



Camas Fire Department Newsletter

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Our Mission:

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



Consolidation Continues...

By Fire Chief Nick Swinhart

Left: Camas Fire Chief Nick Swinhart and Washougal Fire Chief Ron Schumacher together at a recent function

As this newsletter is being created, the trial merger between the Washougal and Camas Fire Departments is barely one month old, but already the partnership is working much better than was anticipated. The savings to the EMS system and the increased service being provided to the citizens of Washougal are some of the biggest changes that have taken place thus far.

Before the trial merger began, the citizens of Washougal would typically have a minimum of two firefighters on duty at any given time, and none of those personnel was a paramedic. With the trial merger, Station 171 now has a minimum of 4 firefighters on duty at all times, at least one (often two) paramedics on duty, and the first fully staffed ambulance in the department. With multiple studies showing how seconds can save lives in medical emergencies, this increased staffing level and decreased response time is a tangible benefit to the citizens in Washougal. The EMS fund itself benefits from the added staffing and decreased expenditures through minimization of duplication of effort. Overtime is projected to come in well under budget for 2011 and the overall cost savings to the citizens of Washougal and Camas thus far has been estimated well in excess of \$20,000 in just the first month of the merger.

The further good news is that the EMS budget deficit forecast for the end of 2011 has been drastically revised. Initially estimated at over \$300,000, it is now believed the deficit could be as much as half of that by the end of the year. That is due primarily to the trial merger with Washougal, along with sweeping internal changes made in Camas in the last year such as decreasing leave slots in an agreement with the firefighter's local, and implementing tight restrictions on discretionary spending and the use of overtime. Even with these successes, your Camas Fire Department will continue to explore more efficiencies in the coming months.



Left: Camas and Washougal volunteer and paid firefighters honor those who gave their lives on 9-11. Right: Washougal Fire Chief Ron Schumacher and Captain Grant Brock pose with the new ambulance the city has purchased as part of the trial merger



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CFD tops national study

The most recent report from the Resuscitation Outcome Consortium, an international medical research study group that Camas has been heavily involved with for the last five years, ranks the Camas Fire Department as having the highest survival rate of pre-hospital cardiac arrests from among the eleven other participating greater Portland agencies. The participating agencies include all EMS agencies within Clark County and many in Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas Counties.

Camas Fire Department primarily transports residents of the City of Camas, the City of Washougal, and the county residents served by East County Fire and Rescue. The recent success and recognition shown by this study should be equally shared between the ambulance staff of Camas Fire Department and the staff and volunteers of our partners in ECF&R and Washougal.



In 2012, the residents of Camas will be asked to vote on a tax levy that will continue to support the Emergency Medical Services that provides paramedic response to our citizens. This will not be a new levy, but will simply be a continuation of a levy that has provided cutting edge medical care to the citizens of Camas for over 30 years. The current levy amount is 35 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value, a number that has been raised only once in over 3 decades. This levy rate would translate to an annual cost of \$70 to the homeowner of a house valued at \$200,000.

The revenue generated from the EMS Levy may only be used for Emergency Medical Services purposes such as: ambulance services, purchase and maintenance of ambulances, equipment and supplies, the hiring and training of paramedic/firefighters and firefighter/IV technicians, and administrative support personnel and training programs.

The levy also supports the EMT training of the volunteer firefighter programs in Washougal and East County Fire and Rescue as part of the overall EMS program in East Clark County. The fire department responds to over 3,000 calls for emergency service every year, and that number continues to rise. Ambulance calls have risen some 30% in just the last 10 years. The ability to dispatch paramedic/firefighters in ambulances to locations throughout the three partners area gives Camas the capability to treat and transport without the delays typically seen in other areas of Clark County. Our ambulances are equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment, making them mobile intensive care units with the latest innovations in cardiac care.

Community programs provided by the EMS levy include citizen CPR classes, instructors, books, videos, mannequins, and local classroom facilities. Volunteer and career firefighters in Washougal and East County Fire and Rescue receive training and equipment from this fund as well.

If approved in 2012, this levy would sustain the current enhanced level of EMS to the citizens of Camas for many more years. As the sidebar at left shows, it is difficult to place a value on the services we are able to provide to our community. Our personnel and our system of providing service to our citizens are simply the best. Please keep an eye out for more information on the 2012 EMS Levy in the coming months.



Recent Photos (left to right): Camas staff with new Washougal firefighter Ben Porter (far left) at a recent 9-11 function, CFD assists Vancouver Fire Department at a fire on August 27, Senior CFD staff at a recent 9-11 function; Battalion Chief Mark Ervin, Fire Chief Nick Swinhart, Battalion Chief Allen Wolk, and Battalion Chief Larry Larimer