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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHIEF

As Fire Chief I am pleased to present the annual report for West Thurston Regional Fire Authority. Covering the reporting period of 2023, this provides an overview of our activities in a year of success.

In 2023, we received the highest number of emergency calls in our department history. We responded to 3,471 emergency incidents in 2023.

Also in 2023, our citizens approved a levy lid lift restoring funding to \$1.50/\$1,000. This funding filled a much-needed funding gap to help maintain our existing level of services. We are grateful for the support of our citizens.

We were also able to focus on giving back to the community in 2023. We sponsored a Christmas Giving Tree that members of the public donate gifts for community members struggling and in need to be able to celebrate the holiday season with their families.

The department was also fortunate to have secured a FEMA grant that provides \$558,000 to fully fund a Volunteer Recruit and Retention Coordinator Position for the next four years starting in 2024. This much needed position will help restore staffing to two of our unstaffed stations which will help improve our Washington State Rating Bureau rating to those communities translating to lower home insurance premium costs to citizens in those areas in the future. This valuable resource will help reduce financial stress to some of our citizens in the communities we serve.

I am proud of the work our department did in 2023 and look forward to continuing to provide effective and efficient emergency services to our community in the coming year. Thank you for your continued support of our fire department and the important work that we do.

Sincerely,

Rob Smith, CFO, Fire Chief

YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT

West Thurston Regional Fire Authority is located just south of Olympia, Washington. The 158 square mile response zone stretches approximately 12 miles east and west along Interstate Five from the city limits of Tumwater to the Lewis County Line. The RFA began from the partnership between Thurston County Fire District 1 and Thurston County Fire District 11. The goal of the partnership was to maximize efficiencies and improve service delivery to the citizens of the region. The successful partnership created the fourth Regional Fire Authority (RFA) in the state of Washington.

West Thurston RFA delivers comprehensive emergency services including Fire Protection, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services and Patient Transport. The Regional Fire Authority serves approximately 30,000 residents in the communities of Bordeaux, Delphi, Gate, Grand Mound, Littlerock, Maytown, Michigan Hill, Rochester, and Scott Lake. The diverse service area includes industrial, commercial, residential, and forest land.

The Regional Fire Authority delivers exceptional service with state-of-the art fire, rescue and emergency medical apparatus and equipment through 61 exceptional professionals both career (36) and volunteer (25). Our proud professionals respond to an average of 3,400 emergency 911 service calls each year.



ORGANIZATION COMMISSIONERS

West Thurston Regional Fire Authority is a special purpose district created by the vote of the people residing in the district with direction provided by a duly elected Board of Fire Commissioners under the RCW 52.26.030. As West Thurston RFA was formed and established in 2009 by two fire protection jurisdictions, the governing board carries out the business of the district according to the strategic plan adopted.

Fire Commissioners representing District 1 included:

Calvin Dahl

Ben Elkins

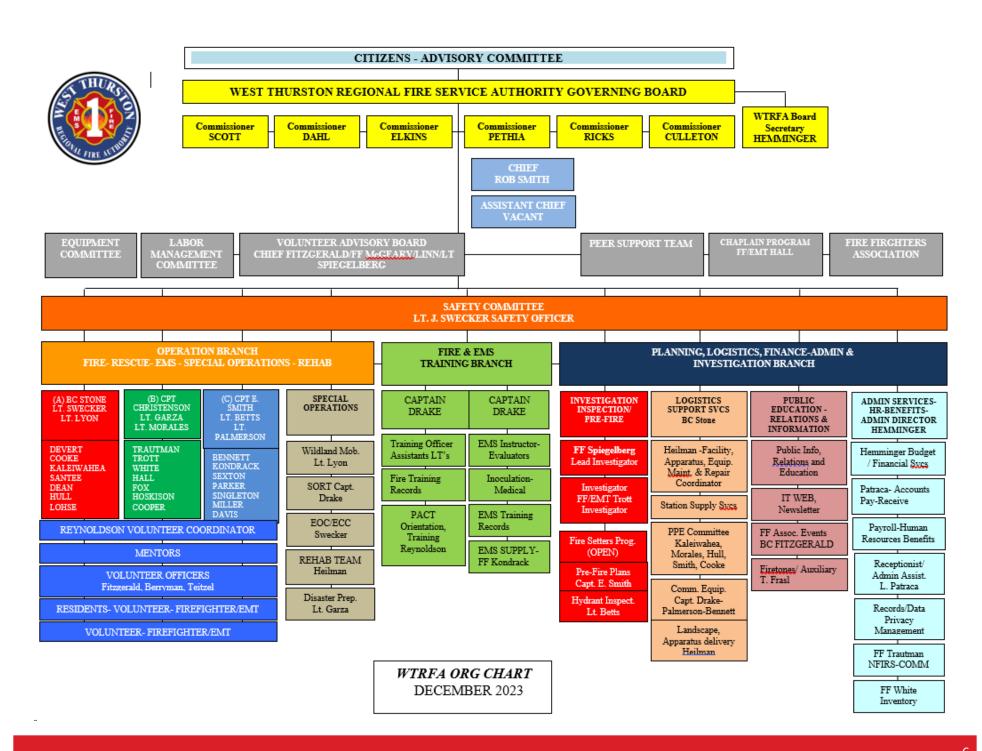
Robert Scott — newly appointed commissioner as of December 2023, replacing Jeff Jernigan

Fire Commissioner Ben Elkins completed his term at the end of 2023. We thank Ben and Jeff for their many years of service.

Fire Commissioners representing District 11 included:

Thomas Culleton Dave Pethia John Ricks

Fire Commissioner Dave Pethia completed his term and retired at the end of 2023. We thank Dave for his many years of service.



FORMATION

West Thurston Regional Fire Authority exists to provide fire suppression, emergency medical, technical rescue, and hazardous materials response. Additionally, the WTRFA provides public information, education, investigation, and risk reduction inspections services to preserve and protect lives and property within the communities of Bordeaux, Delphi, Gate, Grand Mound, Littlerock, Maytown, Michigan Hill, Rochester, and Scott Lake.

In 2004 the Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs (WSAFC) led legislative efforts to provide fire districts, municipalities, and tribal nations with the ability to "formally" join under the provision of fire and emergency services. This ability had formally been available through mergers (between fire districts), and annexations (cities into fire districts or other unincorporated territory protected by a fire district) using inter-local agreements or contractual consolidations. This new formation, adopted by the State Legislature in 2004, allowed municipalities and fire districts to create a "Regional Fire Authority" (RFA). An RFA is a municipal corporation that is not bound by strict guidelines for which entities can join. An RFA, organized under Title 52 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), is similar to a fire district in many ways, but also has a few distinct differences, mainly a planning committee for the formation and a funding model related to taxation and a benefit charge. The approval of an RFA required a public vote with a super majority (60% + 1). Voters in the communities of Littlerock, Maytown, Rochester, Grand Mound and surrounding communities approved Proposition 1 in August of 2008, and the West Thurston RFA was officially established on January 1, 2010, effectively becoming the fourth Regional Fire Authority in Washington State.

Effective January 1, 2010, by vote of citizens under RCW 52.26 and under Resolution 2009-04 (TCFD #1) and 2009-442 (TCFD #11), West Thurston Regional Fire Authority was created.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION

It shall be the mission of West Thurston Regional Fire Authority to develop, operate and manage resources granted by the people of the region to preserve lives and property in our communities by providing services directed toward prevention, management and mitigation of fire, emergency medical, rescue, and disaster incidents.

VISION

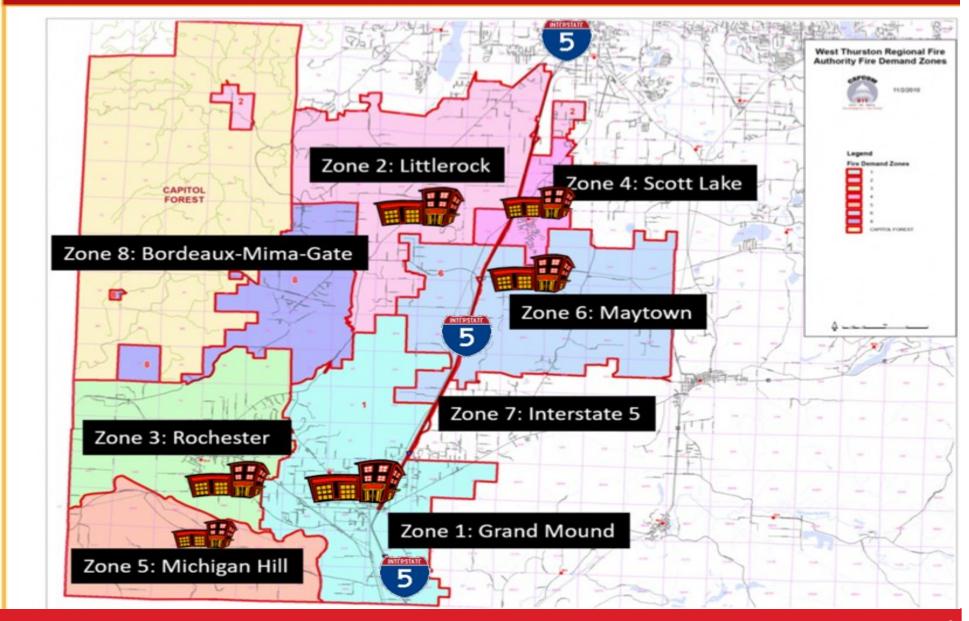
To be recognized by our community as an agency that is responsive to the community's needs and concerns, we must be a model of excellence in providing services through education, prevention and mitigation in addition to fostering an environment of involvement, trust and cohesion: West Thurston should be a community service leader.

VALUES

- Integrity we value honesty, a high work ethic, and adherence to our policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Accountability we stand ready to prove; we do what we say. We will be accountable for our individual actions.
- Efficiency we will manage and direct our resources for maximum service impact and effectiveness.
- **Responsiveness** we will respond to the needs of our community appropriately, and in a timely manner.
- Service we will always promote public service over self-service.

SERVICE AREA

THE RFA RESPONSE ZONES:



INCIDENT RESPONSE and MODELING

Operational Highlights- Emergency Response:

Our Fire Department responded to a total of 3,471 emergency incidents during the reporting period, including fires, medical emergencies, hazardous material incidents, and rescues. 74% are EMS calls. Our response time to emergencies were under target, averaging 7 minutes and 49 seconds for most zones. Of all responses, 1307 or 37.65% of the time we managed two or more emergency incidents at one time. Through prompt and efficient actions, we were able to protect lives, property, and the environment.

To provide the quickest response possible, we evaluate statistics and place limited resources in the most likely location of where the next emergency will be. If you can imagine how major league baseball uses the "shift" as a defensive strategy which the defense overloads players to one side of the field based on the analysis of each batter. We use a minimal, two-person, cross-staffing model at each station to ensure efficiency and timeliness. We expect the current trend in call volume and overlapping calls to continue particularly as we see growth and expansion of industry in our area.

The expected growth will add pressure to not only our response system model, but also has a domino effect on our mutual aid partners. Our response system model is based, in part, on a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1720 hybrid) recommendation that ensures quality response within eight minutes, which is tied to positive outcomes.

INCIDENT RESPONSE & MODELING STANDARDS

Time to Dispatch:

60 seconds 90% of the time

Turnout time:

90 seconds 90% of the time

Arrival of 1st (Most Appropriate) Apparatus - Engine, AID Unit (EMT), Rescue, Hazmat, Wildland.

8 minutes overall average for most zones

Response and assembly at a structure fire:

Rural Zones (2,5,6,8) 6 personnel at the scene in 14 minutes, 90% of the time; Suburban Zones (1,3 &4) 10 personnel at the scene in 10 minutes 90% of the time.

Arrival of ALS by TC Medic One:

Medic One has adopted a suburban response time of 20 minutes.

CRITICAL COMPONENTS

The critical mission of emergency response is often measured using two key scientifically studied (industry accepted) benchmarks. These benchmarks drive many other aspects of operations and emergency response standards.

- Pre-hospital time-to-defibrillation
- •Fire Flashover

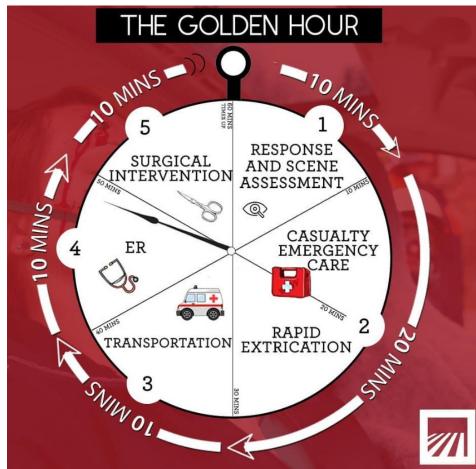
SERVICE LEVEL - Pre-hospital time-to-defibrillation

Golden Hour Metric

In trauma events, the golden hour is the historic benchmark applied to victims with significant critical traumatic injuries. The golden hour reflects the concept that survivability decreases significantly if the patient isn't in the operating room within one hour of receiving a critical traumatic injury.

Cardiac Arrest Survival Standard

In communities where the fire service is the principal provider of EMS first response, the "chain of survival" standard was developed by the American Heart Association. It is often used to provide guidance for the distribution of resources. The chain of survival suggests that basic life support (CPR and defibrillation) should be available to the victim of a cardiac arrest within 4 minutes of the event, and that advanced life support (paramedic service) should be available within 8 minutes or less of the event. Early notification, distribution and concentration of emergency response services are thus paramount to successful resuscitation efforts.



CRITICAL COMPONENTS

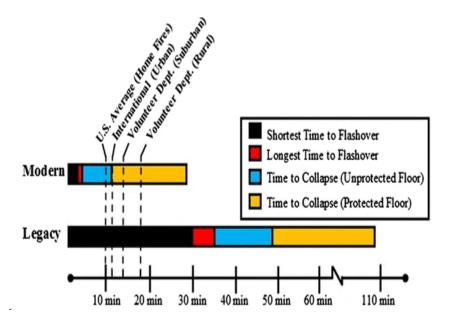
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- •Fire Flashover

SERVICE LEVEL - Fire Flashover

The time-temperature curve in the graph displayed is based on data from various national engineering and standards organizations including the National Institute of Safety and Technology. As ceiling temperature reaches 500° to 600°C (932° to 1112°F) fire conditions change dramatically as there is a rapid transition to a state of total surface involvement of all combustible materials within the compartment. When the fire reaches flashover, flames extend out compartment openings such as a doorway leading to an adjacent compartment. In modern buildings with open floor plans, reaching flashover can rapidly spread from the compartment of origin to other compartments. The graph represents a typical point source of ignition in a residential house which will "flash over" at some time between 3:30 to 4:45 minutes after ignition, turning a typical room and contents fire into an untenable environment that leaves the room of origin. Flashover is a significant event for two reasons. First, the chance of survival for anyone (including firefighters in full protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus) in a room when flashover occurs is unlikely. Second, a flashover creates an exponential growth in the energy released by combustion, which in turn requires a greater amount of water and resources to control the fire.

The utility of the time-temperature curve for fire station placement is limited by several factors. It does not account for the time required for the existence of a fire to be "discovered" and reported to the Fire Department via the 911 system. The time from ignition to flashover varies, thus alone, it cannot provide a valid basis for the allocation of resources. The curve is constantly shifting, given the numerous changes in building construction, built in suppression systems, the increased use of fire resistive materials for furniture and other items typically found in the interior of occupied buildings.



SERVICE LEVEL STANDARDS - RESPONSE

Given West Thurston Regional Fire Authority's unique makeup of rural and suburban populated areas, and career and volunteer staffing, we measure our emergency response performance annually using a benchmark established by policy that is a hybrid of NFPA recommendations, but closely resembles NFPA 1720. WTRFA has an 8 minute response target for all calls within the district 90% of the time. West Thurston, is by definition considered a rural response area subject to assembly of 6 personnel in 14 minutes. We also recognize development in our area that constitutes argument for suburban response standards within certain response areas, which applies an assembly of 10 personnel in 10 minutes to a structure fire. Our hybrid standards challenge our department capabilities considering the critical components of the time-temperature curve and the pre-hospital time to defibrillation benchmarks.

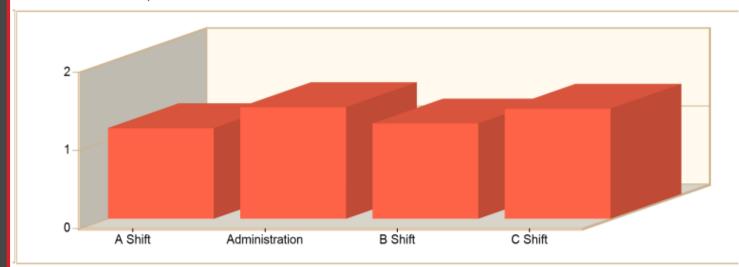
PRIMARY ZONES –1,2,3,4 and 6 AVERAGE RESPONSE TIMES

LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)				
Station	EMS	FIRE		
Grand Mound	0:07:01	0:08:04		
Littlerock	0:08:38	0:09:44		
Maytown	0:11:27	0:11:57		
Rochester	0:07:44	0:07:53		
Scott Lake	0:08:54	0:09:10		
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:07:49		

INCIDENT ANALYSIS-TURNOUT TIME

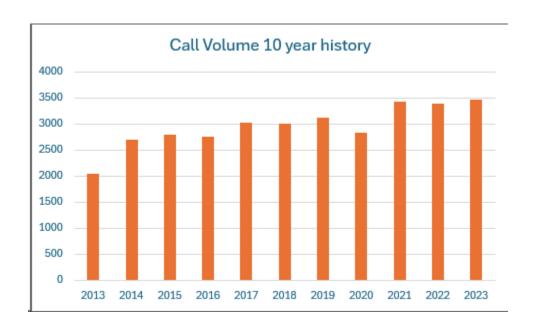
Average Turnout Time per Shift for Date Range

Start Date: 01/01/2023 | End Date: 12/31/2023

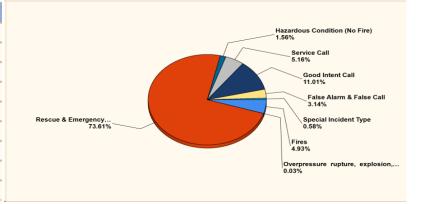


SHIFT	AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME as MM:SS (Dispatch to Enroute)
A Shift	1:10
Administration	1:26
B Shift	1:13
C Shift	1:25

INCIDENT ANALYSIS-VOLUME & MAJOR TYPES



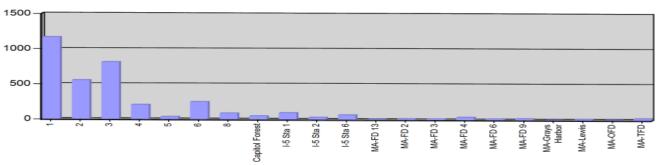
MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	171	4.93%
Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheat - no fire	1	0.03%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	2555	73.61%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	54	1.56%
Service Call	179	5.16%
Good Intent Call	382	11.01%
False Alarm & False Call	109	3.14%
Special Incident Type	20	0.58%
TOTAL	3471	100%



RESPONSE ZONE-ANALYSIS

Incident Count per Zone for Date Range

Start Date: 01/01/2023 | End Date: 12/31/2023



ZONE	# INCIDENTS
1 - Grand Mound	1164
2 - Littlerock	552
3 - Rochester	810
4 - Scott Lake	204
5 - Michigan Hill	34
6 - Maytown	246
8 - Bordeaux / Mima / Gate	85
Capitol Forest - Capitol Forest Zone	47
I-5 Sta 1 - I-5 Station 1-1 Area	93
I-5 Sta 2 - I-5 Station 1-2 Area	29
I-5 Sta 6 - I-5 Station 1-6 Area	64
MA-FD 13 - TCFD 13 - Griffin FD	6
MA-FD 2 - TCFD 2 - Yelm / Rainier	14
MA-FD 3 - TCFD 3 - Lacey FD	12
MA-FD 4 - TCFD 4 - Tenino	36
MA-FD 6 - TCFD 6 - East Olympia	15
MA-FD 9 - TCFD 9 - McLane / Black Lake	19
MA-Grays Harbor - Grays Harbor County	1
MA-Lewis - Lewis County	13
MA-OFD - Olympia FD	3
MA-TFD - Tumwater FD	24
TOTAL:	3471

FIRE SUPPRESSION RESPONSE

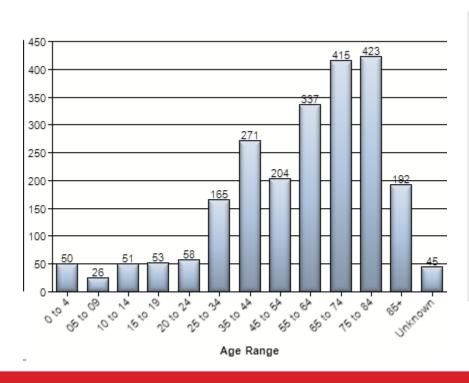


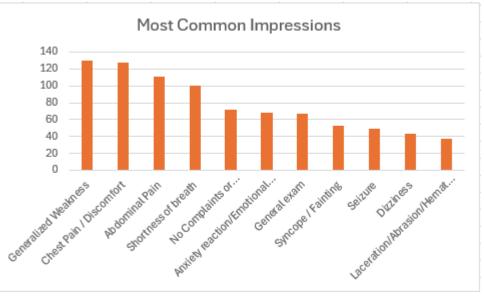
EMS RESPONSE

West Thurston provides transport services. We responded to a total of 2,555 EMS incidents.

West Thurston Fire had 1,064 transports; 782 BLS and 282 ALS.

A1-1	310
A1-2	238
A1-3	229
A1-1 A1-2 A1-3 A1-4 A1-6 ALS	1
A1-6	4
ALS	282





STANDARD OF RESPONSE IMPROVEMENTS

- As a special purpose district, our funding is limited to two major sources; the regular property tax and Maintenance & Operations (M & O) taxation. Due to the failed M & O levies in 2022 leading to a financial shortfall, we have been pushed to rely on reserves to fund personnel in order to maintain the current level of services and response capabilities. As such, the challenge will be managing multiple emergency incidents at once with less human and capital resources.
- Recruitment and retention of volunteers is in need of improvement to increase available personnel for response needs and times. With increased call volume anticipated in the future due to light industrial development in our county it creates increased demand on the system. Because of this evident changing nature of service demand and lack of authorized funding, the expectation remains to continue matching the needs of our 158 mile service area with the existing 3 station staffing model. Restoration of our regular property tax from current levels is a temporary funding patch, but long term funding options will need to be considered to maintain the health of our organization. A full time Volunteer Recruit and Retention Coordinator Position now in place can yield positive results, but takes time to development through recruitment efforts, training requirements and support.
- Isolated communities in our jurisdiction with difficult topography, such as the Bordeaux, Gate, and Capital Forest will be the focus for opportunities to build a facility to house apparatus in an area with water supply to improve service in those areas. Success with recruitment and retention of staff will be key in the future.
- Our apparatus fleet is aging with some engines near 25 years of age needing replacement. As the average age of our fleet increases, our survey rating bureau scores will decline leading to increases in property insurance premiums.
- Staffing pressures that remain in place for service delivery demands coupled with increased call volumes at a rate of 42% over the prior 10 years with little change in current staffing levels will cause fatigue and burnout, and may result in turnover of staff.
- Possible consequences in terms of service delivery when needed when not enough staffing or equipment is available could include; Large fire loss due to inadequate staffing, inability to perform rapid fire attack or rescue operations, or inability to mitigate hazardous materials incidents within a credible period of time.
- Increased commercial and residential development without specialized equipment and training results in knowledge gaps with response capabilities. Response to commercial structures requires a different skill set and equipment to match service needs. Without funding to support the tools and equipment needed for response personnel to do their job effectively leads to potential increased risk.
- Mental health needs of response personnel are ever more present. More resources are needed to preserve overall health and wellness of the organization.

WILDLAND AT HOME

West Thurston places a strong emphasis on wildland firefighting readiness and takes pride in its response capabilities in the wildland urban interface. Given the nature of our rural communities and the proximity to vast forested areas, wildland exposures make up a significant portion of our response volume during the summer months.

We actively participate in the Washington State Mobilization Plan, collaborating with other jurisdictions and partners in the region and beyond when the need arises. By providing assistance to other states on the West Coast, such as Alaska, Oregon, and California, our personnel attain specialized training in wildland tactics and contribute their expertise to help combat wildfires in different regions.

Our Task Force Leaders, Strike Team Leaders, and Engine Bosses have established a reputable presence in the field of wildland firefighting tactics. Being regarded as leaders in this area not only highlights the professionalism and skill level of our personnel but also positions our department as a valuable resource in times of need.

Furthermore, it's significant to note that the program of providing expertise and assistance to other jurisdictions serves as a revenue-generating initiative for our department. The additional funding acquired through this program plays a crucial role in maintaining staffing levels, equipment, and apparatus, which ultimately strengthens our overall operational capabilities. Additionally, the experience gained from assisting other jurisdictions positively impacts our department's ability to handle similar emergencies within our own jurisdiction, further enhancing our readiness and response capabilities.

Overall, our department's focus on wildland firefighting readiness, collaborative approach with neighboring jurisdictions, and the revenue-generating program based on expertise demonstrate a proactive and effective approach to mitigating wildland fire risks and serving the community.



SPECIAL OPERATIONS RESCUE TEAM (SORT)

The Thurston County Special Operations Rescue Team (SORT) provides specialized technical rescue services within Homeland Security Services Region 3 (Thurston, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason and Pacific Counties). The team, which is a Type III USAR team, Rope, Trench, Confined Space, Structural Collapse, Tree, REMS, and Ice rescue services, was established in 2007 from DHS SHSP grant funding with continued support from participating Thurston County Fire Departments.

West Thurston RFA maintains three highly dedicated personnel on this team. Firefighter/EMT Hans Cooke, Captain Nathan Drake and Firefighter/EMT Aaron Hall are our dedicated team members. The training regularly conducted by the team to maintain and improve their skills is unapparelled. In 2023, SORT was activated to respond to several emergencies including ATV accidents involving low angle rescue, parachute jumpers stuck in trees and swift water rescue from a specialized team from Lacey Fire District 3.

The commitment shown by the West Thurston RFA to support and enhance the capabilities of the SORT team reflects the organization's dedication to providing effective technical rescue services. By investing in training and expanding the expertise of their personnel, the department ensures that we are well-prepared to handle specialized rescue situations, ultimately enhancing the safety and well-being of the community we serve.





TRAINING

Training and Professional Development

*Building fires are the top rated type of fire in the State of Washington and is 19.8% of reported fire types. The top fire incident types are:

Building Fire: 19.8%

Cooking Fire, Confined To Container: 10.6% Brush Or Brush-and-grass Mixture Fire: 9.8%

Passenger Vehicle Fire: 8.9%

Fire, Other: 8.1%

22% of fire incident locations are one or two family dwellings.

Our personnel completed 2745 hours of fire based training and 550 hours of EMS training in 2023.

The goal of the training division is to provide quality training to our firefighters, so they are prepared for routine emergencies and catastrophic events in an all-hazards environment. To meet these ever-present challenges, we use shift-based training, online platforms, multiple agency and outside training to meet the requirements of WAC 296-305 Safety Standards for Firefighters.

In 2023, focused attention was given to developing our members on incident command training led by our Training Officer, Nathan Drake. This enhanced skill set results in a more organized emergency scene, and strengthens the safety of fireground operations.

^{*}Fire data collected from Vision 20/20 discovery data hub—U.S. Fire Incidents per Capita, strategicfire.org

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community Outreach—Wildfire Ready Neighbors Program in partnership with DNR and Thurston County Conservation was launched in 2023 to prepare community members from Home Ignition Potential from wildfire threat. Continuation of this program is essential to ensuring our valuable community members are armed with the knowledge, tools and know-how to reduce potential for loss of property and life.



PUBLIC SAFETY & PREVENTION

PUB ED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- Spring Easter Egg Hunts
- Emergency Preparedness Events
- Swede Day Events
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- Littlerock 4th of July Parade
- Operation Glowstick
- Rochester Life Church and Primary School Trunk or Treat
- Scott Lake Fishing Derby
- Wildland Ready Neighbors
- Smugglers Run

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- Christmas Food Drive
- Breakfast with Santa
- Littlerock Elementary BBQ
- Littlerock Elementary Welcome Back to School
- Rochester Primary Back to School
- Holiday Kids Tree Project

FIRE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION:

West Thurston takes a global approach to fire prevention and education using a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) planning model. When properly applied, CRR coordinates emergency operations with prevention and mitigation efforts throughout both the community and at the fire-station level. Involvement of operations personnel at the company level is critical for both gathering local risk data and performing activities necessary to implement a hybrid CRR plan. We continued our proactive efforts in fire prevention and public education programs to raise awareness and reduce fire-related incidents. We also organized many community outreach events, providing valuable fire safety information to schools, businesses, and community groups.



BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION PROGRAMS:

In addition to firefighter safety, there are a number of other reasons why departments should begin the process of developing a CRR plan:

- The presence of new and emerging hazards.
- Declining budgets among fire departments and local governments.
- Community demographics are changing rapidly and will benefit from CRR programs.
- High-risk residents tend to remain underserved.

CHIEF KEN FRASL MEMORIUM

"Family First, Safety Always, Serve Proudly"



JUNE 22, 1955 – MAY 30, 2023

Ken began his career as a volunteer with Littlerock Fire Rescue in 1996. He quickly and deservingly rose through the ranks from Lieutenant to Captain and then Deputy Chief.

Ken's passion was to pass on his knowledge, to help those achieve more and support them even beyond that.

His involvement with Recruit Academy over the past three decades has shaped the lives and careers of so many firefighters in our region.

His expectation is for us to carry his legacy and that's exactly what we will do for him.



West Thurston Regional Fire Authority

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https://www.westthurstonfire.org