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Committed to creating safer communities through  
prevention, preparedness, and effective emergency response.

Don't Forget To Vote! — August 6, 2024

## RIVERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY PROPOSITION NO. 1 WOULD FUND:

**STAFFING**  
Restore to 2013 staffing levels of 7 FF/EMS responders for all shifts, ensuring more reliable emergency response services during simultaneous calls.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS**  
Comprehensive health screening and access to the mental health tools in a high stress industry.

**VOLUNTEERS**  
Sustaining RFA's recruitment and retention program that has added 25 vital volunteers in just 2 years.

**FUNDING STABILITY** Addressing the challenges of increased expenses, due to inflation and equipment advancements, evident throughout the fire service industry.

**MAINTENANCE**  
Every year the cost of maintaining 8 stations, vehicles, equipment, and responders rises. Funding will ensure RFA resources are ready for any emergency, while putting money aside for expensive capital investments.

**EFFICIENCIES**  
A new Community Assistance Referral & Education Services (CARES) program to reduce the impact of high frequency emergency service users and increase responder availability. (See P. 3)

**PREVENTION**  
A more comprehensive Public Education Program dedicated to reducing fire and health risks by educating on smoke alarms, sleeping with doors closed, fall prevention, fire escape plans, and other proven prevention strategies.

**TRAINING** Quality training improves firefighter safety and reduces injuries. Well-trained responders provide high-performing service delivery to our public.

# Fire & Life Safety News

## June 2024

• PREPARE • PREVENT • SAVE • SERVE



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Don't forget to Vote August 6, 2024



## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FIRE COMMISSIONERS:

RFA Proposes Levy Lid Lift on August Ballot

**In the Primary Election** coming up on August 6, 2024, the Riverside Fire Authority will ask voters to consider Proposition 1 (shown right) authorizing a fire levy lid lift. "With the passage of this levy it would assure the men and women of the RFA will receive the tools and training needed to perform their job in a safe and professional way and carry on the excellent service our citizens are accustomed to," says Board Chair Lowrey. "It will also continue to fund the tools needed to keep our volunteer program running, which is a large part of our organization."

Through a 10-year forecasting model, staff and commissioners worked diligently to determine the funding needed, both to sustain the current level of service and allow improvements that better prepare us for the future. "As a board, we were very respectful of protecting our constituents' levy money and worked hard to keep the ask as low as our needs require," notes Commissioner Dolezal. "We all deserve up to date services and playing catch up costs much more than staying on top of things."

The reauthorization would mean an increase in 2025 of \$2.61 per month for every \$100,000 of assessed value and the temporary 6% limit factor for 2026-2030 would ensure

the ability for revenue growth to more accurately reflect the growth of our area. Funds would address a number of challenges and goals identified through the master planning process and pictured on the back page. For more detailed information on the levy lid lift visit:

[www.riversidefire.net](http://www.riversidefire.net)

or use the QR code to the left.

### PROPOSITION NO. 1

RIVERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY  
RE-AUTHORIZING FIRE PROPERTY TAX LEVY RATE  
OF \$1.35 PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUATION  
FOR A SIX-YEAR PERIOD (2025-2030)

The Board of Fire Commissioners for the Riverside Fire Authority adopted Resolution No. 2024-02, concerning a proposition to maintain, improve and adequately fund Authority operations. Proposition 1 will restore the Authority's regular fire tax levy to the previous voter-approved rate of \$1.35 per \$1,000 of assessed value for collection in 2025, and permit annual revenue increases of up to 6% for each of the succeeding five years (but never to exceed the \$1.50 per \$1,000 rate limit). The dollar amount of the levy in 2030 shall serve as the base for subsequent levy limitations as provided by Chapter 84.55 RCW. Shall Proposition 1 be approved?



Commissioners from left to right: Buddy Lowrey, Rick Mack, Joe Dolezal, Mike Rossow and Mike Tomasheck

## FIREFIGHTER FEATURE: MEET THE RFA STAFF WHO SERVE THIS COMMUNITY



### Kate McPheters

became a volunteer firefighter with RFA in October of 2022 and obtained her EMR (Emergency Medical Responder) certificate in 2023.

"I was the kid in the neighborhood that would try to parachute off the roof with a big garbage bag. So, you could say I enjoy a bit of an adrenaline rush," she jokes. Kate's grandfather was a firefighter with DNR and the inspiration behind her interest in volunteering. Originally from Alaska, she moved to Centralia in 2020 with her fiancé Austin and son Daniel. Kate also joined staff at Riverside Fire as a part-time Administrative Assistant in February. "This is the best group of people I've ever worked with. I've learned so much and have had the privilege of seeing true heroes in action."

### Rick LeBoeuf

started his career with the Centralia Fire Department in May of 1995 after 4 years as a paramedic at the Tumwater Fire Department. His interest in the industry started early in life, obtaining his EMT certification when he was just a highschooler in Craigmont, ID where his uncle was Fire Chief. LeBoeuf was hired as the first paramedic for the City of Centralia and tasked with starting the Advanced Life Support Program. He has served as the EMS Coordinator since and, as the Union President, was actively involved in the formation of the RFA. "That's something I'm really proud of," says LeBoeuf. "The best thing we did was bring the City of Centralia and LCFD 12 together to best serve the north end of Lewis County."



## NEW CARES PROGRAM FOCUSES ON EMS PREVENTION

Your RFA is working to establish a Community Assistance Referrals and Education Service, or CARES, program to serve the citizens of Centralia and surrounding rural communities. Riverside Fire provides Emergency Medical Services through both basic and advanced prehospital medical care. Traditionally, the fire service has been instrumental in the prevention of fires and other hazards, but has not been tasked with the prevention of medical emergencies. A recent change to state law allows public fire protection agencies to engage in medical care outside of a 911 emergency call for service. After performing a community health needs and services assessment, we have identified focus areas where we can reduce use of our emergency services by providing alternative resources, education and assistance. These focus areas include:

- reducing frequent repeat 911 utilization from chronic medical conditions
- referring behavioral health emergencies to local resources other than the emergency room
- reducing the impact of opioid use
- reducing injury/death from falls through fall risk assessments

Decreasing the frequency of emergency 911 responses to these focus areas will improve community health overall and help assure our responders available for emergencies of all kinds.

In March of this year the RFA applied for a grant through the Co-Response Outreach Alliance who offered a funding opportunity through the University of Washington. As the only new co-response/CARES program in Washington, we received a grant award of \$350,000 that will fund the implementation of the CARES program. We look forward to serving our community in this new role through preventative service.



Lt. Jason Shepherd is a licensed PA-C in addition to a certified Paramedic & will be heading up RFA's CARES program

## Could Your Home Survive a Wildfire?



Ch. Kevin Anderson  
Fire Marshal

As seasonal conditions become drier, is your home prepared for the threat from wildfire? In 2023, the RFA responded to 42 natural vegetation fires. It's not too late to act for this fire season.

Wildfire preparedness

includes understanding how weather conditions impact fire threat levels. When wind is forecasted and fuels are already dry, a source of ignition can cause devastating impacts. While fires can be naturally caused, the most common source of ignition comes from a person- whether it be burning during a burn restriction, inadequately extinguishing a recreational fire, improperly discarding smoking materials or using powered equipment. The action of a neighbor or someone that you don't even know can pose a threat to your home if dry fuels are allowed to accumulate on your property. Taking these steps can help to greatly improve the safety of your home.

**Zone 1: 0-5 feet**

Includes the structure, deck/patio/balcony or other outside entertaining space as well as fencing that is attached to the home and the immediate landscaping from the home to 5 feet away.

- Remove all combustible materials like wood mulches, dead or dry vegetation, and leaves and pine needles from roofs and gutters.
- Trim tree branches that hang over the roof, eaves and chimney.

**Zone 2: 5-30 feet**

Includes the area from 5 feet to 30 feet away from the home, including the property and all outbuildings.

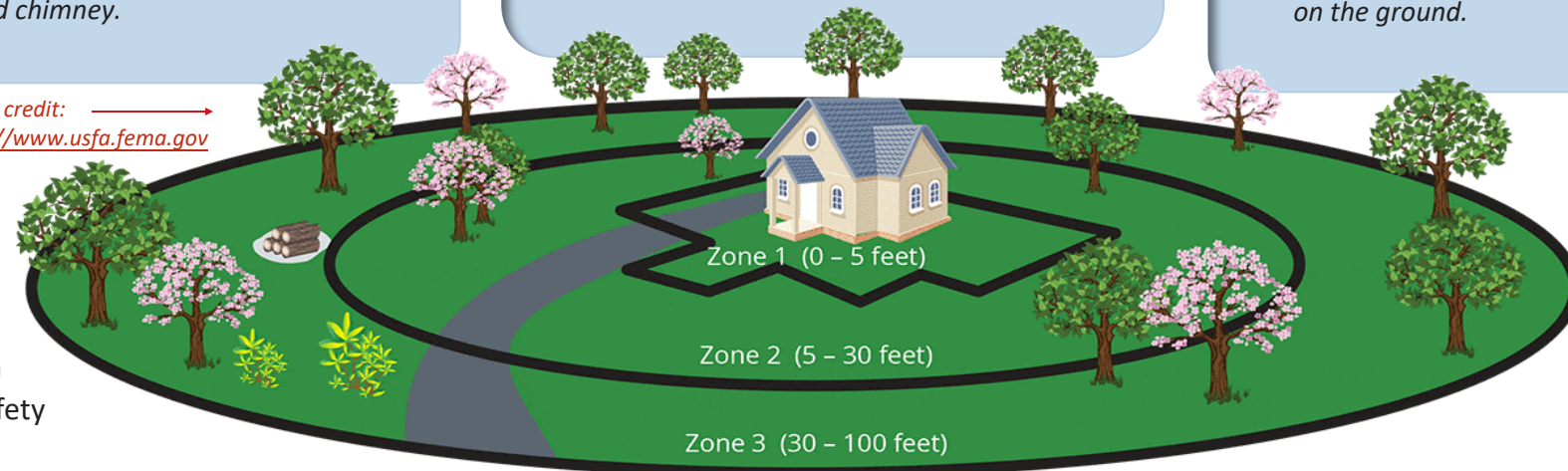
- Keep this area lean, clean and green by pruning and removing dead and dying branches from well-spaced bushes and trees.
- Make sure to keep this area well maintained and watered during a hot, dry summer.
- Stack wood piles on bare or gravel areas or in an enclosed shed at least 30 feet from the home.

**Zone 3: 30-100 feet**

This is the area farthest from the home, extending from Zone 2 to your property's boundary from 30 to 100 feet.

- Reduce fuels by thinning and spacing vegetation vertically and limbing up trees horizontally to interrupt fire's path and keep flames small and on the ground.

Image credit: <https://www.usfa.fema.gov>



# RFA INCIDENT DATA

WE RESPONDED TO

## 4,879

INCIDENTS IN 2023

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## 3,680

INCIDENTS WERE TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

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## 1,921

INCIDENTS WHERE THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE OCCURRING AT THE SAME TIME

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## 39%

PERCENTAGE OF INCIDENTS WHERE MORE THAN ONE IS OCCURRING AT A TIME

## 497

TIMES THERE WERE 3+ INCIDENTS OCCURRING AT THE SAME TIME

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## 69

BUILDING FIRE RESPONSES

## 42

GRASS & BRUSH FIRE RESPONSES