



Graham Fire & Rescue Opens Final Station

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GRAHAM, WA – Fire Chief Ryan Baskett announced today the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the increase of daily firefighter and firefighter/paramedic staffing to 13. The additional members will allow the Department to have emergency crews in all five of their 24-hour-capable stations, including Station 6 located in the Thrift response area.

Graham Fire & Rescue developed an aggressive hiring plan and began improving their service delivery on January 1st, 2015, by increasing the minimum daily staffing from 9 to 11 people. Since January, the Department has hired an additional 11 members, 7 of which have received the required training and are assigned to 24-hour shifts. Two more will be certified and ready for shift work around the first of July with the last two being assigned to shift in mid to late August. The Department plans to hire six additional firefighter/paramedics on January 1st, 2016 to complete their hiring plans.

The improved service was made possible when the Graham Fire & Rescue citizens passed a \$2.75 million annual Maintenance and Operations levy in November of last year. The levy was originally projected to cost the citizens an additional \$.60 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, but was only collected at a rate of \$.54 per \$1,000 the first year. Department officials predict the tax rate will decrease even more next year for the citizens.

On April 19th, 2015, the Thrift Station was staffed with a firefighter/paramedic and firefighter/EMT. A citizen was working in his yard as the Daffodil Classic Bicycle Rally was taking place on the street in front of his house. He noticed a group of riders standing around a rider on the ground not doing well. As this citizen approached, he noticed the rider was not breathing and was turning blue. Without hesitation, and remembering the training he had received one month earlier, he immediately began performing CPR.

The first medic unit arrived within minutes from Station 6 (Thrift) with the two EMS providers on it. They set up to breathe for the patient and applied the heart defibrillator. With early citizen CPR and the rapid Advanced Life Support response from the station, the patient's heart started beating again. This patient is alive and well today because of these events and the quick emergency response from Graham Fire & Rescue. This is just one example of the importance of improving the emergency service in your area.

Chief Baskett stated, "With each new hire we have steadily been improving service to meet our commitment to the citizens. Station 6 (Thrift) was being staffed when possible, but knowing the difference it makes and how critical it is to protecting those citizens, it was just time to make it full time."

More Fire Department information is available at www.grahamfire.org or can be obtained by calling the Headquarters fire station at 253-847-8811.