



# Camas-Washougal Fire Department Newsletter

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### ***Our Mission:***

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



## **Remembering Washougal's Line of Duty Death**



On October 18, 1980, Washougal Fire Department suffered their only line of duty death. Morris "Jim" Bliss had been with the department since 1957 and was just months away from a planned retirement. On that October day, a structure fire occurred at the "Tan Fastic" tanning salon at 709 E Street in Washougal. Bliss was assigned to help CCSO with traffic control during the incident when he suddenly collapsed. Washougal firefighter Rick Strickler was new to the department and the E Street fire was the first big one he had responded to. He was working to extinguish the blaze with firefighter Rod Morris. When they exited the building they noticed people trying to assist Bliss. Despite efforts, firefighters were unable to save him. Strickler recalls Jim Bliss as a "gentle soul" and an "old school" firefighter. He remembers how difficult that day was for the department. Since Strickler was new to the department, he recalled how Bliss' death caused him to question his career choice. Strickler would go on to serve the department for another 26 years, while Rod Morris still serves the citizens of Washougal and Camas. Jim Bliss left behind two sons and four grandchildren.

## **Retired Washougal Fire Chief Basil Taylor Passes**



Retired Washougal Fire Chief Basil "Booj" Taylor passed away on October 10, 2012. Chief Taylor had what is likely the unique distinction of having worked for both the Camas and Washougal Fire Departments as a paid firefighter. Taylor first worked for the Camas Fire Department for over 20 years. In 1983 he went to work for the Washougal Fire Department. When Fire Chief Darrell Alder retired in 1992, Taylor was appointed as the new fire chief. Chief Taylor would go on to serve as fire chief until his retirement in 1997. Camas Police Chief Mitch Lackey recalled a fire early in his career that formed a lasting impression of Chief Taylor. It was an apartment fire that was fully involved. Chief Taylor showed up as the only person on the fire engine and proceeded to not only take the hydrant, but to then deploy a hose line and begin attacking the fire aggressively through the window. By the time support crews arrived about 10 minutes later, Taylor had essentially put the fire out by himself. The members of the Camas-Washougal Fire Department are keeping the Taylor family in their thoughts.



On October 5, CWFD responded to assist at what several members of the department are calling the largest wildland fire the department has ever faced. Some 15 engines and 30 personnel from multiple agencies struggled through the night to contain the fire, which eventually consumed a total of 140 acres, according to state officials. The fire, which started in the Steigerwald Wildlife Refuge, did not result in injuries or damage to structures.