



FRANKLIN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 3

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Franklin County Fire District 3 on track to exceed call volumes from last year

Calls for 2023 through July are up 22% over this time last year; fire levy lid lift would fund additional personnel to respond to higher call volumes

(Pasco, Wash.) – Franklin County Fire District 3 reports that call volumes are projected to surpass 2022 numbers and that the month of July was the fire district’s busiest month to date with firefighters responding to 101 calls.

“Last year we responded to a record-high of 804 calls. This year we are on track to break 900 calls for the year,” Fire Chief Mike Harris said. “Wildland fires are certainly keeping us very busy, but so are calls for emergency medical service, which typically account for 50 percent of all calls. If this trend continues, we could see a 15 percent increase in total calls for 2023.”

Wildland fires for the Franklin-Benton-Walla Walla region for July was the region’s busiest yet with 230 fires, compared to 156 last year. This represents a 47 percent increase over last year.

Franklin County Fire District 3 has been responding to higher calls volumes and overlapping calls (when two or more come in at the same time) for several years. Higher call volumes and overlapping calls are leading to longer response times. More calls are also driving up costs for medical equipment, firefighter protective gear, and other capital projects that are needed.

Revenue is not keeping up with the demand for and cost to provide service. That is why the Board of Fire Commissioners passed a resolution to place a fire levy lid lift on the November 7, 2023, general election ballot.

If approved by voters, the fire levy lid lift will fund:

- One additional full-time firefighter
- Two seasonal firefighters for wildland fire season
- Firefighter gear, ambulance, and water tender replacements
- Renovations at Station 33 on Columbia River Road (Block 1) to allow for 24-hour staffing and decontamination facilities to protect firefighter health and safety
- Backup power at the main fire station to continue operations during a natural disaster

These improvements will reduce response times, improve service reliability across the district, and protect firefighters' health and safety.

The fire district is asking voters to raise the fire levy from \$1.04 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to \$1.34. The \$0.30 lid lift would cost the owner of a \$300,000 home an additional \$90 per year or \$7.50 per month.

More information about the fire levy lid lift can be found at www.fcf3.org. Fire Chief Mike Harris also welcomes your questions at media@fcfd3.org or 509-547-9306.

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Franklin County Fire District 3 (Fire District 3) serves more than 8,225 people over 205 square miles. Fire District 3 is a separate taxing district and is not associated with Franklin County. The fire district relies on full-time and volunteer emergency personnel who responded to more than 800 calls in 2022, of which 50 percent are for Emergency Medical Service (EMS). Fire District 3 firefighters and emergency medical personnel are trained to provide quality emergency services for fire suppression, wildland fires, EMS, technical rescue, hazardous material spills, auto extrication, and prevention/safety education programs for adults and children. Fire District 3 relies on volunteers to respond to calls. If you're interested in volunteering, contact Fire District 3 to learn more.