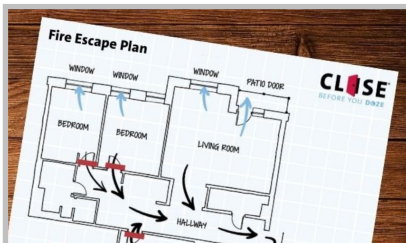
## This is how our two Fire Districts currently compare:

	Douglas County Fire District 2	Chelan County Fire District 1
Population	29,839	44,500
Square miles	100	70
2021 Annual Incidents	1,929	3,416
WSRB Protection Class	5	4
Chief & Deputy Chiefs	4	3
Shift Firefighters (full time)	24	36
Minimum shift staffing	5	9
Wildfire Liaison	0	1
Volunteer Firefighters	2011 49	36
	2021 14	13
Decrease in Volunteers 2021-2011	-71.42%	-63.89%
Stations (staffed)	2	4
Fire Engines (staffed)	1	3
Ladder Trucks (staffed)	1	1
Helicopters	0	1
Pilots	0	4 (part-time)
Training facility	0	1
Maintenance facility	0	1
Assessed value (A/V) 2022	\$5,603,469,264	\$6,216,601,144
A/V average growth (2016-2022)	7.57%	7.74%
Levy rate	2017 \$1.15	\$1.37
	2018 \$1.19	\$1.42
	2019 \$1.25	\$1.36
	2020 \$1.30	\$1.35
	2021 \$1.35	\$1.38
	2022 \$1.26	\$1.32
Increase per \$1,000 of A/V	\$0.24	\$0.18
Monthly increase for \$500,000 home	\$10.00	\$7.50
Cash	\$6,075,000	\$4,871,000
Debt	\$8,881,000	\$7,105,000



## Reflective Address Signs

Visible house numbers help first responders find your home quickly in an emergency. The Volunteer Association offers reflective address signs that help responders and cost \$10 - \$16. Stop by the station at 731 N. Wenatchee Avenue, 377 Eastmont Avenue, or visit [chelancountyfire.com](http://chelancountyfire.com) for more information. Proceeds support the Volunteer Association and their mission to ensure the highest quality emergency response to our community.



Get more information, visit:  
<https://closeyourdoor.org>

## Close Before you Doze! Fighting Fire with Science

The Close Your Door safety initiative comes as the result of over 10 years of research by the UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute (FSRI). After proving that a closed door could potentially save lives in a fire, UL FSRI has committed to share this finding with the world. **Fire is getting faster because of synthetic materials, furniture and construction, fire spreads faster than ever before.**

**17 Minutes** - About how much time you had to escape a fire 40 years ago.

**3 Minutes** - About how much time you have now.



Chelan County Fire District 1 and Douglas County Fire District 2 are combination departments with paid and volunteer members. Both fire districts are recruiting volunteer members to join our team of first responders. The districts provides all-hazard response including structure and wildland fire protection, emergency medical services, rope and water rescue. If you have an interest in any, or all, of these response areas, contact us to join our team.



Deputy Chief Rick McBride, Volunteer Coordinator

Chelan County Fire District 1 &  
Douglas County Fire District 2

rmcbride@chelancountyfire.com or 509-662-4734



**Join the Emergency Response Team protecting your Community!**

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A Newsletter from Your Fire Districts