



HOT NEWS



A Newsletter of Camano Island Fire and Rescue

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Study shows CIFR to be financially stable

A detailed study completed in early September by Emergency Services Consulting Incorporated (ESCI) shows Camano Fire and Rescue as a fiscally healthy district, and recommends some cooperative efforts between CIFR and North Snohomish County service providers.

ESCI's Senior Associate and Project Manager Don Bivins followed the intensive process with a compliment for CIFR.

"I was very impressed by [Camano] fire department's understanding of the budget and the funding sources coming in. I can honestly say that I have not run across organizations which surpass Camano Island's aggressive handling of their budget," said Bivins.

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Federal decision awards CIFR Terry's Corner grant funds

Camano Island Fire and Rescue has won an appeal for a Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) grant that helped fund the seismic retrofit of Terry's Corner Fire Station. The Federal and State portion of the grant was \$392,442.

The District had submitted all documentation detailing the remodel plans to the State of Washington and FEMA before getting bids on the project. The State approved the plans, which triggered the bidding process for CIFR. After construction began, the grant was repealed by FEMA due to an interpretation regarding

Read about more grants received by CIFR... Page 3

the scope of work.

After two appeals, the District was awarded the full amount of the grant, \$392,442 in State and Federal funding.

"Federal bidding laws are very complicated. We take real pride in our record of compliance and most certainly feel validated by this final decision. It's really gratifying to have the Federal Government make such a sensible decision and note that CIFR was in full compliance all through the process," said CIFR Chief Mike Ganz.

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Comparative study shows significant financial stability

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While the ESCI report did offer as one option a regional fire authority be formed to include CIFR and North County fire services, the report showed that it would increase costs to Camano Island residents.

"Islander's taxes would rise by 14 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation, while the North Snohomish County residents' tax rate goes down by 24 cents," he said. The study noted a "moderate to low likelihood of success for financial reasons," and posed "a substantial tax increase to the taxpayers of Camano Island."

Such a partnership makes neither operational nor financial sense at this time. The study also suggested other options for increased efficiencies between fire districts throughout North Snohomish County and Camano Island. Specifically, cost savings in volunteer training and other cooperative efforts were proposed. These and all opportunities for collaboration will be considered as part of CIFR's Strategic Planning process. The District is launching a new strategic planning effort, engaging the community in a discussion about the next six years of service. The comparative data with other districts will prove to be helpful, as CIFR assesses its own structure and services.

The good news take-away from the ESCI report is that for a district the size of CIFR's, the level of service offered and the financial stability it has is significant.



Commissioners Pat Metz, Stephen Lich and Don Timmerman will continue service on the Camano Island Fire and Rescue Board of Commissioners.

Commissioners Metz, Lich and Timmerman continue service

Commissioners Pat Metz, Steve Lich and Don Timmerman are all continuing their service as elected Fire Commissioners for Camano Island Fire and Rescue. After the election is certified, two new members will begin their terms on the board starting in January 2014. Next to them will be decades of commission experience between the sitting Commissioners.

Pat Metz served as a volunteer in the fire service for 14 years as Firefighter 1, First Responder EMS, Technical Rescue (rope and marine), and Driver/Operator. He holds a bachelor of science from Iowa State and a master's from Oklahoma State in Chemical Engineering. He worked in the oil business in Alaska for 18 years

Commission passes 2014 budget

Camano Island Fire and Rescue's Board of Commissioners recently passed the 2014 budget. "The cuts we made in the last two years were difficult, but fiscally necessary. Most importantly they created a balanced and sustainable budget over the next few years" said CIFR Chief Mike Ganz. More info: www.camanofire.com

and in the nuclear industry at Hanford for six years. His work has included a number of safety and emergency planning tasks and substantial business responsibilities, including long-range planning and audit functions.

Stephen Lich has been a resident of Camano Island since 1986 and has a long career in the fire service. He started in the fire service in 1961 with Whatcom FPD No. 8 and was a member there for over 25 years. During that time, he was a volunteer firefighter, a Lieutenant in charge of Training and served two years as a commissioner. After receiving a B.A. in Business Administration from the University of Washington, he served four years in the U.S. Air Force, attaining the rank of Captain as a Vietnam Veteran. He was employed by Sea-Land Service for 26 years and retired as Manager of Tariffs for Alaska, Hawaii and Guam.

Don Timmerman graduated with a BA Degree from Western Washington University. He taught high school history, English, social studies, and coached sports for 31 years. He began a second career in Real Estate, a profession he has practiced on Camano Island and Stanwood since 1998.

New Volunteer Recruits: “Now it’s my turn..”

Jeremiah LaBounty’s story as a Camano Island Firefighter is inspiring. He was barely a toddler when he and his sister were rescued from a fire. The third degree burns shaped his future. As one of Camano Island Fire and Rescue’s newest volunteer recruits, he has fulfilled a lifelong dream.

“As a child I was burned in a house fire,” said LaBounty. “These guys have always been like Batman and Robin to me,” he said, waving a hand at the firemen in the room who recently welcomed him and the other new recruits into service. “Now it’s my turn to wear the badge.”



The recent badge pinning also provided new firefighter badges for volunteers Gabe Greaves, Tyler Engberg, and Kyle Bingham. “These folks give us their time and make a commitment to the community,” said Lt. Mark Norman. He has worked with volunteers since 2002.

Added Battalion Chief Mike Waite, “This was a real energetic group.”

In fact, several new recruits showed up at a fire as new,

trained volunteers right after completing their training. Their “firemanship” was outstanding, said Assistant Chief Levon Yengoyan.

New recruit Greaves said responding to his first fire “felt good. It felt like a whole new chapter in my life.”

At the badge pinning, Chief Mike Ganz noted the oath the firefighters took. “As members of CIFR you are now held to a different standard,” he said. “You are now representative of the organization 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Your commitment, respect and integrity reflect on every one of us.”

Grant writing brings in millions for District

\$2.34 million in the past 11 years. That’s what Assistant Chief Craig Helgeland has procured as a result of his grant writing efforts. All of those funds make a big difference in how Camano Island Fire and Rescue functions. Besides saving the district a lot of money, it has resulted in better service.

The 2006 Narrow Band grant from the Federal Government resulted in \$475,000 to purchase of a narrow band radio system. \$423,000 purchased breathing air packs, available at all the fire stations. An \$80,000 grant purchased physical training equipment to keep firefighters fit. Another \$789,000 has hired firefighters over the past five years.

A new exhaust system was installed in fire stations, with a \$77,000 grant. This piece of equipment hooks up to the diesel exhaust of the fire trucks, removing cancer-causing

particulates from the confines of the station as engines are idled. Another important grant put in a new radio tower on Whidbey Island. The topography of Camano Island left some locations where radio reception was limited. By co-writing a grant with the fire district on Whidbey island, the improvements served both districts.

The district is currently partnering with 10 other agencies for a grant to purchase a new pump training trailer.

A few grants are funded regionally, resulting in equipment such as the “jaws of life” for emergency rescues. But the biggest grants Helgeland receives have been Federal grants.

“As long as they continue to offer the funding, we will continue to write the grants,” he said.



Our Community

Residents visit fire stations during fire prevention week, Halloween Haunted House

Nearly 100 island residents visited Camano Island Fire and Rescue's fire stations during Fire Prevention Week early October and later in the month for the haunted house.

Started in 1920 with a proclamation by President Woodrow Wilson, Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.



Check out our new Website!

www.camanofire.com

for easier access to up-to-date information



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