



Chelan County Fire District #6 Summer 2025 NEWSLETTER

<http://facebook.com/ccfd6>

Outlook on Current & Future Fire District Operations Discussed at Public Meetings

A big “thank you” to everyone attending our public meetings this Spring. We were very appreciative of your overwhelming support for your fire district and our 60 volunteer (unpaid) firefighters.



Fast Facts:

- We have experienced a 27% increase in 9-1-1 calls and the assessed value of property that we protect has increased by 65% during the past 4 years.
- 99% of our funding comes from you, our taxpayers (no annual funding from the state or federal government comes our way).
- Our Fire District, organized in 1955, has not received a community directed funding increase in its 70-year history.



1955



2025

Change in buying power of a dollar since 1955.

Since 1955 the financial position of our Fire District has deteriorated. Unfortunately, due to lack of funding we are unable to address critical operational needs such as the replacement of obsolete equipment. Many of our fire trucks are 30+ years old requiring constant repair, our firefighters are equipped with 20+ year-old personal protective equipment that endangers their safety

while responding to emergencies, and our ‘jaws of life’ equipment are 35+ years-old and often fail when we attempt to rescue victims from car accidents. During our recent strategic planning process, additional funding of \$10 million over the next 6-8 years was identified as necessary in order to meet unmet critical operational needs and enable our fire district to provide reliable responses to your 9-1-1 calls.

During our public meetings we listened while many of you expressed your concerns:

“I must admit to being shocked at our current situation! This fire district needs to be adequately funded!”

“My homeowners fire insurance policy was recently cancelled. This fire district is my only line of defense between homeownership and financial disaster during wildfire situations like happened in California.”

“When I call 9-1-1, I want help quickly, especially during wildfire events and health emergencies; and I am willing to pay more for that.”

We are very appreciative of the large number of community members who attended these meetings and provided their opinions and support. **100% of participants completing surveys indicated that they would support a funding increase to improve fire services and emergency response. Therefore, a proposition seeking an increase in funding to support your fire district will be placed on the August 2025 ballot. Support of this ballot measure will enable us to provide you with the 9-1-1 response that you asked for and deserve. For more information please call Fire Chief Andy Lee. Tel: 509-663-1678**

We Are Your Wildfire Defense Team



Our community has a higher risk of home and business loss to wildfire than 99% of communities in the USA (U.S. Forest Service data).

As you know, hot, dry conditions can quickly turn seemingly small fires into significant regional wildfire threats. We have seen the impact of wildfires in our own fire district and neighboring areas, and we must learn from those experiences to safeguard against California-style events.

We are staffed with 44 red carded (certified) volunteer wildland firefighters. Our wildland firefighting crews conduct regular training to

ensure that we are ready to provide effective operations in the event of wildfire incidents in our fire district. You can assist our firefighters and our operations by taking steps around your residence to reduce the fuel loads and potential risk of wildfire damage to your home. If you would like to have one of our firefighters conduct a yard inspection through our “Wildfire Ready Neighbors Program”, let us know.

During fire weather events, including forecasted lightening outbreaks, many of your volunteer firefighters will be pre-staged at our fire stations so that we can respond ASAP to any reported fire incidents.

Financial Contingency Plan for January 1, 2026

Due to financial limitations beyond our control, without increased funding:

- Our responses to your medical calls will be suspended. At present, we are consistently the first responders to your medical calls providing life support care prior to ambulance arrival on site.
- Our Medical aid contract with Cashmere Fire Department will be terminated. This outcome will effect those residents residing in Cashmere canyons and the Monitor area.
- Response to Motor Vehicle Accidents may also be suspended (leaving injured patients to wait for an ambulance).

The NEW Chelan County Fire District #6 website can be viewed at:

<https://chelanfd6.org/>

Volunteer Spotlight

When **Kevin Cox** moved to Valley Hi 22 years ago there were 12 firefighters living nearby and responding from the local fire station. Today he is the sole firefighter responding from the Valley Hi station.

Since he works during the day, he responds to calls nights and weekends. Frequently he responds to 9-1-1 calls alone on Blewett Pass and waits 15-20 minutes for additional Chelan 6 firefighters to arrive from Peshastin/Dryden. He also routinely responds with the water tanker to structure and wildfires throughout our fire district.

If someone needs help, Kevin will go. He remembers many of the 9-1-1 calls he has responded to and the positive outcomes that he's played a part in, keep him going. A truly memorable call for Kevin was when he saved a young boy from drowning and was able to watch him grow up. He also remembers a call when he and his team carried an injured motorcyclist 10 miles out of the woods on a litter.

Occasionally when the 9-1-1 call comes in at 2 am on a winter night, he will hesitate about responding and his wife will encourage him by saying, "Kevin you will regret it if you don't go." Generally he can go from sound asleep to driving the fire truck out of the station in 4 minutes.

He often arrives 15-20 minutes ahead of other firefighters, which is a critical window of time for cardiac and injury patients. By arriving quickly he can assess the situation and radio the other firefighters and EMTs so they know what to expect on-scene and ensure that they are bringing the right tools and equipment.

Kevin grew up in Cashmere and owns Jerry's Auto Repair Shop on Mission Creek Road.



Cost of Providing Services Exceeds Tax Collected:

The cost of a single emergency response by our Fire District is a minimum of \$300 while our quick response to control an April 2025 Peshastin Wildfire cost \$6,600. In contrast, the annual tax currently obtained from a resident living in a home valued at \$400,000 is only \$124 per year.



Our Fire Commissioners

Phil Guthrie, Dryden

Tim Larson, Monitor

Ray Schmitten, Peshastin

Upcoming Fire Commissioner Meetings:

June 11, July 9 and August 13

All meetings begin at 7:00 PM,

Call for Location

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings.

**Chelan County
Fire District #6**

PO Box 296
Monitor, WA 98836
509-663-1678

<http://facebook.com/ccfd6>

PRSRST STD
UECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

A Message From Your Fire Chief

I receive 2-3 calls a week from new residents that cannot buy fire insurance for their property. I get similar calls from long-time residents who have received a “policy-cancelled” notice from their home insurance provider. Although I cannot sell you fire insurance, I will do my level best to ensure that we have a well-trained firefighting force ready to respond to your calls.

During the past 3 years, we responded to 1,889 9-1-1 calls. We are safeguarding \$1.4 billion in residential and commercial property. Our current Fire District levy rate is 31.5 cents per \$1,000 in assessed property value. This is the lowest levy rate among any fire district in Chelan or Douglas County.

A small fraction (3 percent) of your property tax bill supports our fire district. As a result, we have an annual operating budget of \$426,000, while similar size fire districts in Eastern Washington have a \$1.5 million annual budget. We do the best we can with what we have. However, with no significant funding increase since 1955 (when Elvis was 20 and candy bars were 5 cents each), there isn't much ‘patch’ left in our aging fire trucks and equipment.

We are faced with the choice of asking for a funding increase or reducing our services.

Therefore, we held public engagement meetings this Spring to seek your opinions on our current and future operations. We heard you “loud and clear” that you want us to provide good fire and EMS services and that you are willing to pay for it. You also stated that you do not want us cutting EMS and motor vehicle accident responses.



We are your local community-driven fire district, totally funded by your tax dollars. Your safety and the protection of our communities is our top priority. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andy Lee'.

Andy Lee, Fire Chief

Email: andyeechelanfire6@gmail.com
Tel: 509-663-1678