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■ ■ ■ North County Regional Fire Authority

Recognizing 40 years of Public Service

North County Fire/EMS is proud to announce the retirement of Lieutenant Andy Helms. Lt. Helms is retiring after 40 years in the fire service. He began as a volunteer with Arlington Heights Fire District 21 in 1981, became a full-time paramedic with Stanwood Community Ambulance in 1984, and has been a volunteer and career firefighter/officer with Stanwood Fire Department and then North County Fire/EMS since 1998.

Thank you for your dedicated service to the citizens of northern Snohomish County and Camano Island for four decades.

Congratulations, and wishing you a happy, healthy and long retirement.



Reflective Address Signs

We recommend having a blue reflective address sign at your residence to make it easier to find your home in case of emergency.

If you would like to purchase an address sign, please call 360-629-2184.

Suggested Donation of \$12.



Arlington Annexation Update



Since the voters gave us an 89.33% approval in the February election to move forward with annexing Arlington Fire Department into North County Regional Fire Authority, much work is going on to meet the transition effective date of August 1, 2021.

Arlington has shared their Large Asset list with North County, and is finalizing the “Small and Attractive” inventory (computers, cell phones and the like). They have also shared payroll data with North County so that we can begin setting up transitioning staff in North County’s system. Information Technology is working on connectivity between the City and North County. We expect no major obstacles.

Arlington’s Human Resources staff have shared certification and training documentation with North County, and we are developing on-boarding check lists for incoming Arlington staff. Both unions started negotiations with management in April to arrive at one unified labor agreement, ideally before August 1. Meanwhile, International Association of Fire Fighters must approve the merger of the unions, and that approval is pending.

On April 5, the City of Arlington named Mayor Barbara Tolbert, Councilmember Marilyn Oertle, and Councilmember Debora Nelson to serve two-year terms on the North County Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Board of Commissioners.

The annexation plan agreed to by the City and the RFA includes naming three elected representatives from Arlington to serve on the RFA board. The terms for those three new positions begin on the annexation effective date of August 1, 2021, and run through December 31, 2023.

In November 2023, six RFA board seats will be up for election, including three At Large positions, for which anyone living in the RFA service area may run, and two districted positions covering different parts of Arlington. Anyone living within a district may run for a districted seat.

Arlington will discontinue its Ambulance Utility Fee on utility bills effective August 1, 2021. Starting in 2022, City of Arlington property owners will see levies for fire and emergency medical services (EMS) on their property tax statements. Current North County RFA property owners will not see fire and EMS levy changes from annexation on their property tax statements.

Mayor Barb Tolbert said, “We are grateful for the community’s support of this transition which will protect the level and quality of emergency services. One of deciding factors for me to be on the RFA Commission is to ensure we deliver the voters what we promised.”

RFA Chief John Cermak reflected on the long partnership between North County RFA and Arlington Fire Department. He said, “We know Arlington well, and are honored to serve their community. The RFA provides more emergency resources for residents in the existing areas and in Arlington.”

Arlington Fire Chief Dave Kraski agreed, noting “We have shared several programs under contract with North County for years. Annexation will improve personnel deployment and improve training opportunities for all staff”.



Washington State Survey & Rating Bureau (WSRB) and Your Insurance Rates

An area of concern for any homeowner are the taxes and associated fees that come along with owning a home. One of these costs is home and fire insurance. This topic alone could span the length of many pages; below is a condensed version of how this fee is calculated.

The WSRB utilizes a grading system to evaluate the capabilities of fire departments around the state. The evaluation is a score-driven examination of different portions of the department. These items include, but are not limited to, the number of employees and their training level, response capability, etc. The number and type of fire stations, the distance between them, what is in them, as well as the number and type of fire apparatus, capabilities, water capacity, hose, and tools. And finally, the response area water availability, fire hydrants, tenders (fire department water trucks).

The information gathered by WSRB and the resulting numerical rating or ratings are then utilized by your insurance agency to calculate the amount to be charged. The fire department does not set or have any say in the amount charged.

It is important to understand what type of organization provides fire protection in your area. In some instances, residents that live in a more condensed area like a city with smaller square mile response areas, have a quicker reaction time from first responders compared to those residents that live in a much larger response area. NCRFA is responsible for about 110 square miles of combination response area to include the City of Stanwood, the surrounding unincorporated rural areas, and remote unincorporated areas of Stanwood. To provide the best overall services to all taxpayers it is necessary to deploy resources according to their statistical needs.

The last component is comprised of financial resources. Nationwide, fire departments must work within their allocated budgetary parameters. In the instance of our area, we are considered a "District". NCRFA receives the vast majority of its funding from property tax and timber sales. The overall monies received each year fund a large number of required functions. The following are just a sample of the budgetary items that must be funded to operate: personnel, maintenance & upkeep of apparatus, station/facility maintenance, all legally required repairs, firefighting equipment & gear, and insurance for all vehicles.

It is easy to see that the tax money that comes in, goes out equally as fast to facilitate and support effective service to the community as a whole. When considering all of this and the amount of tax money that is received and spent each year, the organization still has to be very creative and cost-conscious to do the best with what we receive. Even then, the organization still faces serious financial challenges relating to acquiring more employees, more apparatus, and more 24/7 fully operating stations to respond to the needs of the community. In the end, the organization receives a set amount of tax money. We then deploy resources to the best of our ability based on statistics such as call volume (historic and predicted), possible emergency threats, residential density, and projected growth of all of the above.

For more detailed information it is highly recommended to contact your insurance agency and ask them for a breakdown of the charges you receive and why. It is also highly encouraged to contact WSRB for a full explanation of their process, system and how that works in conjunction with your insurance agency.

Washington State Survey & Rating Bureau:

206-217-9772 - Main Line

Website link:

<https://www1.wsrb.com/contact>



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 Postal Customer

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR WILDFIRES
 WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION STEPS THAT CAN MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER DURING A WILDFIRE

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

1. HOME IGNITION ZONES
 To increase your home's chance of surviving a wildfire, choose fire-resistant building materials and limit the amount of flammable vegetation in the three home ignition zones. The zones include the **Immediate Zone** (0 to 5 feet around the house), the **Intermediate Zone** (5 to 30 feet), and the **Extended Zone** (30 to 100 feet).

2. LANDSCAPING AND MAINTENANCE
 To reduce ember ignitions and fire spread, trim branches that overhang the house, porch, and deck and prune branches of large trees up to 6 to 10 feet (depending on their height) from the ground. Remove plants containing resin, oils, and waxes. Use crushed stone or gravel instead of flammable mulches in the **Immediate Zone** (0 to 5 feet around the house). Keep your landscape in good condition.

FIRE RESISTIVE CONSTRUCTION

3. ROOFING AND VENTS
 Choose A fire-rated roofing products, such as composite shingles, metal, concrete, and clay tiles, after the best protection. Inspect shingles or roof tiles and replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration. Be in areas, but provide ventilation to prevent condensation and mold. Roof and attic vents should be screened to prevent ember entry.

4. DECKS AND PORCHES
 Never store flammable materials underneath decks or porches. Remove dead vegetation and debris from under decks and porches and between deck board joints.

5. SIDING AND WINDOWS
 Embers can collect in small rocks and crevices and ignite combustible materials; radiant heat from flames can crack windows. Use fire-resistant siding such as brick, fiber-cement, plaster, or stucco, and use double-pane tempered glass windows.

BE PREPARED

6. EMERGENCY RESPONDER ACCESS
 Ensure your home and neighborhood have legible and clearly marked street names and numbers. Drivers should be at least 12 feet wide with a vertical clearance of 15 feet for emergency vehicle access.

- Develop, discuss, and practice an emergency action plan with everyone in your home. Include details for handling pets, large animals, and livestock.
- Know two ways out of your neighborhood and have a predetermined meeting place.
- Always evacuate if you feel it's unsafe to stay—don't wait to receive an emergency notification if you feel threatened from the fire.
- Conduct an annual insurance policy checkup to adjust for local building costs, codes, and new renovations.
- Create or update a home inventory to help settle claims faster.

TALK TO YOUR LOCAL FORESTRY AGENCY OR FIRE DEPARTMENT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SPECIFIC WILDFIRE RISK WHERE YOU LIVE.

FIREWISE USA
 VISIT FIREWISE.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS
 Order a Reducing Wildfire Risks in the Home Ignition Zone checklist/poster at Firewise.org

How to Prepare Your Home for Wildfires

As the summer season quickly approaches, brush fires and wildland fires once again begin to occur in Snohomish County. North County Fire EMS crews have already responded to and extinguished several brush fires over the past two months. We expect there will be several more over the summer months and into fall. The following one-page wildland preparedness diagram will assist our homeowners who reside near a wooded area or overgrown field to protect their property against the dangers of a brush or wildland fire spreading to their home.

Mike Makela, Assistant Chief of Community Risk Reduction

Water Safety
 ©ElementarySafety.com

Never swim in a river, or any water that has a current.

©ElementarySafety.com

The four key water safety messages include:

- Always swim in a safe place.
- Always swim with an adult.
- If you fall in, float, breathe, relax.
- If someone else in trouble, call 911.