



INTEGRITY,
SERVICE,
TRUST

COMMISSIONERS

- ◆ Mike Noblet
- ◆ Jim Towers
- ◆ Frank Mestemacher (ends 2021)
- ◆ Savannah Erickson (begins 2022)

South Whidbey Fire/EMS
5579 Bayview Road
Langley, WA 98260
www.swfe.org
360-321-1533

 SWFireEMS
 @SWFEMS

FLASH POINT Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

By H.L. "Rusty" Palmer, Fire Chief

Happy Holidays!

We hope that you all have a safe and happy holiday season. We've all experienced many changes in the last two years, some personally, some professionally. Your fire department is no different.

As we approach a new year, I think it's a good time to tell you about some of the changes we've made, and some that are yet to come.

Our daily operations in administration have changed some, in that we have three staff members working from home. This is only possible because of our robust IT program. While working well at this time, there are some long term downsides which we are resolving. We have found it to be difficult to be as effective as a team as we want to be. I hope to transition our work from home staff to a hybrid schedule, after the first of the year.

Due to your strong support of our levy increase request, we hired 12 full-time firefighters on August 1st. We are already seeing the benefits of that, with reduced response times, since each crew is housed 24 hours a day at our District's centrally located Bayview Station. Our volunteers continue to be an integral part of our team. It's not unusual to see our shifts staffed by both career and volunteer personnel.

In the coming months, you will see some new faces in the leadership of the District. Commissioner Mike Noblet will continue his current term and will be joined by two new Commissioners. Commissioner Jim Towers was recently appointed to fill a vacancy created by Commissioner Larry Metz who moved from the District. Commissioner Towers was sworn in at the November 9 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting. He will fill Mr. Metz's unexpired term of two years.

Also joining the Board is Savannah Erickson, elected to the Board in November to fill Commissioner Frank Mestemacher's seat, which was open because he did not run for re-election. Commissioner Erickson will be installed at the Board's January 13, 2022 meeting.

You will also see a new Fire Chief here in the office. I will retire on April 1, 2022. The District has hired a company called Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) to accomplish the Executive Search process for your next Chief. The District hopes to make an employment offer at the end of this year, or shortly after the first of the year. The application deadline closed on November 8 with 11 individuals applying. Three to four of the most promising applicants will be forwarded to the Board, and following assessment testing, the Board will make their decision. Watch for more information about the successful candidate on our website, social media and in our next newsletter.





South Whidbey Fire/EMS
5579 Bayview Road
Langley, WA 98260
www.swfe.org | 360-321-1533
f SWFireEMS | @SWFEMS

PRESORTED STD
US POSTAGE

PAID

IQ DIRECT
98201

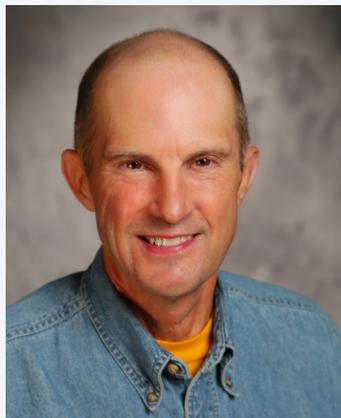
DRIVE-THRU SANTA'S SLEIGH

A tradition since 1995, this year South Whidbey Fire/EMS has again devised a safe and streamlined way for the community to enjoy Drive –Thru Santa's Sleigh at the Bayview Fire Station, 5579 Bayview Road:

Thursday, December 9, 5:30 p.m.—8 p.m.
Friday, December 10, 5:30 p.m.—8 p.m.
Saturday, December 11, 4:30 p.m.—8 p.m.

Instead of visiting communities over the course of a week, everyone is invited to drive up the hill to enjoy lights, music, decorations and greetings from Santa and friends. Visitors should remain inside their vehicles, and follow all safety guidelines, including wearing masks and social distancing. Optional donations of non-perishable food will be collected for the **Good Cheer Food Bank**.

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



By Mike Noblet,
Fire Commissioner

We insure our health, house, and cars against fires, natural disasters, and accidents. But what about ensuring that first responders can enter your house quickly if you are alone and not able to get to the door?

In 2013, my wife tripped on cording in her sewing room, fell, and fractured her leg. I was off Island that day. No one else was at home to open the door. A neighbor who happened to call right afterward, dialed 911, and an ambulance was dispatched to our house. Luckily that neighbor also reached me and was a go-between, between me and the EMTs, so they could get in our house without forced entry. Although it worked out, they reached my wife 30 minutes later than they would have otherwise, had getting inside been easy.

To ensure that it does not happen again, we invested in a KnoxBox, a high security, key safe mounted next to the front door and in clear view. South Whidbey Fire/EMS vehicles carry master keys so that whenever first responders encounter a KnoxBox, they can open it with their pass key to get to the house key. A KnoxBox saves minutes, when they count.

Over 15,000 local fire departments nationwide endorse using a KnoxBox because it saves lives, streamlines access and eliminates possible forced entry. With KnoxBox, first responders unlock a door fast, lock it when they leave, put the house key back in the KnoxBox, and lock it with the pass key. Insurance offers peace of mind. So does a KnoxBox. Only Knox sells KnoxBox.

South Whidbey Fire/EMS receives no financial benefit from them to endorse their product. Go to this South Whidbey Fire/EMS link to learn more: <https://www.swfe.org/public-information/knoxbox/>