



# WEST MASON FIRE

*Proudly serving the communities of Shelton Valley, Dayton, Skokomish Valley, Brockdale/McReavy, and the Skokomish Tribe*



## WEST MASON FIRE



P.O. BOX 2436  
SHELTON, WA 98584

**CURRENT RESIDENT  
123 WEST MASON FIRE  
SHELTON, WA 98584**

# A Message from the Fire Chief:

In case you don't know me, my name is Matthew Welander. I started my career as a volunteer firefighter in 1987 and immediately fell in love with this work. Since that time, I have been a volunteer in several departments and worked for a few private ambulance companies. Working as a paramedic and firefighter over the years, I have developed my love and appreciation for the volunteer firefighters. These are people who serve their community for the simple fact they want to help - a trait not found in many people. In recent times, the ability to volunteer is being stripped away due to many factors like working farther from home, increased training requirements for volunteer responders, policy changes, family and home commitments, and the physical and mental impact of serving in this capacity. We value our volunteers and strive to provide an environment that supports their health and wellbeing.

Your fire commissioners are incredibly forward thinking and willing to pursue all avenues for increased funding and fiscal health. We now have expanded service contracts with The Ridge Motorsports Park, Washington Corrections Center, and the Skokomish Tribe. The partnerships that have been fostered are mutually beneficial, working to provide increased capacity for all.

There has also been a merger between Fire Districts 16 & 9, to make West Mason Fire. The reason for the merger was simple. You can have a bunch of districts with a bunch of chiefs, or you can have one larger district and a bunch of firefighters to better serve the public as a whole. In that merger, both sets of Fire Commissioners saw the future and worked together to make a larger, more efficient district.

In this newsletter you will see many of the recent changes: the increased manpower, and a much improved ability to serve you.

As a Chief, I could not be more proud of our program our volunteers, or even the commissioners who have kept this department moving forward. These are exciting times for me as the Chief, as I get to watch all of the young firefighters grow and help the community.

Thank you for your continued support.

*Matthew N. Welander*

# Get Involved!

There are many ways to get involved with your local fire department from attending and sharing your voice at meetings to volunteering in a variety of roles. No experience is required! Visit us at [www.westmasonfire.org](http://www.westmasonfire.org) or stop by station 16-1 at 4650 W. Dayton Airport Road to learn more!

# 5 YEARS OF PROGRESSIVE CHANGE

The past five years have brought significant changes to Mason County Fire District 16, successfully improving the district's administrative and operational capacity from ineffectively meeting the needs of the community to becoming a pillar of safety and support the community can depend on.

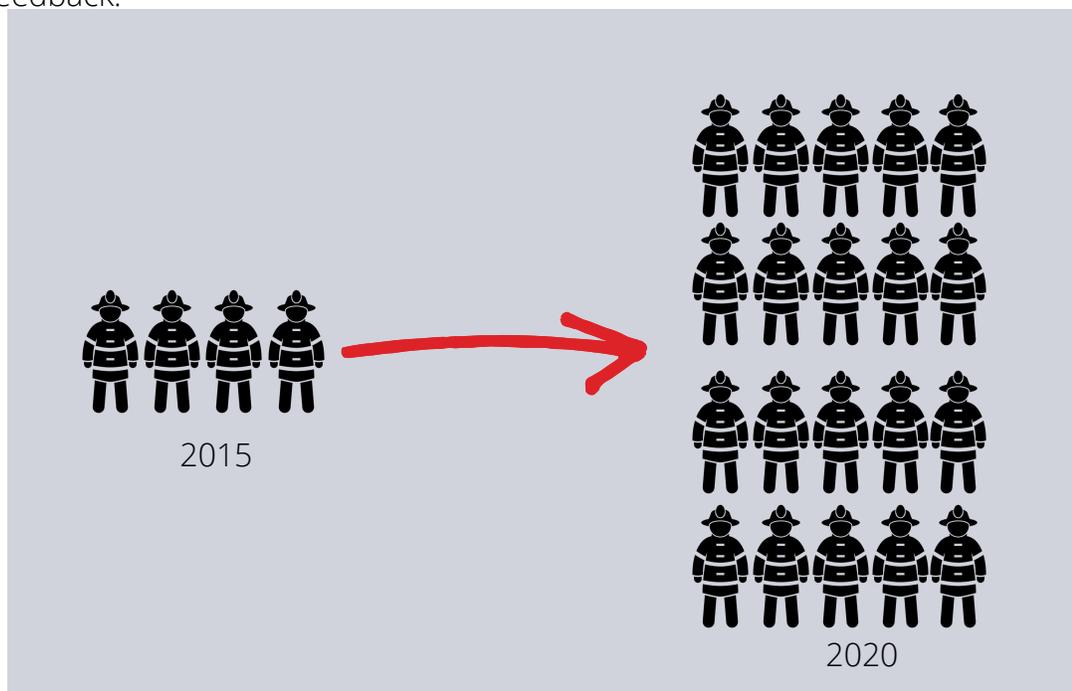
Strategic change requires leadership dedicated to carrying the district into the future of the fire and emergency medical services industry, and we are fortunate to have a team of dedicated leaders committed to preserving traditions of the past, meeting the demands of the present, and building capacity for the future.

Some of the leadership areas of focus over the past 5 years have been increasing staffing, responding to 100% of calls on 1st alarm, assisting mutual aid partners when requested, developing programs that generate non-tax based revenue, improving volunteer health and safety, achieving compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, developing and practicing sound fiscal policy, and improving opportunities for transparency and community feedback.

## RESPONDERS

Leadership changes brought about a new dynamic and focus on personal and professional development of the volunteers, resulting in increased recruitment and retention of trained responders.

Transitioning to a combination paid/volunteer department is the next step to provide adequate staffing, training, and program oversight with an emphasis on responder safety and wellness.



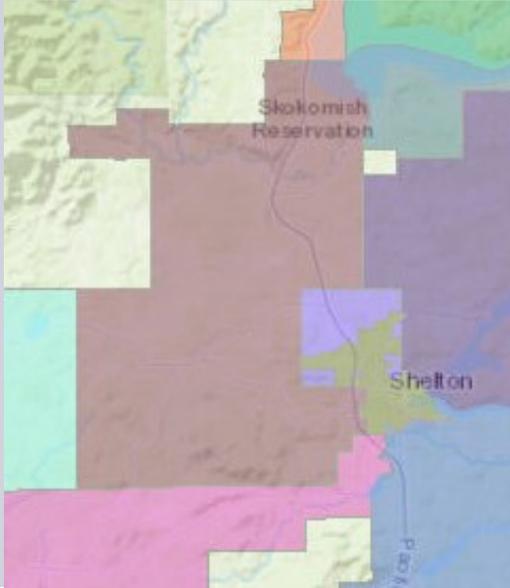
## CALLS TO SERVICE



Call volume for emergency services has continued to rise, with a significant increase in numbers seen just prior to the merger of Districts 16 & 9. It was during this time the district began responding to all calls within the area that is now West Mason Fire.

Despite the merger, call volume was continuing to trend upward, with the majority of calls falling under the category of medical. Keeping up with increased demand has been difficult, but we have successfully met each challenge faced.

# SERVICE AREA



● West Mason Fire  
Primary Response Area

In the November 2019 general election, voters approved a merger with Mason County Fire District 9, which formed the new boundary lines of West Mason Fire.

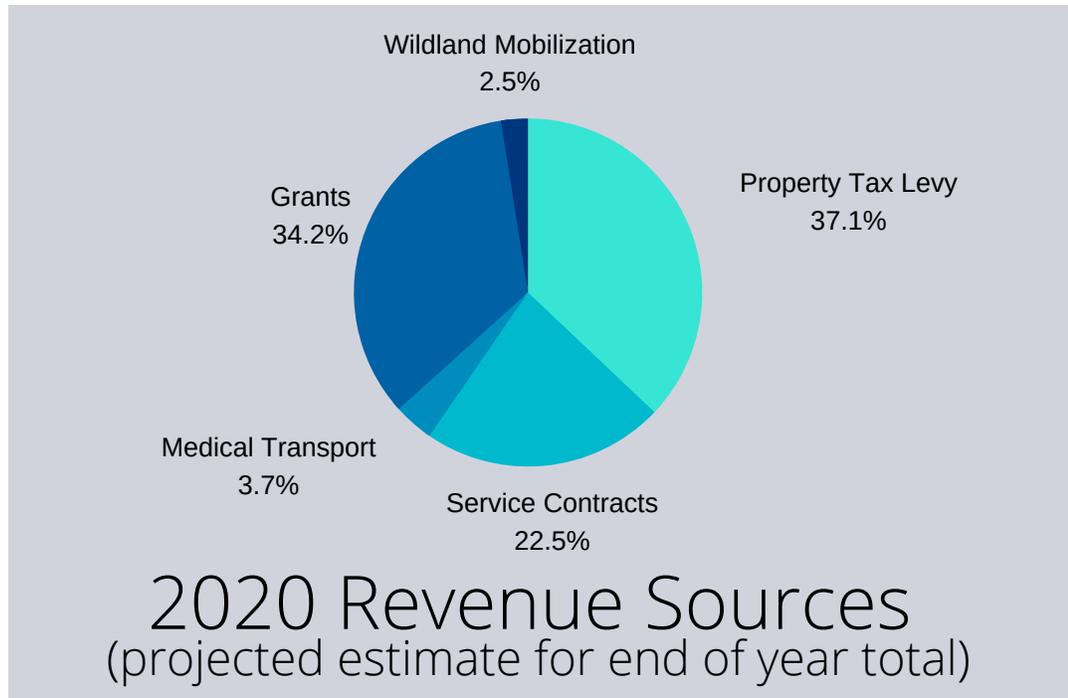
This Merger expanded the service area from 52 square miles to 94 square miles, doubling the population served.

The merger was of great benefit to both districts' operations and the quality and quantity of services provided to the community.

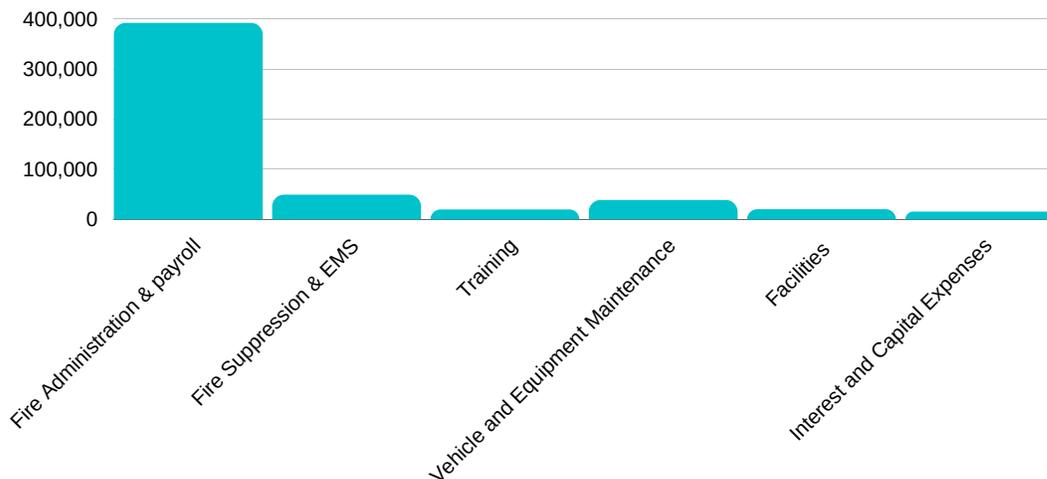
# REVENUE

West Mason Fire's primary source of revenue is received through collection of taxes, with additional revenue generated through service contracts, grants, donations, and through programs such as ambulance transportation services and wildland mobilizations.

In 2015, approximately 80% of revenue was tax-based. The chart on the right shows revenue sources 2020, representing our dedication to seeking non-tax base funding sources.



# EXPENSES



Fire district expenses from 2019 are broken down in the chart on the left to provide an overview of how your tax dollars are spent.

Much of the past few years expenses were repair and replacement of vehicles and equipment that had been neglected in years prior. We now have a maintenance schedule to reduce the frequency of repairs, keeping your fleet and tools in service and ready for the next call.

# EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical calls are on the rise across the nation and comprise approximately 70% of West Mason Fire's calls to service. Five years ago, West Mason Fire had two EMTs on the roster who were unable to respond with an ambulance due to unrepaired mechanical failure. Equipment was outdated and supplies were limited. Change was needed and the new leadership team took action to ensure the district remained compliant with ambulance licensing with a goal of providing our community with the highest level of pre-hospital care.

Today, we have 19 credentialed emergency medical providers, a new, comfortably equipped and stocked ambulance, and the ability to provide both Basic and Advanced Life Support Services on scene as well as Basic Life Support Transportation Services. Four years ago we were unable to transport a single patient, this year we have transported over 60 patients so far, generating additional revenue through insurance billing that is reinvested into emergency medical programs.

## COVID CORNER

West Mason Fire took a proactive role in preparedness for response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is committed to providing safe, high-quality service regardless of the nature of the call.

Many of our dedicated volunteers have been unable to respond during this time due to increased health risk to themselves or a loved one. We were able to support their health and safety needs while ensuring adequate staffing was maintained to continue to provide the necessary response for each call we were faced with.

Grant funding was used in conjunction with our budgeted shift stipends to pay regular wages to the volunteers who were able to schedule shifts, with additional policies and procedures in place to reduce the risk of transmission to non-scheduled personnel and station visitors.

By having paid staff that are dedicated to the unit instead of any available volunteer responding to calls, there is more time and oversight for COVID-19 specific training, cleaning & disinfecting the ambulance, stations, and uniforms, and less risk of carrying the virus home to their families and into the community.

## AMBULANCE TRANSPORTS

West Mason Fire is proud to provide high-quality Basic Life Support Transportation Services!

Providing this service helps keep local dollars paid for services, usually through insurance reimbursement, within the local emergency medical services programs. This allows your tax dollar to be stretched by generating non-tax based revenue and ensures we can provide the highest level of care necessary when responding to you or your loved ones.

We have worked hard to achieve the goal of providing this service, and will continue to work towards building capacity for the future of Emergency Medical Services.

If you would like to check out the new ambulance without the ride to the emergency room, give us a call to set up an appointment. Our crew will happily show you around, perform demonstrations, and answer your medical response questions.



# EMS LEVY

This year, West Mason Fire will have a \$0.50/\$1000 permanent EMS levy on the ballot to support the funding of paid medical responders. Volunteer numbers are declining nation-wide and time availability for even the most dedicated volunteers is also on the decline. In an effort to maintain staffing and support the existing and new volunteers, we are putting forth this tax initiative.

The employees hired through the EMS levy funding will be EMTs or Paramedics, and will be assigned shifts which will include completing the daily cleaning and routine maintenance that the volunteers are currently doing. This will allow the volunteers to dedicate their limited time to necessary training and response without spending so much time on the day to day duties. This will also allow for more consistent staffing for ambulance transports, keeping your tax dollars working for you.

It has been a long couple of years for a dedicated few, but the Chief, Commissioners, and Volunteers all feel that it is time to ask for some help.

For more information about ballot measures, visit our website, [www.westmasonfire.org](http://www.westmasonfire.org).

*your  
vote  
matters!*

Register to vote  
online at:  
[www.masoncountyelections.us/p/register-to-vote.html](http://www.masoncountyelections.us/p/register-to-vote.html)

## Winter Storm Damage at Station 16-2



*Photo courtesy of Firefighter Josh Turner*

A winter storm on January 15th brought heavy winds resulting in downed trees and power lines throughout the county. West Mason Fire was dispatched to Station 16-2, located on Shelton Valley Road, for reports of a tree falling through the station.

Upon arrival, responders found a tree had fallen through the far right side of the pole building that housed reserve apparatuses, including a brush truck, an ambulance, and the Mason County Dive Team's ambulance.

Emergency mitigation included removing the tree and boarding up the station, which is the condition the station has remained in since the incident due to complications with permitting for repairing the existing structure, which was unable to be repaired due to county code issues.

We are pleased to report we are finally permitted for demolition of the building, which will be rebuilt in the lot adjacent to Station 16-1, located on Dayton Airport Road. This will not reduce response capability from the location of Station 16-2 as the primary response apparatuses for that area are maintained in the wood structure on the same property.

Assessment of the remaining trees found many to be unhealthy which prompted the removal of additional trees to reduce the risk of further damage.