



Community Dispatch

NEWS FROM NORTH MASON REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY | WINTER 2018

Station 21 Part of Next Capital Facilities Stage

The NMRFA is facing changing needs in the North Mason community. To catch up and keep pace with development and population growth, the fire authority must address its aging capital facilities.

The NMRFA's recent capital facilities study created an inventory of buildings to help identify funding priorities. With the Tahuya Fire Station project well under way (see page 3 for an update on that project), the next focus is the NMRFA's headquarters, Station 21 on the Old Belfair Highway.

When the headquarters was built in 1974 — nearly 45 years ago — the fire district only served a 36-square-mile area around Belfair. At the time, the all-volunteer district answered about 200 calls a year without any paid staff or overnight support. One of the main activities originally housed at the fire station was a community Bingo game night.

Today, the fire authority has grown to cover 132 square miles as the result of two successful consolidations with neighboring fire districts, and 24/7 paid volunteer personnel respond to more than 2,400 call a year. On any given night, Station 21 houses as many as 10 emergency responders. During the day, the building accommodates a contingent of at least a dozen administrative staff and firefighters who serve the entire region. Bingo at the fire station has been replaced by nonstop firefighter training, disaster-response preparation and emergency-management activities.

In large-scale emergency events, Stations 21 serves as the base of emergency operations for the North Mason region. During the historic flooding event in December 2007, that included more than 250 emergency-response personnel. The headquarters will play the same role in future major emergencies.

The fire authority is reshaping its role to best serve the community in the future. This includes establishing a community-based

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Construction of Station 21, 1974

Call Volume Over Time

1974: ~200

2018: 2,400+



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NMRFA Spearheads Quick Response Program for Opioid Crisis

For the past year, the NMRFA has been leading a community-wide effort to fight the opioid addiction crisis in Mason County. Called the Mason County Opioid Stakeholder Group, a task force representing various local agencies has been meeting monthly for the past year to discuss a joint approach.

With the support from the task force, the NMRFA recently was successful in obtaining a \$498,180 Department of Justice grant for a pilot program. The two-year grant will pay for launching and operating a Quick Response Team as a partnership between the NMRFA, Peninsula Community Health Services and other local agencies.

The goal of the QRT is to make sure that community members who are struggling with an opioid addiction can quickly access the resources they need. Too often, people fall through the cracks because the road to treatment and recovery is long, difficult, confusing and daunting.

Adding to the challenge is the fact that opioid addiction is seldom a one-dimensional problem. Affected individuals often struggle with other issues, such as other substance abuse and mental health.

"We have to address all those issues to have a successful recovery," says Fire Chief Beau Bakken. "If we only address opioids, we will fail."

Bakken says it's clear there's an opioid crisis in Mason County, and there are resources to help solve that crisis.

"But there's a disconnect between the folks who are suffering and need help, and the healthcare professionals and partners who can help with recovery services," he says.

Facing a National Challenge at Home


Opioid addiction is a national public-health crisis. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that opioid misuse carries a \$78.5 billion economic burden for our country.

Nationwide, 1 in 4 people who are prescribed opioids struggle with addiction — and Washington is among the states with highest opioid prescription rates. On average, about 115 Americans die of opioid-related overdoses every day. In 2015, the number of overdoses — 718 — claimed more deaths in Washington than car crashes.



In Mason County, numbers reflect the nationwide and state trends, and the issue has been well documented. Here are some eye-opening local facts:

- Between 2009 and 2014, Mason County had a 60 percent

Opioid Epidemic by the Numbers

U.S.  **11.5 million**
people abused prescription
opioids in 2016

2.1 million of them did so for the first time

WA **718**  **551** 
(2015) overdose deaths VS. auto collision deaths

Overdoses are the No. 1 injury-related death both in Washington and nationwide

 **Mason Co.**
Washington St.
Opioid-related overdose deaths per 100,000
people, 2012-2016 (rounded up)

Sources: U.S. Health and Human Services, WA Dept. of Health, WSDOT

increase in inpatient hospital stays related to opiate use, the fourth-highest increase in the country.

- Between 2012 and 2016, Mason County had the second-highest rate of opioid-related overdose deaths in Washington, 14.7 per 100,000 people (compared to 9.6 statewide).

- Between 2002 and 2013, Mason County had a 295 percent increase in opioid-related crime-lab cases, with an annual rate nearly three times higher than the state average.

Fighting Back as a Community

Individual organizations in the county have been working on the addiction issue. The Mason County Opioid Stakeholder

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Neighbor Recognized for Community Commitment

The NMRFA Board of Commissioners recently recognized local resident Lorraine Boyce for her safety awareness and commitment to her community. She has been working on making sure all her neighbors have reflective address signs posted at their property.

These signs, provided at no cost by the fire authority, ensure that the emergency responders will be able to locate a residence quickly in an

emergency. Boyce has requested them from the NMRFA and then picks them up and distributes them.

In the photo: Lorraine Boyce, showing her Certificate of Appreciation for dedicated service to the community, with Chief Beau Bakken at the Aug. 14 Board of Commissioners meeting.





The Mason County Opioid Stakeholder Group typically has several dozen people in attendance.

Group is the first endeavor of its kind to bring them all together. Law enforcement, schools, first responders, healthcare providers — these are all among the partners working to address the problem as a coordinated effort.

Bakken notes that as of mid-October, Mason County hasn't had any overdose-related deaths, but the number of reported opioid overdoses has gone up.

"If we want to improve the overall health of our community, we need to take a different approach than we have in the past," he says.

QRT a New Approach

The Quick Response Team is part of this new approach. The program will focus on providing a full-time team that will deploy around the county via a mobile clinic. The three-person team will respond to an opioid overdose or related medical incident, as well as to nonemergency requests for assistance when someone is struggling with opioid abuse disorder.

Mason Transit Authority, one of the stakeholder group partners, recently donated a surplus mid-duty bus for the mobile clinic, selling it to the NMRFA for \$1. The 2009 StarTrans cutaway will provide about 90 square feet of space for a patient exam room and other space for the QRT.

Kathy Geist, Mason Transit Authority transit planner, says transportation is one of the biggest obstacles for individuals who need immediate help with their addiction.

"When someone is ready to get treatment, we have to be able to make it happen right then," she says. "Timing is critical between the period these individuals decide to change their lives, and the period they change their minds. If too much time goes by, once they're out of the hospital, we can't find them to get them the help they need."

Purchasing a vehicle like the StarTrans at an auction could cost as much as \$80,000. Instead, the grant funds will be spent on operating the program.

"This issue affects every aspect of our society," Geist says. "It affects the quality of life of our citizens and our economy — it affects everyone and everything we do in our community."

Leveraging Partnerships

The Quick Response Team will be comprised of an EMT, a patient care manager and a peer navigator. The QRT will tie into the 911 call center to receive notifications. Additionally, other community partners will make referrals for individuals who need care coordination.

"The quick response system is designed to be the link between those who need special services related to an opioid event, and the providers who offer those services," Bakken says.

The Department of Justice Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program funded 44 projects in 23 states in the category that's focused on partnerships between first responders and treatment providers responding as a team. The NMRFA was one of only two recipients in Washington state — and the only rural fire authority — in this category.

"There's only a handful of these types of programs in the United States and they are all in medium to large urban environments," Bakken says. "This is the only one in a rural area."

As part of a required research component, the NMRFA will partner with Washington State University to document program outcomes.

"The problem is very complicated and we are tackling it as a community together through the stakeholder group," Bakken says. "We've torn down the silos and we are working on it together as a community."

Tahuya Station Project Moves Past Challenges

Following a year of hurdles, the Tahuya Fire Station project is back on track. The fire authority installed a facility septic system in October, and it will be awarding a contract for a new fire station in December.

The recent construction boom, while good for the economy, created challenges for this project. Following a variety of work, including a geotech report, structural survey, land survey and architectural drawings, building-cost escalation resulted in a cost-prohibitive estimate for the original plans.

"The fire authority has to follow a competitive-bid process for a public works project," explains Assistant Fire Chief Scott Cooper. "Because the economy was good and public works construction was booming, the costs have escalated (nearly double the original estimate) beyond an affordable amount for building a new station on the old store parcel."

To ensure the project meets the capital budget, the NMRFA revised the scope and separated it into two buildings over two phases.

Phase 1 will construct a new building that will house fire engines, ambulances and equipment on the old store parcel. A second phase will remodel the existing station to modernize the facility. The remodeled building will include offices, a public area with a community room, a living area with a kitchen and gym for first responders, as well as other space.

A lack of bids for the design of the septic system added another hurdle, delaying the project by several months. With the septic construction now complete, the fire authority will be awarding a construction contract for phase 1 this in December. Upon completion of phase 1, the NMRFA anticipates phase 2 to be finished in mid to late 2019.

Conceptual drawing of the Tahuya Fire Station: new building on the right and remodeled building on the left



Burn Regulations Explained

This past summer, the NMRFA launched a campaign to educate citizens about safe burning, using a new brochure and a video PSA on Facebook.

Beware there are three levels of regulated burning:



Red = burn ban — no outdoor fires of any kind are allowed

Yellow = restrictions — look for messages related to land-clearing, residential or recreational fires

Green = burning allowed — as long as requirements are met for land clearing, residential or recreational fires



Check county outdoor burning regulations for UGA restrictions. Permit required for land-clearing fires.



Land-clearing or residential burning may not be allowed. Recreational fires may be allowed in properly designed fire pit. All outdoor burning prohibited. Check with fire authority.



All outdoor burning prohibited. Permits for land-clearing fires not allowed. Outdoor charcoal briquettes and nonswitched valve propane also not allowed.

How to Design Your Fire Pit

For more information on Mason County outdoor burning regulations, visit www.co.mason.wa.us/community-services/fire-marshall/ or call 360-427-6970.



FEMA Grant Funds Breathing Apparatus

The NMRFA recently received a nearly \$400,000 FEMA grant to help replace the firefighters' self-contained breathing apparatus. Thanks to the grant, the fire authority, in partnership with Grapeview Fire, will purchase 40 new packs.

"Firefighters need the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) to breathe during a building fire," says Capt. Ryan Cleveland. "It's one of the biggest safety components that enables us to go inside house fires, but they have a huge cost."

A 2005 grant helped pay for the current 23 packs. They have a shelf life of 15 years and will go out of service in 2020. Replacement costs about \$10,000 per pack. With the cost-sharing grant, the NMRFA will pay \$27,000 for all 40 packs.

The NMRFA applied for the grant jointly with Mason County Fire District 3, which also received approval for its 18 requested SCBAs.

Cleveland notes that the application process for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is highly competitive. FEMA allocates a limited amount of AFG funds every year for a variety of firefighting needs around the country.

"We are grateful for this grant because it's a huge cost-savings to the community," he says.

The NMRFA is evaluating SCBAs from several vendors. Each shift is reviewing criteria such as safety standards, performance on an obstacle course, ergonomics and communications. The fire authority expects to complete the evaluation, get bids and receive the apparatus by early 2019.

NMRFA SERVICES

- Free smoke detectors
- Car seat inspections
- First aid/CPR workshops
- Address signs
- Vials of Life
- Free bike helmets
- Blood pressure checks
- Burn regulations
- Home safety inspections
- Loaner life vests
- Auto-dialer units ...and more

Call 360-275-6711 ext. 2

Keeping Bedroom Doors Closed at Night Could Save Your Life

By Capt. Jeromy Hicks

One of the best ways to protect yourself and your family in a fire is to keep the bedroom door closed at night while sleeping. For years, we have seen how a closed door prevents the spread of fire from one area to another during the initial stages of fire growth.

It's simple, really. Keeping a door closed prevents normal heat and cold from transferring from one area of the house to another — and this concept works during fire conditions.

Nationally, 50 percent of fatal fires in residential structures occur between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., most of them in bedrooms. Isolating a bedroom from other areas provides time to escape the deadly toxic gasses and heat.

Studies have shown that fires originating outside of the bedroom and traveling down the hallways can produce temperatures in excess of 1,000 degrees. Closing the door can decrease temperature inside the bedroom to just above 100 degrees, more manageable during a fire.

In addition, the door helps to decrease the amount of smoke and toxic gases. Smoke inhalation and burns account for almost 90 percent of the fatal causes in residential fires. Keeping the bedroom door closed decreases the risk for both thermal and inhalation injuries.

Most homes now are built and outfitted with synthetic materials that tend to burn at a faster and hotter rate and produce more toxic gasses and smoke than their predecessors. This creates a challenge when occupants need to get out safely.

Flame spread rates have almost tripled since “legacy” or 1950s-style homes, which used natural fibers, real wood and other nonsynthetic materials. This, coupled with more electronics that require power — and generally more stuff in the home — has created more material available to burn.

Many people have long left the door open to their child's room. There are many reasons — comfort for the child, ease of hearing in case of an issue, or simple habit. None of these reasons outweigh the risk of fire. Start now. We, as adults, need to set the example.

If your child likes to have the door open, leave it cracked until the child falls asleep and then completely close the door prior to going to bed. Baby monitors are recommended for those parents who would like to keep audio contact with their children.

There are countless stories, backed by field and laboratory tests of how this simple step has saved lives. The conclusion is uncontested: **Keep your door shut.**

Nothing takes the place of a fully operational and properly installed smoke detector. We recommend placing one in each sleeping room and every common area such as the living room

UL **CLOSE** BEFORE YOU DOZE

1,000° vs **100°**
During a fire, a closed door can mean the difference between 1,000 degrees and 100 degrees.

CARBON MONOXIDE 10,000PPM vs **CARBON MONOXIDE 1,000PPM**
During a fire, a closed door can keep carbon monoxide levels at 1,000 PPM versus 10,000 PPM when a door is left open.

MAKE A 900 DEGREE DIFFERENCE
During a fire, a closed door can mean the difference between 1,000 degrees and 100 degrees.

TAKE IT DOWN A NOTCH
During a fire, a closed door can keep carbon monoxide levels at 1,000 PPM versus 10,000 PPM when a door is left open.

50% of home fire deaths happen between **11pm and 7am**

DOZE SAFELY
Closing doors before you go to bed helps keep you safe.

17 MINS TO ESCAPE A FIRE 40 YEARS AGO vs **3 MINS** TO ESCAPE A FIRE TODAY

YOUR NIGHTLY REMINDER

FIRE IS GETTING FASTER
Because of modern synthetic materials and furniture, fire is up to 7x faster. Closed doors slow down fire growth.

YOUR SAFETY HINGES ON IT.

ADD CLOSED DOORS TO YOUR FIRE SAFETY TOOLBOX

ONE OF THESE THINGS IS SAFER THAN THE OTHER. CLOSE BEFORE YOU DOZE.

closeyourdoor.org

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and multipurpose rooms. Check the detectors' operation at least once a week and change the batteries twice a year.

Early notification of smoke is essential to your survival during a fire. The NMRFA provides no-cost smoke detectors and, if necessary, can come to your house and install them or replace your batteries.

One more safety step is to have a second way out of each bedroom. Teach children how to escape using this exit, which could be another path out the back door, a downstairs door or a window as a last resort.

Practice exit drills using the alternative escape. Children as well as adults tend to remember exit routes if they have practiced them.

Smoke detectors, exit plans and closed bedroom doors at night will significantly increase your survival odds in the event of a fire. Prevention and preparedness is the key.

For more information, please visit www.northmasonrfa.com.

Community Response Team Reaches Out to Maggie Lake

The NMRFA Community Response Team had a busy September, visiting the Maggie Lake neighborhood in a community outreach effort. CRT volunteers from around the fire authority joined Tahuya CRT members on a Thursday evening to deliver free address signs and smoke detectors, as well as share information about the CRT.

The fire authority has three community response teams, comprised of volunteers whose role is to assist first responders. In Tahuya, CRT members are typically the first ones on the scene of an emergency and help assess the situation before emergency crews arrive.

"The community response team helps improve our response and outcomes," says Robert Collamore, the NMRFA community outreach coordinator who staffs the Tahuya Fire Station Monday through Friday.

CRT members are trained in CPR and first aid, disaster response and incident command. In addition to responding to emergencies, they assist with public education and outreach.

The Maggie Lake project was the first large-scale organized effort of its kind, and volunteers installed 30 address signs as they visited the neighborhood. The NMRFA Board of Commissioners commended CRT members for this effort during a recent meeting.

The home visits were well received by Maggie Lake residents. Plans are under way to reach out to the Trails End area in the near future, followed by other neighborhoods.

The CRT needs more volunteers to join the program and be involved.

"The service is only available because we have dedicated volunteers for it," Collamore says.

Being on the team requires an initial training of up to 50 hours, and participating in ongoing two-hour training meetings each month. All sessions take place in the evening or on weekends.



Fire commissioners recognize Community Response Team Members during a recent meeting.

Members respond to emergencies and participate in other activities as their schedule allows. You don't have to respond to calls or be in top physical shape, however — there are a variety of roles on the team.

Volunteer applications are available at northmasonrfa.com.

5 Reasons to be Part of the Community Response Team 'Neighbors Helping Neighbors'

- Be the first to respond to a neighbor's emergency and help the fire authority.
- Receive free, life-saving training.
- Engage with your community and give back.
- Meet a group of wonderful volunteers.
- Learn and try new things.

FUTURE GROWTH, from p. 1

paramedic program to provide alternatives to expensive and time-consuming emergency room visits for nonlife-threatening medical conditions. The NMRFA is also implementing a federally funded Quick Response Team program (see page 2) to combat substance addictions. Space for training, housing and operations is a challenge that must be addressed for both of these programs.

As NMRFA Assistant Chief Scott Cooper points out, "Today's fire stations are extremely unique facilities that must serve the community in a number of different capacities. They have to simultaneously function as emergency-operations centers, business offices, housing quarters for personnel, and storage centers for training and emergency vehicles and equipment."

"We've done a good job getting as much useful life out of the building as we could," says Fire Chief Beau Bakken. "But we are busting at the seams. We need a facility that will serve us for the next 50 to 60 years."

Conceptual Plan

Fire commissioners have identified the adjacent 2.5-acre property as a potential option for building a new station to serve the entire North Mason region. A six-month option deal was signed to give the NMRFA the opportunity for a feasibility study. The project would require a bond proposal to be considered by voters.

The NMRFA is exploring several ideas for repurposing the existing building.

"There are several exciting opportunities on the horizon for the future use of the fire station, should the project be feasible," Bakken says. "We want to be good stewards of our resources."

Next Steps

The NMRFA will create a proposed plan for the new facility and host a series of three public meetings.

Following public input, the NMRFA plans to propose a bond to voters sometime in 2019.



Aerial view of Station 21 and adjacent property

Meeting Dates

Jan. 9 - 6 p.m. Timberland Library
23081 NE State Route 3, Belfair

Jan. 16 - 6 p.m. Station 81 Tahuya
14880 NE Northshore Rd, Tahuya

Jan. 23 - 6 p.m. Timberland Library
23081 NE State Route 3, Belfair

CPR Just Got Easier

Hands-Only CPR

Could Save a Life



Minutes, even seconds count when someone goes into cardiac arrest — a disruption of the heart beat that causes loss of blood flow to the brain, lungs and other critical organs. The majority of cardiac arrests outside of a hospital happen at home, and CPR could double or triple survival chances for the victim.

Many people hesitate to give rescue breaths, but new guidelines indicate that chest compressions — hands-only CPR — are just as effective on their own.

“Compressions can keep the blood circulating with minimum interruptions. When we’re compressing on the chest, we’re also compressing on the lungs,” says firefighter/paramedic Ryan Cloud. “When citizens don’t have the devices that we do, compression-only CPR is very effective.”

Cloud has seen this work first-hand. During a recent call, he responded to an emergency to find a man in the middle of hands-only CPR on a family member. Those minutes made all the difference — thanks to the man’s quick actions, his relative was able to walk out from the hospital.

“We have an amazing inventory of equipment and interventions in the ambulance, but by the time we get there, if someone has already lost the tissue, there’s only so much we can do,” Cloud says. “If you can do compressions to keep the blood circulating and the vital organs alive until we get there, our interventions have a greater chance of succeeding.”

How to Perform ‘CPR Now’

Call 911 first, then get the victim down onto a hard, flat surface.

If you’re in an area with an automatic emergency defibrillator (AED) available, don’t stop compressions to retrieve it — get help from a third person. Otherwise, continue with the hands-only CPR.

Perform compressions at the rate of 100 to 120 per minute. It’s easy — just hum one of these tunes:

- “Stayin’ Alive” by the Bee Gees
- “Walk the Line” by Johnny Cash
- “Imperial March” from Star Wars
- “Dancing Queen” by ABBA
- “Sweet Home Alabama” by Lynyrd Skynyrd
- “Another Brick in the Wall” by Pink Floyd

FACTS

about CPR

1

Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of adult deaths, claiming nearly half a million lives every year.

70%

More than 70 percent of sudden cardiac arrests happen in people’s homes or in a public setting.

90%

About 90 percent of people experiencing sudden cardiac arrests outside of the hospital die.

46%

Only about 46 percent of people who need immediate help during an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest receive it.

45%

Almost 45 percent of people who receive CPR from a bystander outside of a hospital setting survive cardiac arrest.

Source: American Heart Association

Did you know that the NMRFA has a page on Facebook? It’s a great way for you to learn about events and announcements and find PSAs and educational materials.

During the recent dry season, we created a campaign to educate the public about the three burn levels (see related article, page 4), including a brochure and video PSA to explain what each level means. When the burn level changed, we got the information out immediately via Facebook — reaching about 7,000 readers in three days — instead of using slower or more expensive communication methods.

The most-recent video as part of the NMRFA’s PSA series was an announcement about CPR Now (see related article above). More short videos are planned in the near future. Like our page and stay in touch!

We Are on Facebook!



Like our page at www.facebook.com/NorthMasonRFA



Like Follow Share ...

Send Message



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Visit us online for 24/7 information at www.northmasonrfa.com

Santa's 2018 Schedule

Season's Greetings!

DEC. 7 4-7 p.m. Tahuya River Valley,
Collins Lake, Maggie Lake
DEC. 8 2 p.m. Trails End Lake
4-7 p.m. Twanoh Falls
DEC. 14 4 p.m. Cedar Street
5-7 p.m. Riverhill
DEC. 15 4-7 p.m. Lynch Cove and
Beards Cove

DEC. 21 5-7 p.m. Belfair Fire Station 21
DEC. 22 5-7 p.m. Collins Lake Fire Station 27

