

SEPTEMBER 2026

newsletter



WEST THURSTON REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

A Message From Your Chief

It is my privilege to serve as your Fire Chief and to work alongside the dedicated firefighters, EMTs, volunteers, and staff of West Thurston Fire. Every day, our members work to protect the communities we serve, including Rochester, Grand Mound, Michigan Hill, Littlerock, Gate, Bordeaux, Maytown, Scott Lake and the surrounding rural areas.

West Thurston Fire serves approximately 25,000 residents across 156 square miles. Our size and geography present unique challenges, particularly when it comes to maintaining timely response, adequate staffing, and strategically located stations.

Like many fire departments, we are also facing increasing costs, and the ongoing need to maintain and replace aging apparatus, equipment, and facilities maintenance. Fire apparatus are significant investments in our community and must be maintained and eventually replaced. Many of our fire apparatus are quickly approaching 20 years old and have had reduced reliability. At the same time, the emergencies we respond to are becoming more complex, including wildfires, hazardous materials, severe weather, and emerging technologies such as lithium-ion batteries.

These challenges require thoughtful planning and responsible decisions about how we provide fire and emergency services today while preparing for the future. Our focus remains on maintaining a highly trained workforce, reliable equipment, strong partnerships, and the ability to respond when our community needs us most.

Community preparedness is an important part of that effort. Working smoke alarms, defensible space, emergency supplies, evacuation plans, and knowing how to respond during an emergency can make a significant difference.

Most importantly, thank you for the trust you place in West Thurston Fire. We are proud to serve this community and remain committed to working with you to make West Thurston a safer, stronger, and more prepared place to live.

-Chief Nathan Drake

Upcoming Events

October 23rd Annual Food Drive Starts

October 31st Operation Glow Stick

November 29th Boot Drive- North and South

November 30th American Red Cross Blood Drive

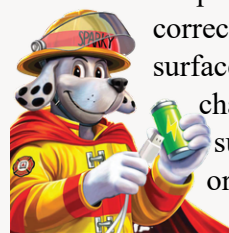
December 12th Santa Breakfast

December 20th & 21st Santa Sleigh



Fire Prevention Week is Coming

This year's Fire Prevention theme is "Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower." Many everyday devices use lithium-ion batteries, which can overheat and cause fires when damaged or improperly charged.



Help prevent battery fires by using the correct charger, charging devices on a hard surface, unplugging them when fully charged, and watching for warning signs such as excessive heat, swelling, smoke, or unusual odors. Safe charging can help keep your home and family safe!

Help us---- Help you.

West Thurston Regional Fire Association is now offering LIFESIGN, a highly reflective address sign designed to help emergency responders locate your home quickly day or night, rain or shine. Order forms are available at wtrfa.org or by calling the station.



courage. compassion. community

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.

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2026 August M&O Levy Update

In August, a Maintenance and Operations Levy proposition was presented to voters but did not receive the required 60% approval for passage. As our facilities and apparatus continue to age, the costs associated with ongoing maintenance, necessary repairs, and equipment replacement increasingly exceed available budgetary resources. The Maintenance and Operations Levy is intended to provide additional funding to address these needs and support the continued reliability and readiness of our facilities and apparatus. This November West Thurston Fire is seeking voter approval on Proposition 1 for \$0.36 per \$1,000 of assess value for a single year (2027 only) maintenance and operation levy. If approved it would cost \$15 a month on a \$500,000 of assess value for 2027 only. This vote requires a 60% voter approval. Please vote November 3rd.



Training

Our crews continue to advance their skills through regular fire and EMS training. 2026 has brought a wide variety of training opportunities and operational advancements so far.

This year, we officially rolled out our ATV program and expanded and completed our water rescue capabilities. Crews have also completed Multi-Company Operations training and Live Fire evolutions. To finish out the year, our members will participate in elevator rescue training and vehicle extrication training.

It may seem like we do a lot of training, and we do. But training is what turns critical skills into muscle memory when seconds matter most. The more we train together, the more effectively we can work together when the call comes.

Working together makes all of us stronger, more confident, and better prepared to serve our communities.

Volunteer Program

We continually accept applications for our Volunteer Program, and our next round of interviews is scheduled for November. During this recruitment period, we will also be conducting interviews for and opening our Resident Program to outside applicants.

Additional information and applications are available on our website or at any of our fire stations.

In 2024, we were fortunate to add a Volunteer Recruit and Retention Coordinator through a FEMA-funded grant. Over the past two and a half years, our volunteer program has grown, and we are excited to continue building on that momentum as we strengthen our department and serve our community.

We have also expanded our program to include a Designated Aid Unit and a Resident Program. These additions have enhanced our operational capabilities, provided additional opportunities for volunteers to grow and develop, and allowed our department to reach its full potential.



Stay informed with TC Alert!

Sign up for Thurston County's official emergency notification system to get real-time updates on severe weather, evacuations, and urgent alerts. It's fast, free, and delivered straight to your phone or email. Sign up at tcalert.org.



For more educational content, real-time event updates, and response information, be sure to follow us on Facebook or Instagram and visit our website. www.wtrfa.org

SEPTEMBER 2026



**ALL HOME OWNERS IN WEST THURSTON'S
FIRE DISTRICT ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A FREE
SMOKE ALARM. PLEASE CALL THE STATION
TO LEAVE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND
PHONE NUMBER AND A CREW MEMBER
WILL CONTACT YOU.**

● Three out of five home fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms and between the times of 11pm to 7am. ●

● Smoke spreads fast—you may have less than 2 minutes to escape a home fire. ●

● Smoke alarms should be installed:

Inside every bedroom

Outside sleeping areas

On every level of the home ●

**PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES.
INSTALL SMOKE ALARMS.
MAKE A FIRE ESCAPE PLAN.**



CONTACT US

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BREAKFAST



With Santa

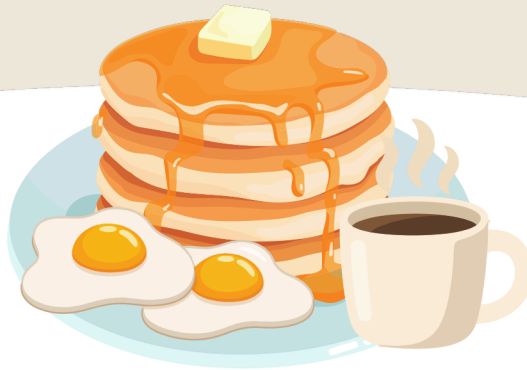


— At Littlerock Fire Station —

10828 Littlerock RD SW WA 98512

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 2026 | 9:00-11:30AM

BRING YOUR FAMILY FOR A HOLIDAY MORNING OF FUN
Delicious Food | Festive crafts | Photo with Santa



Tickets: \$6 per person

Includes breakfast and a photo with Santa.

Raffle tickets will also be available for purchase.

Be sure to visit the holiday crafts table while you're here!

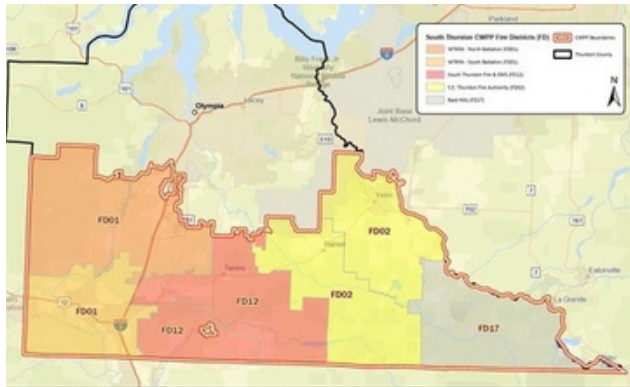
Payment Methods: Cash, Check, or Venmo only.

All proceeds support our local community.



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The South Thurston Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a living planning document that captures the collaborative process, values, and priorities of stakeholders who are working in south Thurston County to prepare for wildfire. This process involves gathering community input, assessing data, and local decision making to prioritize and implement wildfire mitigation actions that can occur within the next 5-10 years.



The current CWPP includes mitigation strategies tailored to the needs of the southern half of the county, with the possibility of future expansion into the north. The stakeholders are meeting twice a year to discuss updates and edits to the document.

The CWPP outlines several community priorities and lists potential projects that can be completed to reduce the ignition potential in and around vulnerable areas: cell/radio towers, schools, neighborhoods with limited evacuation routes, or anywhere else the community deems a priority or vulnerability.

THE CWPP PROCESS

Research & data analysis



Gather community input & determine priorities



Complete projects & update plan



REACH OUT TO YOUR LOCAL FIRE DISTRICT TO LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED.

