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HOT NEWS



A Newsletter of Camano Island Fire and Rescue

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From the Chief: *District is doing more with less*

Doing more with less seems to be the motto in these tough economic times. Currently, fire and EMS services on Camano Island remain viable and strong due to conservative budgeting and careful planning.

Paramount to the District's concerns is maintaining the quality and effectiveness of our emergency operations and, in particular, the superb EMS service that represents about 75 percent of the District's responses. The District has some of the most experienced and qualified paramedics in the tri-county area (Island, Snohomish, and Skagit).

We are working hard with our planning and budgeting efforts to keep it that way. Though we will continue to have challenges like every other public safety agency, the District's budget is stable and still supports a very high level of service with a combination of full-time, part-time, and volunteer personnel. Maintaining and/or improving this level of service will require continued financial analysis and planning. The District has already begun this process by participating in a joint study with other regional fire departments conducted by Emergency Services Consulting Incorporated (ESCI).

ESCI's report will provide us with the comparative data for both our department and the region's fire departments to help us assess the value and risks of future partnerships,

as well as our current strengths and weaknesses. This data from a neutral third party will be invaluable as we move into a strategic planning period that will shape our District for the next six years.

Your contributions to our strategic planning will be critical, especially given the fact that two of our long-standing and experienced Fire Commissioners will not be seeking re-election next year. As our District faces the election of two new members to our five-member commission this fall, we invite our community to take part, learn and share with us.

*Stay Safe,
Chief Ganz*

Clean Audit: *well-managed projects, new system credited*

Camano Island Fire and Rescue received a clean audit report for the past two years. The Board of Fire Commissioners and Administration are pleased with the result, considering the significant bond projects under review as well as the new accounting system recently implemented.

Learn more at www.camanofire.com



CIFR's Board of COMMISSIONERS

Working well together

Loren Murray and Mike Hamel have a little insight into what makes an effective governing board. Between them they have served as Commissioners for Camano Island Fire and Rescue for more than three decades, and many years more than that as firefighters.

The success of this Board of Commissioners, they agree, is that "we have all had the same goal and focus. Even when we disagreed, we could come to a consensus," said Hamel. "We each have certain ideas that (we) think are better than other ideas, but we have always been able to compromise."

Which makes 2013 a bittersweet year. They are both retiring from the Commission and their decades of service to the community. Hamel has spent the past 18 years as a Commissioner, and served before that both as a volunteer firefighter and Chief of the District. Just over 20 years ago the District was split into three separate fire districts, one of which Hamel presided over as Chief. When the

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Our Strategic Goals:

The Board of Commissioners set eight strategic goals in 2012, guiding Camano Island Fire and Rescue operations and planning.

- 1.) Strategically plan to meet the emergency service needs of the Island Community.
- 2.) Provide resources to respond to customer service requests and needs in the most effective, cost-efficient, and professional manner possible.
- 3.) Provide for a well-trained and safe combination work force.
- 4.) Provide a program to ensure that current facilities, equipment, and apparatus are properly maintained.
- 5.) Provide for timely and effective long-term budget development and expenditure controls to ensure that needed resources are properly requested and that resources are effectively utilized.
- 6.) Continue to search for methods of improving efficiencies and effectiveness within the organization.
- 7.) Provide community education, prevention, and self-help programs in life safety and emergency preparedness.
- 8.) Provide for simple and timely access to fire department officials for all members of the community.

Cooperation: Shop saves money for multiple districts

When the Board of Fire Commissioners for Camano Island Fire and Rescue made its maintenance shop available to other districts for apparatus repair, they made it clear Camano Island rigs are top priority. That's never been an issue, said Lead Emergency Vehicle Technician Jay Jacks.

The department has successful contracts with four other area agencies to repair their emergency vehicles, including engines, tenders and medic units for Silvana, Arlington Rural, Darrington and Cedardale districts.



Lead Emergency Vehicle mechanic Jay Jacks keeps districts' rigs on the road.

But CIFR's 35 pieces of apparatus, including boats and equipment at five stations, are well maintained. The shop's bottom line is in the black, with a respectable \$46,000 in annual income, and neighboring districts say it's saving them money, too.

Rick Isler with Snohomish County District 21 said his "gut feel is that it's saving us money." Isler said there are not many options for this specialized kind of maintenance. There are a few mobile mechanics certified to do the work,

while full-service shops are as far south as Monroe and as far north as Blaine.

"There aren't many fully certified emergency vehicle shops in the area," said Jacks. He noted that the training includes many levels of certification above

the automotive industry standard of ASE, for a total of 26 certifications.

Jacks has been with the District for 18 years and works

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Employee News: Retirements & promotions

Shaughnessy Advances to Rank of Captain

Ryan Shaughnessy was promoted to Captain during a recent badge pinning ceremony. A lifelong resident of Camano Island, he became a volunteer firefighter in 1996, a career firefighter in 2001, and was promoted to Lieutenant in 2007.

Ryan passed the challenging Captain's promotional assessment center, which is evaluated by fire officers from neighboring jurisdictions and includes a written test, presentation, oral resume, personnel management scenario, tactical exercise, and Chief's interview. He was promoted to Captain effective March 16 and assigned to oversee B-shift.



Capt. Ryan Shaughnessy

Bill Bothel is first retirement of CIFR career firefighter

Bill Bothel's departure from Camano Island Fire and Rescue marks the first retirement of a career firefighter from Camano. He started as a volunteer in 1995 and became a full time firefighter in 2001. A long-time island resident, Bothel was active in both of CIFR's technical rescue teams (High Angle Rope and Marine). "Bill was an integral part of our team and we are grateful for his years of service. We wish him the best in his retirement," said Chief Mike Ganz.



Bill Bothel

Denise Willmasher Retires

Lt. Denise Willmasher retired from volunteer service with Camano Island Fire and Rescue. Denise has been an inte-

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Retirements will change Commission

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districts combined into Camano Island Fire and Rescue. Murray served as a volunteer for 14 years until 1998. "It was all volunteer at that time," he said. The first career firefighters were hired in 1998, and the same year Murray became a commissioner of the District. He is also a firefighter for the City of Seattle, where he's been for 33 years.

The shift from all-volunteer to a combination of career/volunteer has presented some difficulties, as it has for many districts. Most people, said Murray, just want to "know when they have an emergency somebody is going to show up at their door!"

The two note that demographic changes in the District present the greatest challenge. "When I moved here there were only 4,000 people on the island," said Hamel. Fewer people have volunteer time. "It's a tremendous commitment," he said.

Engaging the community is going to take a special commission, they said, noting they'll need to work together as a team, and understand how the District can achieve its mission, meet its strategic goals, and keep the finances in order.

"We've done the best we could with what we have," said Hamel, who is also a business owner. It's that diversity of experience and expertise that has contributed to a successful Commission.

Employee News: *Continued*

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gral part of our operations for the last 13 years, serving as Firefighter/EMT, Lieutenant, and Captain. In addition to her normal firefighter and emergency medical services training, Denise pursued training to become a Hazardous Material Technician and worked with the Snohomish County HazMat (Hazardous Materials) team.

Simmons retires

Camano Island Fire and Rescue recently recognized the service of retired Emergency Manager Mike Simmons in April following his retirement as Emergency Manager for Camano Island and Stanwood. He served the Stanwood-Camano community for many years as Emergency Manager, putting in place innovative programs to help residents be self-sufficient and prepared for emergencies.

More than anything, it's the commitment to public service and the aim to achieve a common goal that makes this Commission so effective. Between 1996 and 2003, the District saw a 100 percent increase in calls, a reflection of a growing community. They've met that challenge, hiring firefighters, and stepping up volunteer recruitment.

"You have got to know what you are doing," said Hamel. Added Murray, "I just think that the Board is made up of a good balance that reflects the community." What will their retirement do to that? "It's going to be interesting next year no matter what happens," said Murray. "What's good about a five member board is that it has more of a mellowing effect, even if you have a couple people that are adversaries, you can still get the job done."

Shop: *Win-win for districts*

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with Gabe Greaves, who is entering his fifth year of service for CIFR. Jacks is on call 24 hours a day, responding when rigs get caught up in muddy rural driveways, or are in need of immediate repair. He said the front-line equipment gets a thorough maintenance check-up four times a year. "We keep our equipment in the best possible shape," he said. The newest rig on CIFR's lots is a 2009 engine. The oldest piece of apparatus is 20 years old.

"I believe it's an invaluable resource for Fire District 19," said Silvana's Chief, Keith Strotz. "I truly believe that this partnership is a win-win for Camano Island and District 19. They treat us fairly, and professionally. And that's all I can ask."



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