

Camas-Washougal Fire Department Newsletter

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Our Mission:
***To provide the highest
quality service to our com-
munity through the protec-
tion and preservation of life
and property***



Year in Review

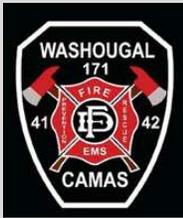
Fire Chief Nick Swinhart

As your Camas-Washougal Fire Department enters 2013, there are many challenges and opportunities awaiting us. Looking back on 2012, we reflect on the many changes that have taken place and the appreciation we have for our citizens who continue to support our cause of protecting the community. The year started out with a continuation of the merger agreement between Camas and Washougal until the end of 2013. Shortly thereafter, both city councils voted to appoint one fire chief to oversee the two agencies and the creation of a new Division Chief/Fire Marshal position. As spring approached summer, the department received great news that we had been awarded the federal SAFER staffing grant, which would provide three new firefighters to the combined agency in an effort to increase efficiency and provide even better levels of service to our community.

The summer of 2012 was one of the busier in recent memory, especially when it came to wildland fires. Significant drought and high temperatures caused many CWFD firefighters to be deployed to wildland fires throughout Eastern Washington. The conditions were so severe that Washougal experienced a nearly 150 acre wildland fire in September, an incident that many veteran firefighters said was the largest they'd ever seen in the area. Finally, as summer wrapped up, Camas was faced with renewing their vital EMS levy for the first time in 6 years. Thanks to our community support the levy passed, providing for the continued security of our EMS fund and our citizen's emergency needs for years to come.

As we were closing out 2012, two more events kept us incredibly busy. As they have for over 50 years, CWFD again provided food and gifts to needy families throughout the community at Christmas time. The department also successfully negotiated a renewal of the "Three Parties Agreement," which has provided for the contractual EMS needs of the East Clark County community for over 30 years.

I could not be more happy with the efforts of our staff as I was in 2012. Navigating the murky waters of a service merger is tough enough on its own. The fact that our hard working staff (including many who are volunteers) managed to take on so many other challenges at the same time was an inspiration and a testament of their service to the community.



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New Training Captain

After a very successful year as CWFD's first training captain, Captain Larry Saari stepped down at the end of 2012 to return to normal shift assignment. Taking his place for 2013 will be Captain Greg Payne. Captain Payne will be continuing many of the same programs that Captain Saari did and may create some new ones as well. Best of luck to Captain Payne in his new assignment!

Merger Progress

The merger between the Camas and Washougal Fire Departments has been in place since 2011 and will continue until at least the end of 2013. Elected officials from both cities have been meeting regularly to discuss ways that the merger might be made permanent. A January 29 meeting of the committee will be a critical juncture in the process. At that meeting, consultant Paul Lewis is scheduled to present his findings on the financial viability of the two departments becoming one permanently. The meeting is open to the public and will be held January 29, 5:30 pm, Camas City Hall.



CWFD Fire Chief Nick Swinhart will depart for the final year of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program on March 9.

