

# LACEY

## 3

# FIRE DISTRICT



## STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2027

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## A WORD FROM CHIEF BROOKS

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I feel confident in saying that the LFD3 team is not alone when we acknowledge that the past five years did not always go “according to plan”! As I look back on this period in our history it is marked by some of the most significant “highs” and “lows” of my thirty-plus years in fire and emergency medical services. I am extremely proud and thankful for both the members of the LFD3 team and the wonderful community we are privileged to serve. As we have jointly navigated the tremendous challenges brought about by the pandemic, the desire to fulfill our “*Service with Excellence*” Mission while also striving to preserve and protect our workforce has required the collective efforts of our entire team and the reliance on strong relationships with many key partners. While it is easy to allow the impacts of the pandemic to define our recent past, I appreciate the opportunity this new Strategic Plan provides to both highlight the many other accomplishments our team achieved and to set the course for our future. LFD3 personnel continue their tireless efforts to take care of our citizens and one another, even in the midst of a 17% increase in the annual requests for our services in 2021 alone. Both the voter approved funding for our Capital Facilities and Equipment Plan in 2017 and the strong support to restore our Regular Operating Levy in 2020 have allowed the Fire District to weather this period of sustained and significant growth over the past five years. The investments made to expand our workforce and improve our infrastructure have positioned us well to now take a fresh look at the needs and opportunities we can anticipate over the next five years. I want to say thank you to the many LFD3 members, citizens, and partners who have contributed to the efforts to develop this new Strategic Plan. It was important to me and our Board of Fire Commissioners to make certain the development process was both as collaborative and comprehensive as possible. Thank you for taking the time to become more familiar with our agency. I hope you will find the information contained here to be informative and reflective of our goals to provide transparency and accountability to those we serve. I welcome any feedback or questions you may have about this plan and I truly appreciate the opportunity to serve this wonderful team and community!



*Steve Brooks*



# ***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 alone 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 it doesn't match best practices then say something.

If there's not a policy but a known past or best practice exists, rely on it.

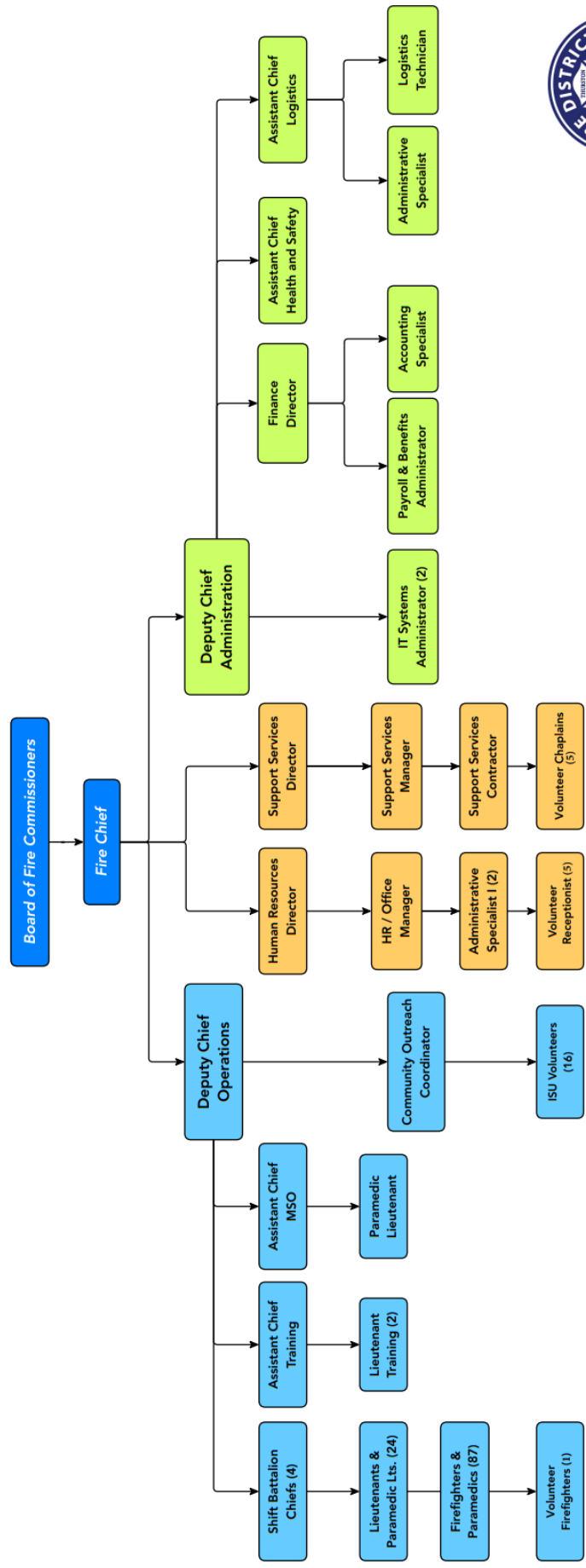
If there's no policy or practice to follow and you have discretionary time, then seek the guidance of your peers or leaders; THEN take a lead role in developing the needed policy or guide.

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.

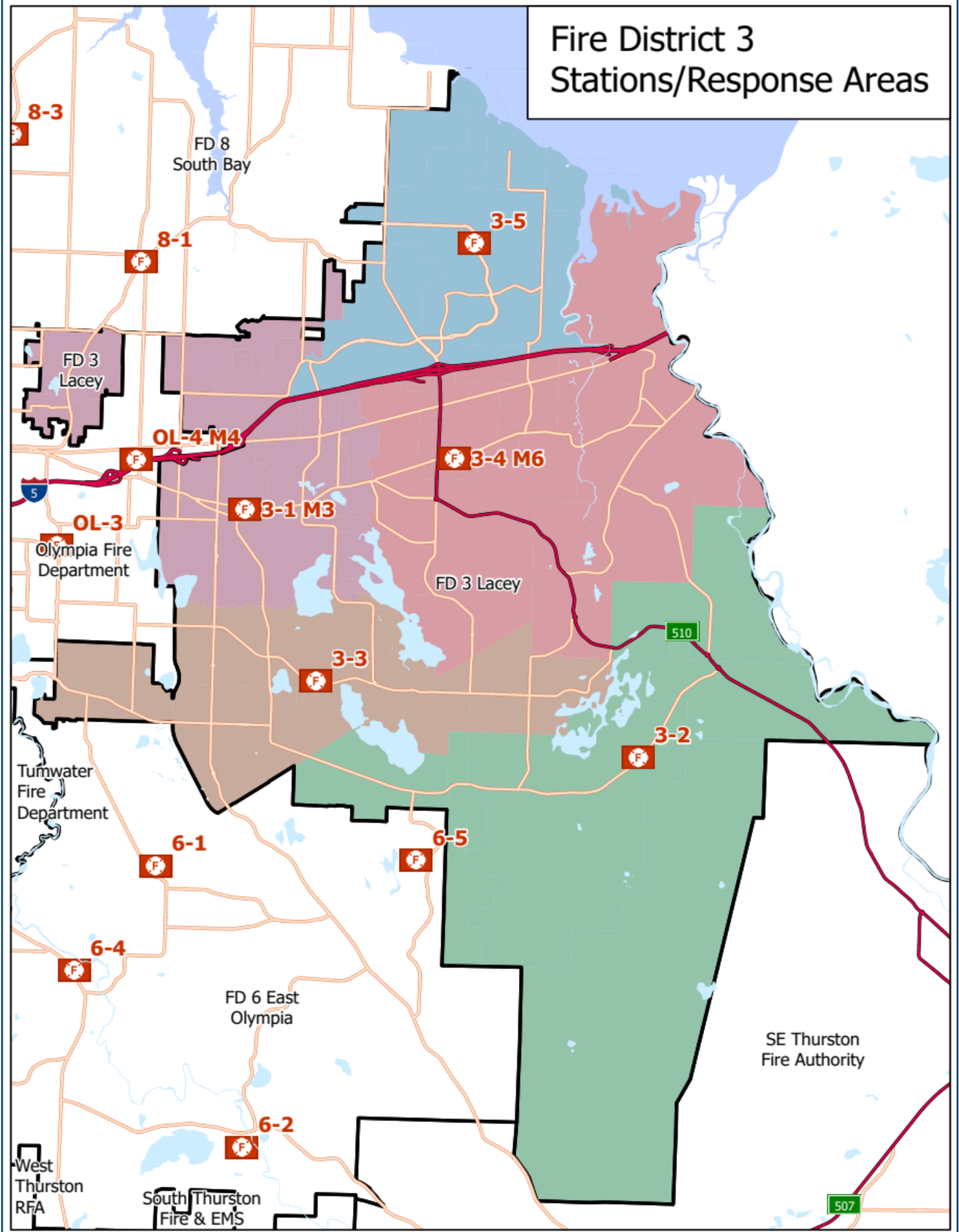
**Mistakes** are inevitable. Without them, we would never learn the wrong way to do something. Just don't waste the experience by hiding or repeating a mistake.





2022 Organizational Chart

## Fire District 3 Stations/Response Areas



# FACTS, FIGURES, AND FORECASTS

**1. Lacey is one of the fastest growing cities in the state.**

- In the last 20 years Lacey Fire District 3 has grown from 73,000 to 105,650 residents.
- By 2025 the population is expected to grow by at least 4.5%, bringing the population to a minimum of 110,420.

**2. Historically our calls for service have increased by an average of 8% to 9% per year. A majority of the increase being medical calls.**

- If we continue to increase at an average of 9%, here's how the numbers breakdown:
  - 2022 – 18,080 calls for service
  - 2023 – 19,707 calls for service
  - 2024 – 21,480 calls for service
  - 2025 – 23,413 calls for service
  - 2026 – 25,520 calls for service
  - 2027 – 27,816 calls for service
- In 2001 LFD3 had 7,191 calls for service and employed 56 full-time employees.
- In 2022 LFD3 is on track to have 18,000 calls for service and have 137 full-time employees.

**3. Key drivers of increased demand for service:**

- Currently seniors are the fastest growing population in Lacey. Calls to residents over 65 make up nearly half of all EMS transports in the United States, and is estimated to be more than half by 2030.
  - This means the following areas will most likely see an increase:
    - ◆ Licensed long-term care facilities
    - ◆ Geriatric calls in the community
    - ◆ The need to be creative and proactive in our care
- There is a nation-wide behavioral health crisis.
  - This means there will be an increased demand for our services:
    - ◆ For mental health training and other response resources
    - ◆ For additional capacity for in-patient and out-patient resources
  - This means there will be a continued need to think creatively about our training and response
- Rising homeless population in Thurston County.
  - 995 homeless individuals in Thurston County (2020)
  - 54% of our homeless individuals are considered unsheltered, up from 49% in 2019

**4. There is a national recruitment crisis that is certainly affecting public service agencies, which increases the need to think creatively about how we recruit and train new members at LFD3.**

**5. All of the above have a significant impact on the future of LFD3, requiring us to take a strategic look at our capacity in the following areas: Workforce, Facilities and Equipment, Training and Funding**

**6. The two primary funding sources for LFD3 are the Regular Property Tax Levy, which is capped at \$1.50/\$1,000 of assessed property values (AV), and our contractual agreement with Thurston Medic One for provision of paramedic services. The regular levy was last restored by the voters in 2020 and is anticipated to be approximately \$1.16/\$1,000 of AV in 2023.**



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## A WORD ABOUT THE PROCESS

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In January 2022 the Support Services Team led four groups through a three hour process designed to receive input that resulted in a five year strategic plan. Each session included a Battalion Chief, firefighters (new and old), paramedics, administration, volunteers, and a Commissioner. A strategic planning process seeks to answer three basic questions: Where are we? Where are we going? How do we get there? In order to accomplish this we took each group through a two-part process which included a time of systematic reflection; where have we been and where we are, as well as a time of gathering strategic input concerning where we are headed in the future.

**Systematic reflection** was a three part process. **First**, we reviewed the LFD3 Way (Mission, Vision, Values, and Guiding Principles). We asked two questions: What do you find meaningful? What would you want to add or change? The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with few suggestions for change. **Second**, we reviewed the 2017 Strategic Plan. This plan had three strategic priorities: Citizens and Services, Team Members and Partners, Facilities and Equipment. We asked two questions: Did we accomplish what we said we wanted to accomplish? Did our accomplishments get us closer to our goals? We found we had met a lot of our goals and the ones we didn't accomplish were mainly due to the strains and stresses of the pandemic. **Third**, we conducted a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. The information from this exercise translated into the strategic input.

The **strategic input** section also consisted of three parts. The **first part** began with a question: If we were to build on our strengths, strengthen our weaknesses, take advantage of untapped opportunities and mitigate the threats over the next 3 to 5 years, what priorities would we need to focus on? The **second part** was an exercise to determine which priorities were most important. We asked: which priorities affect all the rest? Which are mission critical? Then the **third part** took the top three priorities and asked the question: What would we need to *start*, *stop*, or *continue* in order to accomplish these priorities?

The final step prior to producing the strategic planning document was to meet with and gain input from our **partner organizations** as well as **community members**.

The result of this process is the following five year Strategic Plan. It outlines our strategic priorities and how we will seek to accomplish them in the coming years. Going forward over the next five years, this document will be our guide to develop a yearly set of priorities and more detailed operational plans.

Thank you to all the participants in this process. Your input has been extremely important in setting the priorities for the next five years at Lacey Fire District 3.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY: *COMMUNITY SERVICE & OUTREACH*

LFD3 will continually seek out ways to grow in our ability to effectively serve the Lacey community together with our partner organizations.

## GOAL

**INCIDENT RESPONSE:** *To collaboratively and creatively refine our services in order to best meet the needs of our citizens and visitors to the District.*

### OBJECTIVE #1

- Collaborate with our partner agencies to forecast the changing healthcare needs in our community and discover innovative ways to meet those needs.
- Collaborate with our partner agencies to evaluate and update the best response practices for every anticipated incident.
- Strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones that will serve the growing needs of our community.
- Regularly evaluate mutual aid agreements with partner agencies to maximize resources available for fire and Emergency Medical Responses.
- Add additional response and case-management capacity to meet the growing demand for low-acuity medical responses.
- Evaluate and improve our processes and systems for data collections and record management.

### STRATEGIES

**PUBLIC EDUCATION:** *Seek out opportunities to educate our community concerning public safety, use of 911, resources for seniors, disaster preparedness, fire prevention and personal health and wellness.*

### OBJECTIVE #2

- Look for new and creative ways to provide education to the public.
- Leverage community events/activities in order to be an integral member of our community and to attract future members to the fire service.
- Update and expand our website and social media presence in order to more strategically educate and inform our community.
- Consider adding elements to our education that include the cost of providing services and the value of community preparedness.
- Maintain and expand on our positive relationships with local media outlets.

### STRATEGIES

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY: *STAFFING, RETENTION AND GROWTH*

Recruit, train, equip and retain emergency responders and administrative staff, as well as, maintain, update and expand our facilities and equipment in order to keep pace with the projected growth of the District.

## GOAL

**RECRUITING AND ONBOARDING:** *Develop a hiring process that can maintain pace with the forecasted growth of the District.*

## OBJECTIVE #1

- Focus on marketing and visibility of LFD3.
  - ☐ Advertisement and Outreach
  - ☐ Social Media Presence
- Create a streamlined and digitized application process.
- Evaluate our testing and assessment processes.
- Eliminate certification requirements and focus on hiring the right people and train them internally.
- Maintain and expand our relationship with Joint Base Lewis-McChord.
- Recruit and hire to fulfill the anticipated needs of the District over the next 5 years.
- Continue to strengthen and expand on our success in hosting the South Sound Recruit Academy.

## STRATEGIES

**FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:** *Proactively anticipate future facilities and equipment needs based on the projected growth of the District.*

## OBJECTIVE #2

- Maintain a prioritized plan for facility and equipment updates and expansion.
- Evaluate and refresh the Capital Facilities and Equipment Plan based on anticipated needs over the next five years.
- Explore alternative and creative funding sources for the District to help keep up with growth.

## STRATEGIES



# STAFFING, RETENTION AND GROWTH CONTINUED

**MEMBER CARE:** *Ensure the emotional, mental and physical needs of our members are met.*

## OBJECTIVE #3

- Establish a process of two-way communication for members out on long-term leave.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive program that will strengthen individual and organizational resilience at LFD3.
  - ☐ Incorporate mental, emotional and physical wellness into regular training activities for operations and administration.
  - ☐ Develop video trainings that focus on practical tools for resilience.
  - ☐ Evaluate and develop a process to create a culturally competent team of clinicians that are equipped to meet the counseling needs of our members.
- Train and equip LFD3 members with the skills to defuse after critical incidents.
- Continue to strengthen and expand the Peer Support Team.
  - ☐ Work closely with the Thurston County Peer Support Consortium.

## STRATEGIES





# STRATEGIC PRIORITY: *LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING*

Train leaders at every level of the organization to effectively lead and mentor the next generation of emergency responders and administrative staff.

## GOAL

**TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MEMBERS:** *Create a work environment in which every team member receives the necessary training, education and support to be successful in their role.*

## OBJECTIVE #1

- Update and develop clear standardized roles and responsibilities for all agency positions.
- Develop standardized training for operation and administration staff at LFD3.
- Develop a clear performance review and improvement process for every position.
- Promote continuing education on a personal and professional level throughout the organization.

## STRATEGIES

**OFFICER DEVELOPMENT:** *Develop a standardized ongoing officer training program that embodies and reinforces the LFD3 Way.*

## OBJECTIVE #2

- Develop leadership benchmarks based on future needs.
- Train all current and aspiring leaders in the following:
  - ☐ Leadership Principles
  - ☐ Coaching and Mentoring Skills
  - ☐ Communication
  - ☐ Corrective Action
  - ☐ Team Development
  - ☐ Critical Incident Stress Defusing

## STRATEGIES

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING CONTINUED

**SUCCESSION PLANNING:** *Proactively anticipate and plan for the future leadership needs throughout the agency based on potential growth and attrition.*

## OBJECTIVE #3

- Evaluate and update qualifications related to promotional processes.
- Integrate succession planning into the hiring strategies of the District.
- Determine future leadership needs throughout the agency to meet the ever changing and growing demands of the fire service.

## STRATEGIES



## A WORD OF THANKS

At Lacey Fire District 3 our mission is *Service With Excellence*. The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to focus our efforts on those priorities that are mission critical, in order to meet the growing demand for service throughout the district. The formulation of this document and more importantly the implementation of it, would not be possible without the input of LFD3 members, partners and our citizens.

With this in mind, we want to take this opportunity to thank our partner organizations across Thurston County. There are more than 20 agencies that we collaborate with on a regular basis in order to effectively accomplish our mission to Serve the citizens of Lacey and Thurston County *With Excellence*. We appreciate your input into this strategic planning process and look forward to working together to meet the needs of our citizens.

We would also like to thank our citizens for their continued support. We appreciate the trust that



Deputy Chief of Administration, Michael Cerovski (left); Fire Chief, Steve Brooks (middle); Deputy Chief of Operations, Jennifer Schmidt (right)



LACEY FIRE DISTRICT 3 FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Sylvia Roberts, Frank Kirkbride, Liberty Hetzler, Melissa Gamble, Rick Kelling

you have placed in us and we will continue to work hard at maintaining that trust. As you may know, Lacey and the surrounding urban growth area is one of the fastest growing places in the state of Washington, which means the needs of our community are also increasing. We are committed to growing in our ability to continue to meet those needs, while at the same time maintaining a healthy workforce.

*LFD3 FAMILY*