

Eastside Fire & Rescue Chief Jeff Clark
“Community Conversation”
September 21, 2022



Chief Clark has been with us seven years and will retire in November, to be succeeded by Assistant Fire Chief Ben Lane who has been with EFR for 28 years.

Updates:

- Eastside Fire and Rescue covers fire and medical response for Fire Districts 10 and 28, Carnation, Issaquah, Sammamish, and Woodinville. EFR also has an administrative contract with Mercer Island to assess the town’s fire service (two stations) and provide interim fire chief and interim deputy fire chief services to the Island. Clark has led the Mercer Island Fire Department for the last year and a half.
The chief’s time with EFR has included seven years of fire service mergers and regionalization that removes duplication in service, including the coverage for medical response.
- Sammamish is the only city with a population of 50,000+ without a Medic Unit; closest Medic Unit to Sammamish is in Issaquah Highlands, funded by the King County EMS Levy
- Station 82 (north Sammamish, 228th Ave NE) is undergoing renovation and will have facilities for a Medic Unit
- “Mobile Integrated Health Core” underway this past year includes a social worker and a firefighter who follow up medical calls from individuals with a history of calls for assistance such as falls, mobility issues, homelessness, mental health. The social worker was formerly with Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, now with EFR and funded through EMS (emergency medical services) dollars
- Note: the police department has an acute mental health individual for behavioral calls and accompanies the officer on the calls
- Wildland concerns include wildfires such as this month’s Highway 2 Bolt Creek Fire with thousands of acres burned, and the recent I-90 Mile Post 42’s 2-alarm fire (12 acres along the highway)
- EFR is currently recruiting two staff for wildfire planning/prevention
- There is concern with a wildfire raging up steep treed hillsides, such as a potential with an I-90 Exit 18 hillside raging uphill to the north
- Protecting property
 - Clean up your property near your house before the next fire season
 - Wooded areas – you should be able to see 1,000 yards into the trees; otherwise, remove brush and blackberry bushes
- General protection - cutting fire breaks ahead of time, having a coordinated effort for fire prevention: our wet and damp Springs – “as long as we stay wet, we can be safe”
- Types of calls: 2021 was the busiest year ever, over 10,000 calls, and 4,000 in Woodinville; emergency medical services average a 5 - 10% increase in calls/year. Calls from lower social economic and aging individuals are increasing for medical responses
- There are no alarming trends outside of wildlands
- Redistributing 2-person Aid Units for medical responses versus the 3-person Engine and Aid Car response
 - About 80% of calls are medical needs
 - Sammamish Stations #82 (228th Ave NE) and #83 (Sunny Hills school) are undergoing remodeling and include an Engine and an Aid Unit
 - Sammamish Station #81 (Pine Lake) is a 2-person station with an Aid Car
- Issaquah Station #71 to be closer to Sammamish on East Lake Sammamish Parkway within three years to be located on state land; this would be a joint asset with Sammamish if worked out – awaiting the go-ahead from the state
- Staff openings – in 2022 first half year EFR had 17 candidates going through the six-month Fire Academy, 15 currently, and 2023 will have six more candidates in the fire academy

- The department is currently recruiting for a second assistant fire marshal and two wildland positions
- Technology changes – the drone program for fires and Search & Rescue, the value of the camera-in-the-sky over river rescues; this works well if people will keep their personal drones out of the way
- Fire trucks may look the same though as ever, but now have electronic readers. The future may be having an electric fleet. The current fueled style costs \$600,000-700,000; electric fire trucks are \$1.1 to 1.2 million. There is concern with an electric fleet in how long the battery will work and what its charging time is to re-boost the battery
- Improved building-firefighting process is breaking glass and sending water through the windows to cool the fire before entering; firefighters now carry cameras into building fires and can “see” through the heat/fire for recoveries
- His concern with Sammamish having many non-connecting streets as designed by pre-Sammamish King County – the caution gates for traffic, speed bumps for calming, cul de sacs, and roundabouts significant slow fire and medical responses – from a safety respect, it’s essential to have through roads in neighborhoods. The Trossachs neighborhood was to have a through road through Soaring Eagle to the golf course area
- Funding formula – call volume and assessed value is what determines what each jurisdiction pays. Sammamish Station #81 was changed to an Aid Unit response 3 years ago based on the areas relatively low call volume, and proximity to aid from neighboring stations. There is a comprehensive review by the EFR board every two years

Thank you, Chief Clark, for your service over these past seven years.

We wish you well in your retirement!

We are also glad you’re choosing to stay in our area!

Eastside Fire and Rescue is a fire department providing fire protection and emergency medical services in the eastern portion of King County. It was formed in 1999 as a joint fire department by three cities and two Fire Protection Districts. These municipalities use an Interlocal Agreement to establish how Eastside Fire & Rescue operates.

Participating cities are Carnation, Issaquah, North Bend, Preston, Sammamish, Tiger Mountain, Woodinville, and Wilderness Rim. King County Fire District 10 and King County Fire District 38 are also participating agencies. The consolidation was prompted by the municipalities' desire to provide better fire protection and emergency medical services to the general public in a cost-effective manner.

Fire District 38 consists of the unincorporated area around North Bend and Snoqualmie.

Fire District 10 includes Carnation, May Valley, Preston, and Tiger Mt.

Training and Volunteering Opportunities with Eastside Fire & Rescue

www.eastsidefire-rescue.org

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people in disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their community and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

Using the training skills through classroom settings and exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

Fire Corps is part of the Department of Homeland Security Citizen Corps Program and a companion to the CERT Program (Community Emergency Response Teams). Eastside Fire Corps is managed and operated by Eastside Fire & Rescue

Mission: Attract and engage passionate volunteers from within our service area and adjacent communities ~ By drawing on a larger pool of volunteers we can gain from their experience and best practices ~ By providing area-wide training and exercises we will be better prepared to interoperate with each other ~ Build a larger resource of volunteers and a “bench” of leaders to ensure stability and future growth

Priorities:

- Unified commitment
- Engage and serve our community
- Clearly defined roles, responsibilities and reporting structure
- Encourage personal development and skills training
- Recruitment, recognition, retention
- Provide a personally satisfying experience to every volunteer