

Lacey Fire District 3

Annual Report

2020



Message from Fire Chief Steve Brooks



I feel fairly confident in saying that, just like I'm sure was the case for the vast majority of you, 2020 did NOT go according to our initial plans. That said, I must quickly add that I could not be more proud and thankful for the countless ways in which every member of the Lacey Fire District 3 (LFD3) team has risen to the unique challenges of the past year. We were able to continually adjust our focus and practices in order to meet the needs of our community as we have battled the COVID-19 pandemic together.

A significant majority of our responses have long been in the area of emergency medical services, but the complexity and evolving information related to the pandemic required our responders to continually monitor and adjust to the best available practices. Life both inside and outside the fire stations looked very different through the entirety of the year. Our members worked diligently to comply with the increased needs for personal protective equipment, decontamination practices, and even dramatic modifications of their personal time and activities outside the workplace in order to make certain they were healthy and able to safely serve our community. While everyone on our team played a role in rising to the occasion, I would be remiss if I did not specifically call out our Medical Services Officer, Captain Karen Weiss, and all of our chief officers for leading the way and setting the tone for how our personnel would maintain operations during these difficult months. We must also thank all of our citizens who have continually expressed support and appreciation for our team. This strong sense of community and collaboration has been one very bright spot in the midst of some of our darkest days, and we are so honored to serve each and every one of you!

Even though the pandemic required the majority of our focus and certainly overshadowed all other activities, I am happy to report that we were still able to accomplish some of our other goals for the year. Most notably, the new Station 34 on Steilacoom Rd. reached substantial completion and was opened in mid-December. While this was about three months behind our original schedule, the fact that it was completed within 2020 is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our general contractor, Jones & Roberts Company, the entire design team from Rice Fergus Miller Architects and our own project management team led by Logistics Director Matt Chambers. The new station maintains the advantages of being strategically located to effectively serve the fastest growing areas of our District, while also providing capacity for growth and the addition of a new medical response unit in the future. The new facility has many added safety and health features to help protect our responders and make sure they are effectively equipped to respond to all types of emergencies. Unfortunately, the restrictions associated with the pandemic prevented us from hosting the planned grand opening for the community where we could personally take you on a tour, but we promise to make up for that with a celebration and open house as soon as conditions permit doing so safely!



Chief's Message, Continued

Several of you have inquired about the plans for the “old” station. I am happy to report that it literally was only empty for about two days before its evolution began in to a regional education and training facility and multi-use venue for other public safety partners. By the end of the year the building had already hosted over 50 families (in a socially distant and safe manner!) for the Lacey Firefighters Charity annual holiday event. Additionally, through a partnership between LFD3, Providence Health, and both Medic One and Public Health from Thurston County, we were able to host an initial drive-thru vaccination clinic for eligible healthcare workers. We are excited to see the many other ways in which this repurposed facility will be able to continue to serve our community in the years ahead.

LFD3 is nothing without our dedicated team members, so I wanted to wrap up by highlighting how we continue to grow. We brought on several new firefighter EMTs and Paramedics and also expanded our administrative team by adding an additional IT specialist in 2020. A somewhat bittersweet transition occurred mid-year when our longest serving member, Lieutenant Mike Heikes, retired after well over 40 years of public service. The good news for us is that Mike was not quite ready to end his legacy of public service, so he is continuing in a volunteer role to assist with our fire investigation program and pass on his wealth of knowledge to our next generation of leaders.



There is much more I wish I had the space to share, but I will wrap up by simply offering another “thank you” to both our members and citizens for all you have done to get through a very difficult 2020. As we turn the page and look ahead to 2021, I am very hopeful that much brighter days are ahead but am also confident that we will be much more grateful and prepared for them based on our recent experiences. I cannot wait for the opportunity to reengage with you personally and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or feedback.

The LFD3 Way ...

Mission: Service with Excellence

Vision: To be trusted professionals in our community and experts in our field who specialize in emergency preparedness, prevention, and response

Values: Competence - To effectively handle whatever challenge we face
 Character - To preserve our integrity and the public's trust
 Courage - To do what's right, no matter what
 Compassion - For everyone we encounter without prejudice
 Camaraderie - To respect and support every member of our team

Guiding Principles:

- Teamwork is what sustains us. Nothing important is accomplished and no one succeeds in isolation.
- Leadership is a commitment and mindset, not a title or position.
 - ◊ Our leaders are accessible and accountable, guiding others in a trustworthy and disciplined manner with clearly defined expectations that are predictably consistent and fair
- Decisions we make must stand up under inevitable scrutiny; could you confidently read about it in the newspaper?
 - ◊ If there is a policy, follow it.
 - ◊ If there's not a policy but a known past or best practice exists, rely on it.
 - ◊ If there's no policy or practice to follow and you have discretionary time, then seek the guidance of your peers or leaders; THEN take a lead role in developing the needed policy or guide.
 - ◊ If there's no policy, practice, or discretionary time, use your training and experience to make the best decision you can; THEN share your experience so the next person will have a guide to follow.
- Life-long learning is what prepares us for our future. Every day MUST BE a Learning Day and should be conducted as if lives depend on its success, because they do.
- Mistakes are inevitable. Without them, we would never learn the wrong way to do something. Just don't waste the experience by hiding or repeating a mistake.

Lacey Fire District Overview

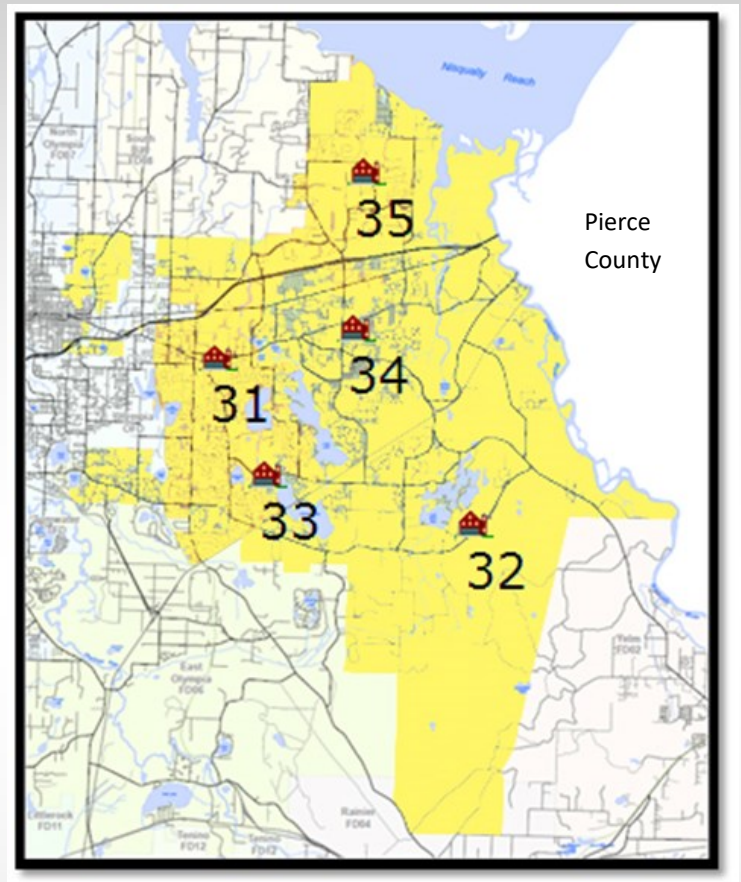
Lacey Fire District 3 began operations in 1948. The current boundaries include the Nisqually River to the East, the City of Olympia to the West, Fire District 8 to the North and Fire District 6 and Joint Base Lewis McCord to the South. Within the District boundaries are the City of Lacey and the Nisqually Indian Reservation. These boundaries encompass about 70 square miles and approximately 100,000 people.

Lacey Fire District protects an assessed valuation of more than \$13.6 billion, which includes a mix of residential and commercial occupancies as well as agricultural and undeveloped wildland. The District holds a Class 3 rating from the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau throughout most of the District area.

The District area is shown at the right, with our five stations; Station 32 is the resident volunteer station.

Services are provided throughout the District from four 24-hour staffed stations strategically located throughout the community. A fifth station, with volunteer residents, provides additional coverage in the south east area of the District.

Each staffed station has an Engine company of three career firefighters, with volunteer firefighters providing a fourth crewmember on an engine. In addition, Station 33 (Mullen Road) has a staffed Aid Unit, and Station 34 (Steilacoom Rd) has a staffed Medic Unit. Station 31, the headquarters station on Franz St SE, has a staffed Engine, Ladder Truck and Medic Unit, as well as the Battalion Chief.



Overview - Leadership & Staffing

Board of Fire Commissioners



Gene Dobry



Frank Kirkbride



Sylvia Roberts



Liberty Hetzler



Robert Motzer
(January -September)



Melissa Gamble
(December)

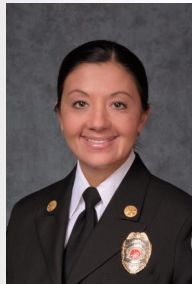
Executive Staff



Steve Brooks
Fire Chief



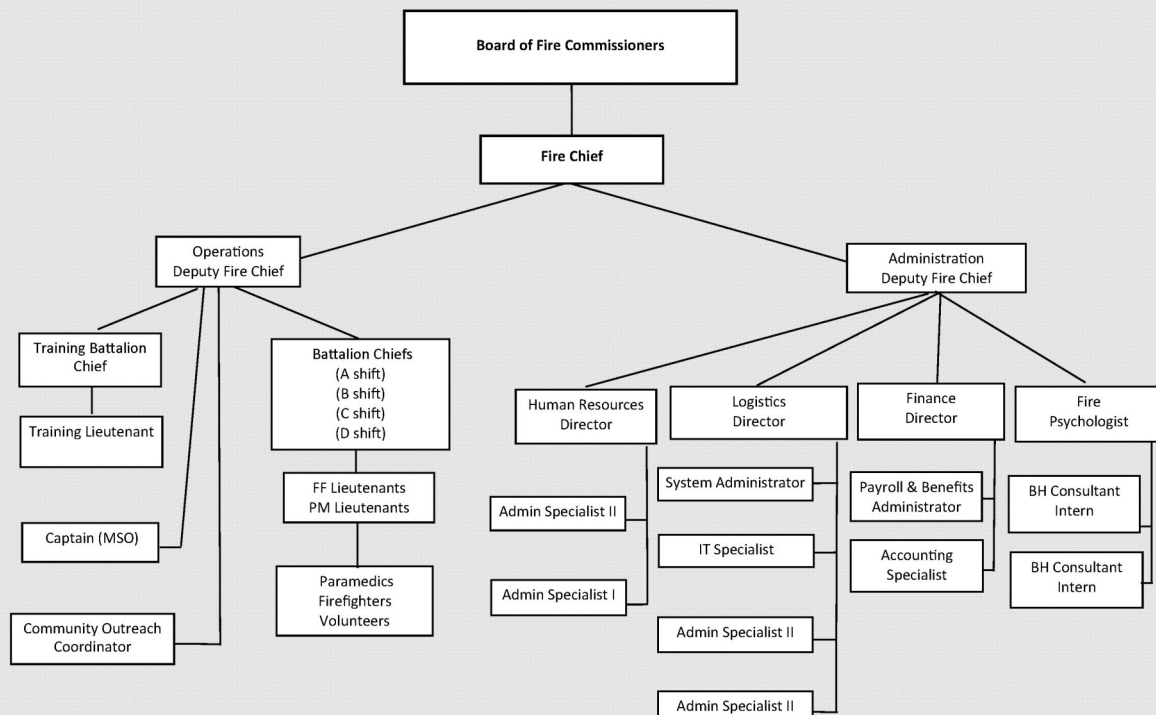
Kathy Dickson
Deputy Fire Chief
Administration



Jennifer Schmidt
Deputy Fire Chief
Operations

The District is governed by an elected five-member Board of Fire Commissioners. The District operates as a combination agency, with both career employees and volunteer members. In 2020, the District had 128 career members, and approximately 25 volunteers filling various roles in operations, administration and support functions, to fulfill the LFD3 mission.

Lacey Fire District 3 • Organizational Chart



Overview—Budget & Finance

The 2020 General Fund Operating budget for the District was \$27.7 million which included an operating reserve of approximately two months, based on state auditor's "best financial practices".

The District's Fire, Rescue and Paramedic services are funded primarily through property taxes and contracts. Property taxes represented 65% of the District's annual revenue. Paramedic services in Thurston County are coordinated through a central administrative office, Thurston County Medic One (TCMO), which contracts with Lacey Fire District 3 to operate three of the seven Medic Units in the County. The District's agreement with TCMO covers approximately 80% of the costs of providing those services.

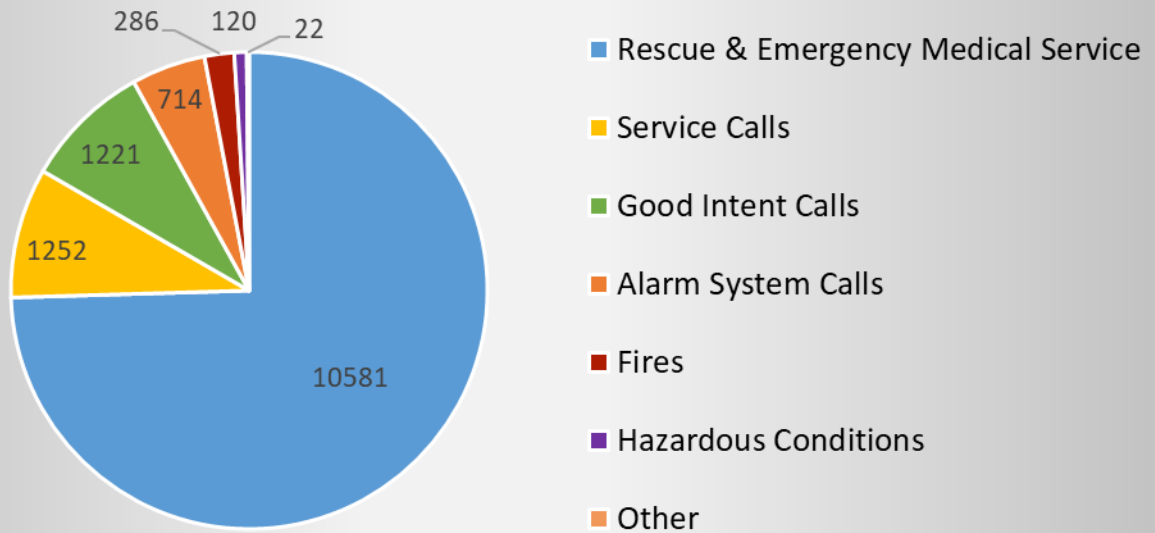


Additional ways the District funds its services is through intergovernmental agreements. The District currently has agreements for vehicle maintenance, training, water rescue and special operations and rescue (SORT). Crews mobilized outside of the District for wildland fire services are funded primarily through the WA State Department of Natural Resources or WA State Patrol. The District also contracts with Tribal, County, and other State agencies to cover the costs of providing services to tax exempt properties. In 2020, due to Covid-19, we were able to seek disaster relief funds from FEMA for some of the many costs associated with the pandemic.



Response Overview

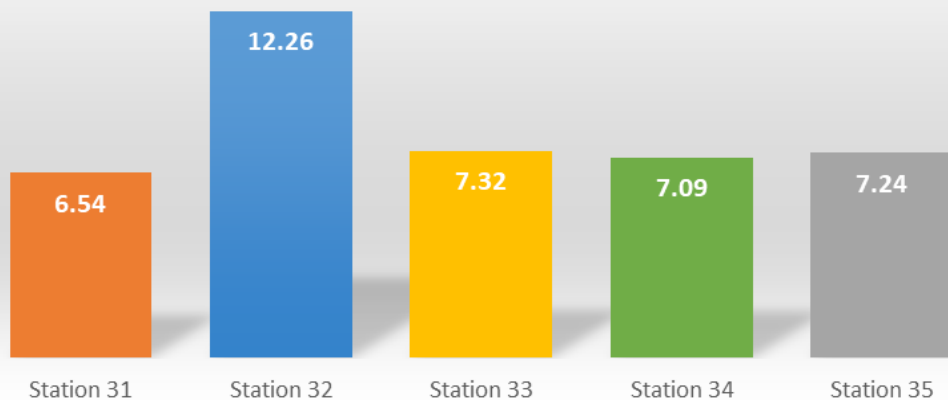
2020 Response Types



In 2020 the District responded to 14,196 calls for assistance.

Emergency medical services (EMS) and rescue responses are still the highest frequency request in our community and comprise nearly 75% of our call volume. Motor vehicle accidents accounted for 792 of rescue and EMS responses.

2020 Average Response Times by Station
(notated in minutes & seconds)



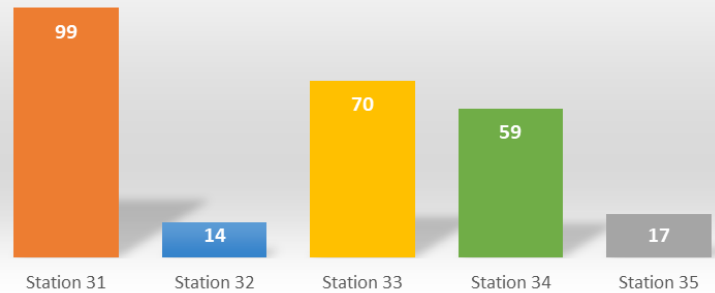
Community Fire Report

In 2020, the District responded to 286 fire calls.

Fire responses include house fires or other structure fires, chimney fires, vehicle fires, wildland fires and other types of fires such as dumpster fires or stove top fires that are kept confined to the stove top.

Structure fires accounted for 79 of the total number fire calls. Brush and wildland fires were the 2nd most prevalent type of incident at 66, followed by 34 passenger vehicle fires.

2020 Fire Responses by Station Area



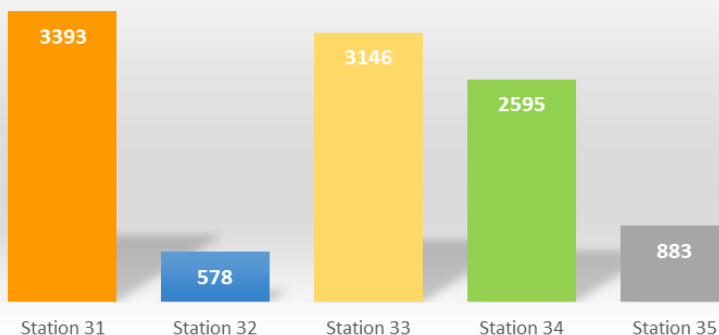
NOTE – numbers only reflect fires in District area, not total fire responses, which include out of District mutual aid.

Emergency Medical Responses

Calls for emergency medical services (EMS) comprise about 75% of the District's response volume. In 2020, Lacey Fire District responded to 10,595 EMS calls.

The presentation below does not include EMS responses outside the District station areas, such as a Lacey Fire operated Medic Unit response to Yelm.

2020 EMS Responses by Station Area



NOTE – numbers only reflect EMS calls within the District area, not total EMS responses, which include out of District response.



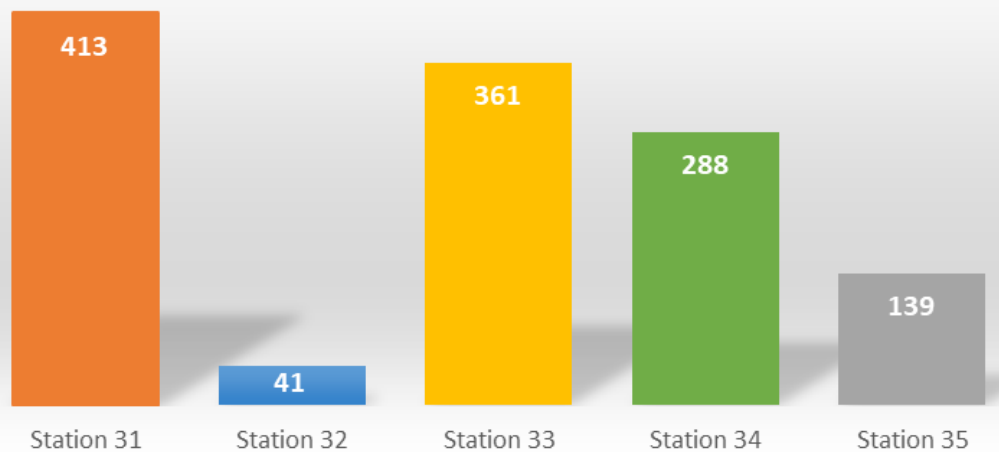
The District provides both advanced life support (ALS) and basic life support (BLS) services. Typically, the distribution of BLS to ALS services is approximately 60% BLS and 40% ALS.

Service Calls

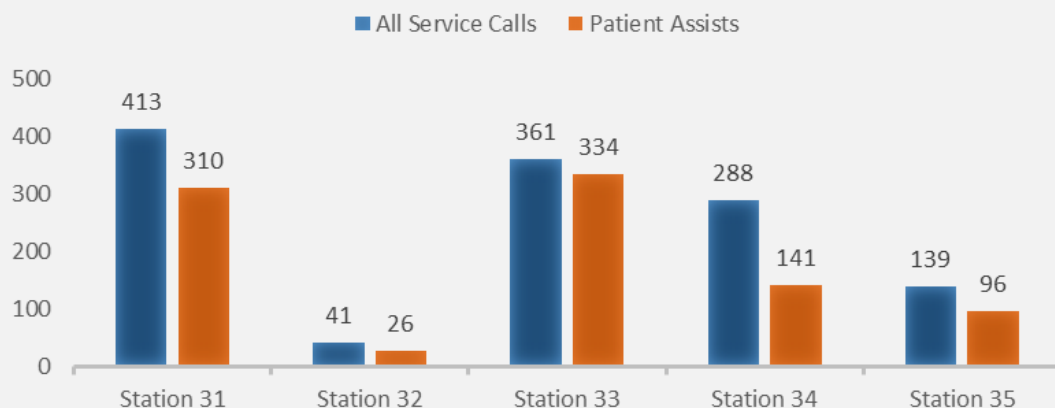
Service calls account for the 2nd most prevalent request for help. They comprise a wide range of types of assistance needed by citizens, including patient assists, water leaks or other water related problems, unauthorized burning, and assistance to law enforcement or other governmental agencies.

In 2020, the District responded to 1242 service calls. Across the District patient assists accounted for approximately 73% of all service calls. Station 33 crews handled the highest ratio of patient assists at 92% of all service calls in the Station 33 response area.

2020 Service Call Responses by Station Area



Patient Assists as a Component of Service Calls 2020



Training

Much like the rest of the world, 2020 started off with great promise for the Lacey Fire District 3 Training Division. Plans were in place for another great year of sharpening skills and training new members. As we shifted away from “business as usual” the role of training shifted towards supporting efforts to understand and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. All but our most critical compliance and medical training plans were placed on hold. We did however utilize the opportunity to get creative and leverage the opportunity to explore new platforms by shifting several deliveries remote. In spite of the pandemic we were able to accomplish several key goals:

- Training and implementation of an entirely new Self Contained Breathing Apparatus platform.
- Orientation and training on new “Heavy Lift and Stabilization” equipment.
- Open water rescue scenario training at Hicks Lake
- Annual maritime training with USCG and TCSO Dive Team
- Starting an LFD3 podcast that focuses on history, training and education.
- Curriculum development for key programs to be rolled out in 2021:
 - ◆ New career member training academy
 - ◆ Ladder Truck initial training for current members



In the end however, the majority of 2020 was mainly about supporting our response internally and externally to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Working with LFD3 staff we developed and implemented internal practices:
 - ◆ Decontamination and sanitization
 - ◆ Workplace practices and hygiene
 - ◆ “Engineering” controls
- Training on and implementing governing body direction from Thurston County Medic One, Department of Health and Labor and Industries.
- Training staff worked through numerous iterations of contact tracing, quarantine and COVID-19 testing for LFD3 members.



Facilities & Equipment Improvements

The largest project of 2020 was the construction and completion of **New Station 34**. A few of the standout features of the new firehouse include apparatus' quick access to the main arterial of Steilacoom Road, individual dorm rooms for crews, indoor training capabilities, expanded physical training space, and an apparatus exhaust capture system in the bay. The project culminated with a virtual grand opening ceremony in December.



Station footprint October 2019



Board of Fire Commissioners tour construction site May 2020



Project completed December 2020

The LFD3 Logistics team kicked into high gear and tackled the improbable task of keeping our facilities and personnel stocked with ample supply of PPE and sanitizing products to ensure our responders always had necessary COVID-19 protection. In addition, the team was immersed in other equipment and facility improvement projects in 2020.

Station alerting systems received an overhaul, with new hardware and software at Stations 33 and 35 that replaced aging technology. All hardwiring, programming, and testing of the new system was completed internally by the IT

team. The alerting system upgrade for Station 31 is scheduled to occur in 2021.

Sizing, fit testing, and distribution of a complete second set of bunker gear and new breathing apparatus (SCBA) for all first responders was another sizable accomplishment managed by the Logistics team.

Staff navigated through several months of building improvements at Station 31/Headquarters as the administrative and public portion of the building received much needed painting and new flooring.



Faces of LFD3

Continuing population growth and increasing call volume served as a catalyst for several personnel changes and additions in 2020.



Two members received promotions: one to a Lieutenant/Company Officer position, and the second to the rank of Captain/Medical Services Officer. The District also had the opportunity to welcome four new career positions in Operations consisting of two new firefighter/EMTs and two firefighter/paramedics.

To keep pace with technology demands, an additional administrative IT position was created and filled. LFD3 welcomed six new volunteers; five in operations and one in administration.



Additionally, after the mid-term resignation a Commissioner, the Board of Fire Commissioners interviewed candidates and appointed citizen Melissa Gamble to fill the vacated position, effective December 2020.



Community

Covid-19 restrictions eliminated most community events and limited usual outreach opportunities. LFD3 rose to the challenge in continuing the mission of community outreach by finding alternative methods to engage, assist and educate citizens.



- ◆ Friday Night Lights & Sirens, an early summer parade of emergency vehicles, including the participation of LFD3 service partners, aimed to spread some cheer through neighborhoods.

- ◆ Virtual Fire Prevention Month for Kindergarten through 2nd grade was offered to all elementary schools. Grade specific videos were created and produced by LFD3 members providing continued commitment to enforcing fire safety messages even though in-person teaching opportunities were not possible.
- ◆ Citizens' ongoing needs for child car seat inspections were answered by staff creatively by utilizing video or social distancing tactics.
- ◆ Lacey Community Connect was introduced to residents and businesses as a tool to help first responders better serve citizens during an emergency. The online platform allows for residents and businesses to provide important details about the home or business property that helps save precious time in an emergency.



- ◆ December's annual Santamobile rounds throughout District neighborhoods continued.

2020 in Photos





Lacey Fire District 3

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