



Benton County
Fire Protection District No. 4
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West Richland, WA 99353
(509) 967-2945
www.bcf4.org

Benton County
Fire Protection District No. 1
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Meetings Planned for Ballot Measures Funding Emergency Services

Fire Chiefs Tell Their Stories

[West Richland and Kennewick, Wash.] – Two fire chiefs are coming forward to talk about how emergency services have impacted their lives personally. Benton County Fire District 4 and Benton County Fire District #1 have measures on the August Primary Election ballot and have scheduled meetings to answer questions from the public.

Benton County Fire District 4

Benton County Fire District 4 is asking voters to approve a bond of 28 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value (approximately \$7 per month for the owner of a \$300,000 home). The bond would build and equip a fire station (including an ambulance), as well as replace three fire engines approaching the end of their usable lives.

The fire district has two stations and has built one every 20 years in response to population growth. The City of West Richland has grown almost 25 percent since 2010. Unincorporated areas served by Benton County Fire District 4 have grown by 30 percent. Looking at call volumes, the fire district is responding to 62.5 percent more emergencies in the same time period.

“Adequate facilities and apparatus are just as important as firefighters and paramedics,” said Chief Bill Whealan.

He knows what he’s talking about. In 2016, Chief Whealan had a stroke and it was his own department that responded in a fire truck and new ambulance to administer life-saving medications and transport him to a local hospital. He has since made a complete recovery.

Public meetings to answer questions about the bond will be held July 28 (9:00 a.m.) and August 2 (5:30 p.m.) at Station 420, 2604 Bombing Range Rd., West Richland, WA 99353. More information about the bond can be found at www.bcf4.org.

Benton County Fire District 4 is proud to provide fire and emergency medical service (EMS) to 18,232 people over 52 square miles, including the City of West Richland.

Benton County Fire District #1

Fire Chief Lonnie Click's story has some heartbreak.

First, you should know that Benton County Fire District #1 is asking voters to consider a levy for emergency medical services (EMS). Funding would purchase and staff two ambulances with paramedics and emergency medical technicians to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) for fire district residents. Currently, Benton #1 relies on neighboring agencies to provide this level of care, which takes longer.

Chief Click's family was hit by a drunk driver who was driving the wrong way on the interstate. The accident killed his son and caused his wife and daughter to experience multiple months of surgeries and rehabilitation.

He is quick to say that his son would not have survived the accident even if the fire district had ambulances, or ALS care at the time. His injuries were too severe. However, the most important thing is knowing that level of service is there so it can make a difference.

"We want to provide the best possible outcome for your family even if it couldn't have helped mine," he said. "That's why we're doing this."

Almost 55 percent of all emergencies for Benton #1 are EMS-related (with total call volumes 10 percent higher than the previous year) and 90 percent of those require transport to area hospitals. The EMS levy would be 50-cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value or approximately \$8.33 per month (\$100 per year) for a \$200,000 home.

Ballots should be in the mail on or around July 26. The fire district will hold two public meetings on July 20 and 31 at 6:00 p.m. at its Fire Training Center, 1811A South Ely Street, Kennewick WA 99337.

Benton County Fire District #1 is a combination fire department with approximately 90 volunteer, part-time and full-time firefighters serving 17,800 people over 320 square miles. It responds to an average of 1,300 calls per year for structural and wildland fire suppression, emergency medical service, technical rescue, and hazardous materials response.

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