



# Camas/Washougal Fire Department Newsletter

April 1, 2012

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CFD/WFD Command Staff:

**Nick Swinhart**

Fire Chief

**Ron Schumacher**

Division Chief/Fire Marshal

**Cliff Free**

Division Chief of EMS

**Allen Wolk**

Battalion Chief

**Larry Larimer**

Battalion Chief

**Mark Ervin**

Battalion Chief

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***Our Mission:***  
***To provide the highest quality service to our community through the protection and preservation of life and property***



## Full Consolidation of Staff Completed

A flurry of merger activity has taken place since our last newsletter. On February 21, city councils in both Washougal and Camas voted to extend the current merger between departments until at least the end of 2013, while at the same time forming a Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee. On April 2, both city councils approved the final step of the personnel consolidation to include chief officers. Camas Fire Chief Nick Swinhart was subsequently sworn in as the Fire Chief of the combined Camas/Washougal Fire Department, while Washougal Fire Chief Ron Schumacher was sworn in as the new Division Chief/Fire Marshal of the combined agencies. While not a new legal entity yet, the combined agency now consists of 51 full time personnel and over 30 volunteers operating out of four stations. These dedicated personnel protect over 80 square miles and some 60,000 citizens. It will be the job of the Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee to determine the “if, how and when” of whether to form a new legal entity between the two agencies.

No immediate major changes are anticipated in the operations of the combined departments. Washougal and Camas apparatus and fire stations will still maintain their current names and identifications. The only minor change currently being undertaken involves the redesign of both department’s uniform patch. A committee of Camas and Washougal personnel have been meeting to come up with several different designs. Once completed, these designs will be put on a website so that all department members can vote on their favorite.

This is a momentous step to solidifying the public safety needs of our cities, and our citizens. It’s a step many municipalities are taking throughout the United States. Thinking outside the box in these difficult economic times to find ways to improve our efficiency, save public funds, and in some cases, actually improve the level of service we’re able to provide.

## Camas EMS Levy Rate Approved

On April 2, the Camas City Council approved sending our EMS levy to the voters on August 7, 2012, at a rate of 46 cents/thousand. This increase would represent an additional \$33 per year to the owner of a \$300,000 home. Our old levy rate of 35 cents/thousand was the cheapest in Clark County. Even the new rate will just be “middle of the pack” compared to other regional EMS levy rates. Given that our agency was recently recognized as one of the top 5 in the country in cardiac arrest survival, we believe this new rate still represents an outstanding value for our community. More information will be coming soon.



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## Former riverside bowling alley goes up in flames

On Saturday, March 24, the former Riverside Bowling Alley was burned to the ground as part of an elaborate training exercise organized by Camas/Washougal Fire Department. The 16,000 square foot building, built in the 1940s, had fallen in to disrepair and had been vacant for years. With holes in the floors and ceilings, black mold, vermin, and damage from a previous fire, the building was unfixable and had become a community eyesore on a major thoroughfare. The owners graciously agreed to donate the building to the fire department for training purposes. Months of planning took place between the fire marshal's office, public works, and the police department, to make sure everything came off without a hitch and that safety was ensured. A significant permitting process that involved coordination of asbestos removal was necessary before the building could be burned. Special thanks are due to Deputy Fire Marshal Randy Miller for the months of hard work he put in to organizing this event. Gratitude is also due our police department, public works, and East County Fire and Rescue's rehab services. Thanks to everyone for your help!

